



Media Release

Senator Mathias Cormann

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When did your golden boy first know, Prime Minister?

For the second time this week Mark Arbib has refused to answer a direct question in the Senate about when he first became aware of safety concerns for workers involved in the failed home insulation program.

"The Prime Minister now says he takes responsibility for the failed program," Senator Cormann said. "If that is truly the case he should get Senator Arbib to answer the simple question: when did you first become aware of safety concerns for workers involved in the rushed and failed home insulation program?"

"For the past week Mark Arbib has been ducking and weaving to avoid answering that very simple question," he said. "What has he got to hide?"

"Appointing him last year, Kevin Rudd made his expectations very clear – as Minister he said, Senator Arbib was 'responsible directly for making sure that... energy insulation is happening' (Source: Interview with John Stanley on Radio 2UE on 9 June 2009).

"At the time Senator Arbib was quite happy to brag about the supposed 'great success' of the home insulation program. Now he is ducking for cover and rewriting history.

"According to the Minter Ellison Risk Management Plan Senator Arbib was involved in weekly meetings about the home insulation scheme.

"Earlier this week he conceded attending 'regular' meetings with ministerial officers and departments. By today that had become meeting 'a few times'.

"This week in Senate Question Time it was obvious to everyone – Senator Arbib is not telling the whole story. He should come clean on what he knew, when he knew it and what his involvement was in this failed home insulation scheme.

"It would seem that Mark Arbib was too distracted from doing his job as a Minister while he was desperately trying to stay on top of the increasingly messy internal machinations of the NSW Labor Party.

"It only adds insult to injury that now the Prime Minister has tasked his golden boy to clean up the mess that he in fact helped create," Senator Cormann said.

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