

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2013-2014

Finance Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance

Outcome/Program: 3.1

Topic: Government Staffing Committee

Senator: Faulkner

Question reference number: F41

Type of question: Hansard, F&PA Committee, Page 86-7, 25 February 2014

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday, 11 April 2014

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator FAULKNER: I could perhaps point out to you that in relation to Senator Wong's question you said there has been a practice not to answer. Question on notice 23 in the 2010-11 additional estimates was a written question asked by Senator Ryan—who of course is a coalition senator. He asked who the members of the Government Staffing Committee were, and it was all answered. In that case it was former Deputy Prime Minister Swan; the SMOS, Mr Gray; the then minister for agriculture, Senator Ludwig; and the Prime Minister's chief of staff. Senator Ryan then asked, 'Does it have specific guidelines or remit?' That was answered. Then he asked, 'Is there a Government Staffing Committee secretariat?' That was answered. He asked, 'Have any ministerial staff or electorate officers been sanctioned under the code of conduct?' That was answered. He asked, 'How many times has the Government Staffing Committee met?' All the meeting dates were given. So I think that is the sort of level of transparency that has applied in the past.

Senator Ronaldson: On the back of that, I do not have that answer and I do not for one minute suggest that you are not repeating that verbatim, but on the back of that I will take that question on notice.

Senator WONG: Can you then take on notice the questions I was asking about the members, the chair, dates of meeting and so forth in light of the—

Senator Ronaldson: Sorry. I do not understand.

Senator WONG: Sorry. So we can clarify what you are taking on notice—

Senator Ronaldson: Sure. I am just taking Senator Faulkner's question on notice about who is on the committee, which is what he asked me about.

Senator WONG: Which was what I was asking. You declined to answer, so if you would take that—

Senator Ronaldson: On the back of—

Senator WONG: You have taken it on notice; I am moving on.

Answer:

The Government Staff Committee operates consistent with long-standing Coalition practice. It is not the practice of successive governments to provide commentary on the internal workings of the Government Staffing Committee.