

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing – October 2009**  
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General

**Program 1:** Support for the Governor-General and Official Activities

**Outcome 1:** The performance of the Governor-General's role is facilitated through the organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official household and property and administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system.

**Topic:** Household Attendant

**Senator:** RONALDSON

**Question reference number:** PM31 (a)

**Type of Question:** (*Hansard F&PA page 31, 19 October 2009*)

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 4 December 2009

**Number of Pages:** 1

**Senator RONALDSON—Is the job description for the current household attendant different from the job description for people who may have previously filled a role for male Governors-General?**

**Senator RONALDSON—Mr Murtagh, if you could get me the duty statement for that position prior to the arrival of the new Governor-General and the description of that position currently, that would be good.**

**Answer:**

The Duty Statement for the position of Household Attendant was last reviewed in July 2008, prior to the appointment of Governor-General Bryce. It has not been updated since. The Duty Statement is attached.

**Topic:** Household Attendant

**Senator:** BERNARDI

**Question reference number:** PM31 (b)

**Type of Question:** (*Hansard F&PA page 32, 19 October 2009*)

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 4 December 2009

**Number of Pages:** 1

**Senator BERNARDI—Mr Brady, you made the point that the personal attendant—if that is the right term—of the Governor-General is a woman, for obvious reasons. Might I understand from that that there was no consideration given to any male applicants?**

**Answer:**

The Office had sought to fill positions of household attendant and advertised these vacancies in Canberra and regional newspapers in May 2008. Despite advertising broadly only two applications were received. One applicant withdrew prior to interview. The remaining applicant was interviewed and found suitable in June 2008 and appointed (a male). Having only recently tested the market, and having had a limited response, the Office became aware of a candidate from interstate who was interested in the position and who was subsequently assessed as being suitable to fill an additional Household Attendant position and was hired. No other candidates, male or female, were available for consideration at that time.

**Topic:** Household Attendant

**Senator:** BERNARDI

**Question reference number:** PM31 (c)

**Type of Question:** (*Hansard F&PA page 32, 19 October 2009*)

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 4 December 2009

**Number of Pages:** 1

**Senator BERNARDI—...But my question is: when did it become okay for us to make decisions or appointments on the basis solely of gender...**

**Answer:**

The Office does not make decisions on the basis of gender. It should be remembered that household attendants work in broad-based close domestic and support roles. While the Governor-General may have expressed a preference for a female to undertake some particular duties within the job description, the Office has both male and female staff members employed as household attendants all of whom attend to the Governor-General's needs.