

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL BUDGET ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of Finance and Deregulation

Outcome/Program: 1/1.1

Topic: CSIRO

Senator: Ryan

Question reference number: F20 & F21

Type of question: Hansard, F&PA Committee, Pages 81-82 & 83, Wednesday, 29 May 2013

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: Friday 12 July 2013

Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. **Senator RYAN:** Mr Suur, of those 32 pieces of advice – letters, file notes and pieces of advice – do you know on how many occasions Dr Swiegers was contacted by the department? Is that possible? I am not sure if you would be able to. Some of them could have been updates about the Comcare and ASIC activities, but how many of them were about the Department of Finance investigation into the CAC allegations?

Mr Suur: That would mean counting stuff up and categorising it.

Senator WONG: We will take that on notice.

Mr Suur: It will take some time, so we will take it on notice.

2. **Senator RYAN:** Looking at the file in front of you – without providing content – is it true that, prior to the public nature of this in April this year, Dr Swiegers had not heard from the department or the minister since June of last year?

Mr Tune: Again, I will have to take that on notice. I have in this list – and again this goes to a sensitivity that I would rather not share publicly; it does not have to do with the department, it has to do with Dr Swiegers – that there was a telephone call with Dr Swiegers in June 2011 – or 2012. I will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

1. The Department's records show that of the 32 pieces of advice referred to, there were 9 substantive communications initiated with Dr Swiegers during the course of the investigation. These include two letters from the Minister, one letter and one email from the Department, four phone conversations, and one mediation meeting organised by the Department with CSIRO.

All of these communications with Dr Swiegers encompassed the Department's ongoing investigation into the alleged breaches of the CAC Act, in addition to other allegations made by Dr Swiegers.

2. It is correct that, during Finance's continuing investigations into the allegations raised by Dr Swiegers, no further contact was made by the Department from June 2012 until after April 2013. On 27 May 2013 the Finance Minister wrote to Dr Swiegers advising him of the outcome of the investigation.