

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Mr Neville Power – remuneration

Senator: Gallagher

Question reference number: 0017

Type of question: Hansard, page 32-33, 13 May 2020

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 27 May 2020

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Ms Foster: The chair is receiving a sum which has been designed around covering costs of travel and accommodation, so the chair is in quite a different position. That's essentially a full-time role.

CHAIR: What's that equal to?

Ms Foster: From memory, it is around \$500,000.

CHAIR: So Nev Power's retainer is \$500,000?

Ms Foster: In essence, that covers the costs of travel to and from Perth, accommodation in Canberra and any other incidental travel and accommodation that he'll need over the course of the—six months is what we've been planning around.

CHAIR: Does it cover the cost of his private plane? I understand he's travelling to and from Perth in a private plane?

Ms Foster: We base our costs around commercial flights. How Mr Power then travels and how he uses the funding is not our concern.

CHAIR: Most of us are working remotely. Is that factored in as well?

Ms Foster: He has been largely working in Canberra.

CHAIR: So taxpayers are picking up accommodation in Canberra, travel to and from, and a salary essentially for a full-time position?

Ms Foster: No, no, no. The amount that I quoted was actually worked out by us to cover the costs of travel, accommodation, any other travel and accommodation—

Senator PATRICK: That implies that the contract is to a company, not to an individual. So it's a contract for services to a company. Is that correct?

Ms Foster: I'd have to go back and look at the exact way in which we've executed the contract.

Senator PATRICK: One of the problems with AusTender is that you can have a company, Acme Limited, and there could be someone well known who sits as the director of that company. Can you provide the committee with as list of who the entity is that is contracted in relation to the commissioners and the chair?

Ms Foster: I can take that on notice, but I don't think there's any—I don't think it's not apparent, but I'll make sure that that is apparent. And I just want to make sure that my answer to Senator Gallagher was clear. It's not a salary; it's covering costs.

CHAIR: Yes, but it's a \$500,000 package?

Ms Foster: That's right, Senator. It's around that.

Answer:

A list of the contracted entities for the Chair, Commissioners and the CEO is as follows:

Contracting entity	Individual
The Trustee for Myube Trust	Neville Power
Halton, Sarah Jane trading T/A Rangeworthy Advisors	Jane Halton
Greg Combet Pty Ltd	Greg Combet
Thodey Consulting Pty Ltd	David Thodey
Catherine Tanna	Catherine Tanna
Paul Alexander Little	Paul Little
Harrisolutions Pty Ltd	Peter Harris

Ms Stephanie Foster PSM, Associate Secretary of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, provided a letter of clarification to the Committee on 14 May 2020, relating to the Chair of the Commission's contract. Also, see answer to Question on Notice 0027.