

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing 21-24 May 2012

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1.3 Support Services for Government Operations

Topic: Caucus Committee Support and Training Unit - relationship with PMO

Senator: Senator Ryan

Question reference number: 63

Type of Question: FPA P26, 22 May 2012

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 July 2012

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator RYAN: I appreciate that; however, what I am interested in now are relations between this group of people and the office of the Prime Minister.

Senator Chris Evans: I can take that on notice. In terms of formal accountability, it appears it is probably Finance in terms of the management and employment of staff, et cetera. As to relationships between them and the Prime Minister's office, obviously there would be engagement with the PMO and officers of the PMO about government activities. I can take that on notice, and I will also double check for you but it seems to me it is probably best handled under Finance. I think I might be representing for part of that, so we might have that discussion then.

Senator RYAN: I will put some questions on notice, because you might have another opportunity to answer them under another outcome, although I think because this particular part of estimates covers the office of the Prime Minister and not just the department of the Prime Minister it could be handled here. I would like to know whether or not in any way there has been a change to the arrangements of the Caucus Committee Support and Training Unit, or any group that is now known by a different name that was that, and whether or not it answers to anyone in the Prime Minister's office, and the extent of liaison between it and the Prime Minister's office, particularly with respect to what might charitably be known as opposition research?

Senator Chris Evans: I can take that on notice. Obviously there is liaison about government announcements, et cetera, providing information to caucus members about those things, as do prime ministerial officers. But in terms of opposition research, as you describe it, I am not aware of whether they undertake any such functions. I will take that on notice.

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Answer:

Please see the answer to PM54 **part 2.**