

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates 24-28 February 2014

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Outcome/Program:** 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Topic:** Mr Alistair Furnival

**Senator:** Senator the Hon Penny Wong

**Question reference number:** 20

**Type of Question:** FPA, Monday 24 February 2014, page 96 &

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

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

Senator WONG: On the basis of that answer, therefore, it is possible he commenced work and was working for a period of time without any of the arrangements to which the Prime Minister referred actually being in place.

Senator Abetz: If we want to go down that track can I just remind you of the ministerial standards that required all ministers to divest themselves of all private interests and shares, and for the full 18 months Senator Bob Carr was Minister for Foreign Affairs he retained his shareholding in his lobbying company—in direct breach. We also had a situation of Mr Epstein becoming the chief of staff to Prime Minister Rudd, in his first iteration, where Mr Epstein's partner was a director of GRA—and whilst he was chief of staff that company lobbied the Prime Minister's office in relation to resource matters. So let's just be careful before we pretend to be holier than thou in exploring this matter.

Senator WONG: I am asking questions and just asking for answers, Senator. What I said to you was—

Senator Abetz: Yes, and I have said I will take it on notice.

Senator WONG: Was it possible, therefore, given you cannot tell us when the so-called arrangements were put in place, that Mr Furnival in fact commenced employment without any such arrangements being put in place?

Senator Abetz: I understand that not to be the case but I will take it on notice....

Senator WONG:...Perhaps after the break you could come back with some clarity around what the arrangements were and when they were actually put in place. I also want to know how they were given effect. For example, did the Prime Minister's chief of staff's letter to Senator Nash set out how these conflicts should be managed or was that system of conflict management set out elsewhere?

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Senator WONG: Minister, what have you been able to find out from the Prime Minister's office over the break?

Senator Abetz: Nothing that will assist thus far, but all the matters have been taken on notice

**Answer:**

See PM19.