

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Joint Public Accounts and Audit

19 April 2024

QoN Number: 5

Subject: Home Affairs advice to Minister

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

Mr Julian Hill MP: So, no evidence was seen by the ANAO that the then Prime Minister – was it Prime Minister Morrison by that point?

Mr Drew Layton: Yes, it was.

Mr Julian Hill MP: That the then Prime Minister Morrison had responded to the Minister's letter, that was paragraph 2.7 footnote 22, that's correct? So, why did Home Affairs advise the Minister to seek input from the Prime Minister, given he'd declared a conflict of interest? And what was Home affairs proposed strategy for managing the probity issues?

Mr Drew Layton: Senator, I'd need to take on notice the first part of your question as to why.

Answer: The Department consulted the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) and neither is able to locate records explaining the rationale for the recommendation to seek input from the then Prime Minister.

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Joint Public Accounts and Audit

19 April 2024

QoN Number: 6

Subject: Home Affairs advice to Minister - conflict with previous tenderers

Asked by: Julian Hill

Question:

Mr Julian Hill MP: So, I get the point in abstract, but in the specific, it still seems that you were recommending to go back to the previous tenderers, and so I'm not sure it quite stacks up to say, 'Oh but we hadn't started a process, so we wrote to the Prime Minister, knowing he had a conflict with the previous tenderers.'

Mr Michael Willard: Chair, we might just take that point on notice to provide clarification about...

Mr Julian Hill MP: Sure, and I'm not having a go at the former Prime Minister in that either, to be very clear. He declared a conflict, so it's probably not helpful that Home Affairs advised the Minister to write to him, knowing that you're also recommending to go back to the people with whom he had a conflict.

Mr Michael Willard: What I'll seek to draw out though is the difference in approaches in terms of the advice that was provided by Home Affairs but then subsequently a decision to go to a different process.

Mr Julian Hill MP: Sure, so there could be a temporal aspect, it might be a timing overlap, okay. If you could take that on notice.

Answer: See response to QoN Number 5.