

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 - directions from the PM

Senator: Senator Ryan

Question reference number: 64

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Question:

Senator RYAN: Can you also take on notice whether there has been any direction from the office of the Prime Minister to the Caucus Committee Support and Training Unit to undertake research on members of the opposition in terms of their portfolio, their personal backgrounds, even issues like their declarations of interests, and-we can discuss this Thursday-whether or not there has been any direction from the PMO or advice regarding that to the CASTE.

Senator Chris Evans: I very much doubt that. Those things tend to be handled inside the offices. I will certainly take that on notice.

Senator RYAN: I do not necessarily disagree that the communication might not be from the Prime Minister personally, but any officers within the Prime Minister's office-any of her personal staff-providing such direction or advice to the Caucus Committee Support and Training Unit.

Senator Chris Evans: As I say, I do not think that is their role, but I will get you an answer. We can probably have that discussion under Finance.

Answer:

No.