



COPY

HON GARY GRAY AO MP

Special Minister of State
Special Minister of State for the Public Service and Integrity

REF: B10/1987

The Hon Tony Abbott MP
Leader of the Opposition
Member for Warringah
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Abbott

I refer to the letter sent by the Department of Finance and Deregulation on 19 August 2010 in relation to an article published by *The Drum* website alleging that [you] used taxpayer money to promote [your] 2009 book, *Battlelines* (letter and article attached).

On 29 October 2010, your Chief of Staff responded to this letter and enclosed a cheque **S 47F S 47G** for \$6,255.49, corresponding to the travel taken outside of entitlement. However:

- this letter did not comment on entitlements use other than flights;
- Ministerial and Parliamentary Services' (M&PS) records indicated that other entitlements, including car transport (i.e. Comcar), were accessed during the period in question;
- the amount purported to be repaid in relation to the flights outside of entitlement did not clearly align with the amount paid by the Commonwealth in relation to these flights; and
- another flight (Sydney to Brisbane on 11 August 2009) was subsequently identified as being outside entitlement.

Finance officers discussed this matter further with your office and it was decided that repayments should also be made in relation to the Comcar use and all relevant flights during that period (including the GST component). A second cheque **S 47F S 47G** for \$3,141.93 was received by the Department on 8 December 2010.

Given the repayments made, I do not intend to take any further action in relation to this matter. However, I take this opportunity to remind you that:

- in future, similar payments should not be made by the Commonwealth to later be reimbursed **S 47F S 47G** and

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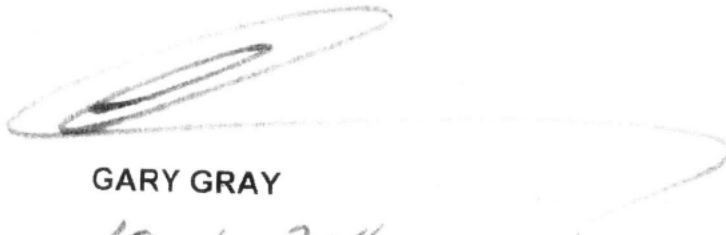
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Staff are employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act) to assist their Senator or Member carry out their duties as a Member of Parliament. If the employee mentioned in Ms Credlin's letter was employed under the MOP(S) Act, it would be inappropriate for their duties to include tasks outside of the parameters of the entitlement, such as arranging travel for your book tour. I note that this employee has subsequently left your employment, but this principle would apply to any of your staff employed under the MOP(S) Act.

Yours sincerely



GARY GRAY

10.1.2011