

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Joint Public Accounts and Audit

31 March 2023

QoN Number: 1

Subject: 'Independent review of Home Affairs budget outcomes, February 2022', by Proximity consultants

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

'Independent review of Home Affairs budget outcomes, February 2022', by Proximity consultants.

CHAIR: How much did this report cost?

Ms Saunders: I'd have to take that on notice. I don't have those figures at hand.

Answer:

The Department of Home Affairs paid Proximity Advisory Services Pty Ltd \$98,440.00 (inclusive of GST) for the Independent Review of Home Affairs Budget Outcomes.

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31 March 2023

QoN Number: 2

Subject: 2018/19 Review - Minister's Office Briefing

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

CHAIR: I'm reading the 2018-19 review.....Were ministers briefed on the commencement of this work and its outcomes?

Ms Saunders: Intuitively, yes. I'd have to confirm the timings et cetera of doing so, but we have certainly advised the incoming government of the outcomes of this review.

CHAIR: And the previous government? I can't imagine that ministers would not have been aware of this.

Ms Saunders: I can't recall at what point in time we would have engaged the minister's office on the work, but, yes, it's fair to say we would've engaged ministers at some point through the process.

CHAIR: Can you take that on notice and give us the specific dates on which ministers were briefed?

Ms Saunders: Certainly.

Answer:

The Government announced the measure Strategic Review of the Home Affairs Portfolio as part of the 2018-19 Budget on 8 May 2018. The then Minister for Home Affairs was briefed on this measure as part of the standard budget process.

A Ministerial Submission on the Strategic Review of the Home Affairs Portfolio was provided to the then Acting Minister for Home Affairs on 30 July 2019.

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31 March 2023

QoN Number: 3

Subject: Independent review of Home Affairs budget outcomes, February 2022, by Proximity Consultants - ASL

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

Ms Cargill: No. In terms of the work that was done as part of the review, what we actually did was demonstrate the process that we undertake when ASL is transferred or resources are reprioritised within the department. We very clearly demonstrated to them the due diligence process and the transparency that's undertaken when resources are reallocated.

CHAIR: Which activities have been underfunded and under-resourced, then, as a result of the lack of additional funding being provided to the department?

Ms Saunders: I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The Department of Home Affairs (the Department) manages the ongoing resourcing challenges, including ASL, through ongoing trade-offs across operational delivery, systems and processes, and people – which have come at a cost.

It is not as simple as going to a particular area that was underfunded. The Department prioritises resources to support front-line operational activities and delivery of core services. What we've done over many years is manage the budget within the parameters that are set and manage our priorities internally, whether it's people, processes, or operational activity, to work within that budget.

As a result of changing priorities, we are working with the government in consideration for long-term sustainable solutions to address these very pressures.

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Joint Public Accounts and Audit

31 March 2023

QoN Number: 4

**Subject: Independent review of Home Affairs budget outcomes, February 2022
- expectations and budget envelope**

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

CHAIR: This was not a new situation, though, at all. I think one of the two most astounding quotes is on page 6. They have put it in blue and bold. This is from a Department of Home Affairs stakeholder, and the list of stakeholders is in the back. 'From the beginning the department was set up to fail in terms of its expectations and budget envelope.' That is from 2016. It is in bold, it is in colour and it is an astoundingly frank phrase. Who said that?

Ms Saunders: I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The Department of Home Affairs is not privy to this information and consistent with evidence given by Chief Operating Officer, Justine Saunders, on Friday 31 March, the question would need to be directed to Proximity Advisory Services Pty Ltd, who undertook the Independent Review.

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

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31 March 2023

QoN Number: 5

Subject: Independent review of Home Affairs budget outcomes, February 2022, by Proximity consultants - Ministers Office briefing on findings of the report

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

CHAIR: There is a list of the executives interviewed in the back. There are not that many of them. You were two of them. Is that your statement?

Ms Saunders: It is not a statement that I made.

CHAIR: So was it one of the other deputy secretaries?

Ms Saunders: I don't think you can draw that conclusion. I understand Proximity engaged quite widely. It might even be a question for Proximity as to who made that statement and, once again, also clarifying that accuracy of the statement too.

CHAIR: When was the minister made aware of the findings? What was the minister's response? I think we have captured the first one as a question on notice.

Ms Saunders: Yes, as I said, I will have to take it on notice in terms of the timing.

Answer:

The Minister for Home Affairs (Minister) was briefed on the Independent Review (Review) of Home Affairs Budget Outcomes on 1 June 2022 as part of the Incoming Government Brief (IGB), which summarised the outcomes of the Review.

The Minister continues to support and promote the funding requirements of the Department, noting that the review findings form part of the evidence base the Department uses to prosecute its proposals through the standard Commonwealth Budget process.

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PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

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31 March 2023

QoN Number: 6

Subject: Current budget position

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

CHAIR: Can you take on notice to outline your current budget position, including the split between operating and capital.

Ms Cargill: Certainly.

Answer:

The Department of Home Affairs current budget position as at the October 2022-23 Budget is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Department of Home Affairs funding as at the October 2022-23 Portfolio Budget Statement

(\$'million)	2021-22 Estimated actual	2022-23 Estimate	2023-24 Estimate	2024-25 Estimate	2025-26 Estimate	TOTAL FE
Department of Home Affairs						
Departmental operating expenses	2,771	2,794	2,562	2,660	2,650	10,666
Departmental capital	302	200	161	155	163	679
Own-source revenue (s 74)	215	209	210	208	207	834
Departmental	3,288	3,203	2,933	3,023	3,020	12,178
Administered expenses	2,047	2,161	1,856	1,561	1,520	7,098
Administered capital	29	37	26	24	25	112
Administered	2,076	2,198	1,882	1,585	1,545	7,210
Total Department Of Home Affairs	5,364	5,401	4,815	4,608	4,565	19,388