

**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:** L20 and G20

**Senator:** Senator Cory Bernardi

**Question reference number:** 29

**Type of Question:** FPA, Monday 24 February 2014, page 112

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

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

Dr Smith: The previous government provided \$15,000 to the ACTU to attend the L20 meeting.

CHAIR: Did the Prime Minister's office at the time request that this money be made available?

Dr Smith: I would have to take that on notice.

CHAIR: Do you remember which Prime Minister's office it was—who was the Prime Minister at the time?

Dr Smith: I would have to check that.

CHAIR: Has PM&C provided grants to support union delegations in the past in this manner?

Dr Smith: I am not aware that we have, but I will also have to take that on notice.

CHAIR: Has the entire \$50,000 grant—which is the contract I happen to have here—been spent?

Dr Smith: I am not sure of that.

CHAIR: What steps, then, would PM&C take to reclaim any money that was not spent?

Dr Smith: I am not aware of what processes we would put in train.

Ms Kelly: We will have to take on notice the acquittal process attached to the payment of that money, and whether or not that has been completed.

CHAIR: Are you able to tell me who the ACTU sent overseas using this \$50,000 of taxpayer money?

Dr Smith: I would have to take that on notice, as well.

CHAIR: Were any steps taken to vet who was sent by the ACTU?

Dr Smith: Again, I would have to take that on notice. I am not aware of the details.

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CHAIR: I will put the rest on notice as well.

**Answer:**

The decision to fund delegates from the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) to attend G20 meetings was made by the then Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP.

Pursuant to that decision, the G20 Taskforce was asked by the then Prime Minister's office to make available funding to put the Prime Minister's decision into effect.

Accordingly, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) entered into an agreement with the then Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) under which DEEWR would be provided with \$50,000, from which it could draw funding to reimburse the ACTU for the costs of attending meetings covered by the then Prime Minister's decision. No funding was provided up-front to the ACTU. Unspent funds were to be returned to PM&C.

The ACTU was reimbursed by DEEWR for the delegates' airfares and accommodation expenses, amounting to a total of \$15,108.60, upon presentation of the required documentation. The remaining funds of \$34,891.40 have been returned to PM&C as required under the terms of the agreement between the two departments.

The ACTU delegates funded under these arrangements were Ms Amy Schwebel and Mr Matt Cowgill, who were nominated as representatives by the ACTU and approved by DEEWR.