

Select Committee on Administration of Sports Grants

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Email – from Senator McKenzie’s Adviser

Senator: Rice

Question reference number: 003

Type of question: Hansard, page 7, 22 July 2020

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 August 2020

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator RICE: Can you tell me a bit more about that email. Was the email from Senator McKenzie's adviser?

Mr Gaetjens: Yes, it was. Other people might have greater memory. My memory is that it was emailed from that adviser, in fact, to herself at another email address.

Ms Foster: Yes, Senator.

Senator RICE: So it was from that adviser to—was it only to herself?

Mr Gaetjens: I'd have to take that on notice.

Senator RICE: So you don't know whether it was in response to any earlier emails from anybody else?

Mr Gaetjens: I don't think that was apparent from what we saw.

Answer:

Please refer to the response to Question on Notice 010.

There were no other recipients on the email.

Select Committee on Administration of Sports Grants

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Senator McKenzie's Adviser – Email or Memo

Senator: Rice

Question reference number: 006

Type of question: Hansard, pages 7-8, 22 July 2020

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 August 2020

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator RICE: There's been a lot of interest in this email and this spreadsheet. In Senator McKenzie's submission, she refers explicitly to a memo—not just a spreadsheet. Is your understanding that this adviser's spreadsheet is, in fact, the memo that Senator McKenzie refers to?

Mr Gaetjens: Again, I'll check. Even if you look at the Auditor-General's report, you'll find that in paragraph 3.20 there is a reference to this so-called adviser's spreadsheet, which had two lists of projects—one for the existing program funding of \$29.7 million, and another for a program involving total grant funding of \$100 million—which, again, suggests that the purpose, as Ms Foster suggests, was actually to look at a funding proposal rather than an assessment proposal. But we can take that on notice. Whether there was a memorandum or not, I suspect it was simply about the spreadsheet that was attached as well. Again, I think the focus of that was that adviser's spreadsheet.

Senator RICE: Can we get all of those details. I've got paragraph 3.20 in front of me. When they summarise it, there are a lot of things that they summarise that seem to be from more than just a spreadsheet. They've even got a direct quote about what representations the office took into consideration. It really does seem to be a memo rather than just a spreadsheet.

Mr Gaetjens: I'll take it on notice. As I understand it—and, again, I think I'd have to seek advice on this—the Auditor-General has not provided any documents used in the audit to the committee. If that's the case, I doubt we could provide it.

Senator RICE: Even if you couldn't provide it, it would be useful just to have the existence of this memo confirmed.

Mr Gaetjens: I think the existence was confirmed in the Auditor-General's report.

Senator RICE: No; we've got a lot of work that the Auditor-General's report says was done, and Senator McKenzie refers to a memo. We seem to have information about the existence of a spreadsheet and whether or not there was a memo attached to it, which may have been a draft memo which was then going to be sent to somebody else, even if in this instance it was only being sent from the adviser to herself. I'll move on, and I look forward to seeing what you are able to provide on notice to us.

Answer:

The email had two attachments: the 'adviser's spreadsheet' and a Word document.