

25 September 2023

**Questions taken on notice: Inquiry into Commonwealth Bilateral Air Service Agreements**

Chair

1. **Could you provide us with when [your clients] found out about the Qatar Airways decision on the public record?**
  - 1.1 Although at the time that I gave my answer to the Chair I believed, based on the date of Minister King's letter, that our clients had found out about the Minister's decision on 10 July 2023, I have since been informed that although the letter was dated 10 July 2023, our clients actually received the letter by email on 17 July 2023.
2. **What is the government doing to assist your clients?**
  - 2.1 I am aware from media reports on 6 September 2023 and a statement issued by the Qatar Foreign Ministry that a telephone call had occurred on 4 September 2023 between the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister of Qatar, in which the incident was discussed.
  - 2.2 It is entirely possible that other representations have been and are being made through diplomatic channels, which are not on the public record. However, I do not know and do not expect to be told by the government what happens via diplomatic channels.

Senator Dean Smith

3. **On what date did [one of your clients and a representative of your firm] meet with the Foreign Minister?**
  - 3.1 One of our clients and Damian Sturzaker of Marque Lawyers met with the Foreign Minister on Tuesday, 5 September 2023.
4. **Was that the first engagement you or your clients had had with officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs?**
  - 4.1 On 31 August 2023, our firm wrote a letter to the Foreign Minister asking for a meeting between the Minister and one of our clients. The meeting took place on 5 September 2023.
  - 4.2 Prior to that, on 19 August 2022 our firm wrote to  
and requesting a copy of the report

into the incident, that was provided to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade by the State of Qatar, referred to in a joint statement issued on 31 October 2020. On 31 August 2022, we received a letter in respect of this request, which was signed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

**5. Was the Foreign Minister able to provide information to your clients about what advocacy the new government had undertaken on their behalf?**

- 5.1 The Foreign Minister indicated that representations were being made to the Qatar government. I am aware from media reports on 6 September 2023 and a statement issued by the Qatar Foreign Ministry that a telephone call had occurred on 4 September 2023 between the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister of Qatar, in which the incident was discussed.
- 5.2 It is entirely possible that other representations have been and are being made through diplomatic channels, which are not on the public record. However, I do not know and do not expect to be told by the Foreign Minister what happens via diplomatic channels.

Michael Bradley  
Managing Partner