

Question on notice no. 21

Portfolio question number: 21

2018-19 Budget estimates

Finance and Public Administration Committee, Finance Portfolio

Senator Jenny McAllister: asked the Department of Finance on 23 May 2018—

Senator McALLISTER: I might pick up on some of those issues around the payment to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation. When was Finance first consulted on the proposal?

Senator Cormann: This is a proposal that is part of the budget process. I'm quite happy to take on notice consideration of the date as to when this was first considered. But you would, of course, appreciate that, consistent with convention, I'm not going to be at liberty to reveal the content of cabinet deliberations or deliberations of cabinet subcommittees.

Senator McALLISTER: Would it first have been brought to the Department of Finance's attention before Christmas, as part of the portfolio budget submission?

Senator Cormann: I've taken it on notice. It's part of the deliberative process of government and part of the budget process. In the course of the budget process, this came forward as a proposal, and it was dealt with in the usual way through the deliberative processes of the cabinet.

Answer —

It is a longstanding practice not to disclose information about the operation and business of the Cabinet, including details of matters that may have been raised in meetings of the Cabinet, as to do so could potentially reveal the deliberations of the Cabinet, which are confidential.