

Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Supplementary Budget Estimates 20 - 23 Oct 2008



Question: PM13

Outcome 1, Output 5

Topic: PM response to Victorian church leaders regarding Victorian Abortion

Law Reform Bill 2008

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Senator Boswell asked: The government has been approached by prominent Victorian church leaders, including the Archbishop of Melbourne, with concerns that the Victorian Abortion Law Reform Bill 2008 breaches the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Australia is a signatory. The leaders wrote to the Prime Minister asking that he act on the legal advice provided by former Federal Court justice Mr Neil Young QC and by human rights barrister Mr Peter Willis. Has there been a formal response from the Prime Minister to these church leaders?

Senator Faulkner-Senator, I do not know-

Senator BOSWELL-Well the question was not asked to you. It was asked to the officials-

Senator Faulkner-No, but it is directed through me-I assume the usual courtesy- so I am now checking for you. I am indicating to you that I do not know. I will now establish if any of the officials are able to assist you. Senator, I am sorry, officials do not know so we will need to check that for you and take that on notice.

Answer:

The correspondence to which Senator Boswell referred has been referred to the Attorney-General, the Hon Robert McClelland MP, for his consideration.