

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 23-24 OCTOBER 2014 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Australian Hearing – Meetings with the Scoping Study Team

Question reference number: HS 1

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Hansard page 4, 24 October 2014

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12 December 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

a) Senator CAMERON: How many discussions have you had with the scoping team?

Mr Davidson: We have met with the scoping team on three occasions.

Senator CAMERON: Can you provide dates? You do not have to take them off the top of your head; you can provide me dates of when you met on notice.

Mr Davidson: I will do that.

b) Senator CAMERON: Can you also tell me how long those meetings lasted?

Mr Davidson: Yes, surely.

c) Senator CAMERON: And the issues that were raised from the scoping team. That would be helpful.

Senator Payne: Senator Cameron—and I defer to the secretary on that—we might take that on notice to examine what we are able to say publicly. As you understand, there may be issues that relate to confidential matters, but we will take that on notice.

Senator CAMERON: Sorry, on what matters?

Senator Payne: Commercial-in-confidence matters.

Senator CAMERON: I am not looking for commercial-in-confidence, which is obviously—

Senator Payne: So we will take that on notice and provide you with what information we are able to.

Answer:

a) Australian Hearing has met with the scoping study team on four occasions. Three formal meetings were held on 8 August 2014, 30 September 2014 and 20 October 2014. The Australian Hearing Board attended the August and October meetings and the Australian Hearing Executive all three. In addition, there was an informal meeting on 18 August 2014 between the scoping study team and some of the Australian Hearing Executive.

From the time the scoping study team was appointed, the team has been in contact with Australian Hearing and the National Acoustic Laboratories almost daily, to request data and clarify matters raised in the formal meetings. There have been numerous follow-up discussions on matters of detail with individuals, but not the entire scoping study team.

b) The duration of each meeting:

- Friday 8 August 2014 – from 8.30 am to 2.00 pm;
- Monday 18 August 2014 – from 12.00 pm to 2.30 pm;
- Tuesday 30 September 2014 – from 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm; and
- Monday 20 October 2014 – from 1.45 pm to 2.40 pm.

c) Issues that were raised from the scoping study team included:

- A review of Australian Hearing's current business.
- Australian Hearing meeting its obligations to deliver services under the Voucher program and also the Community Service Obligations program under its Memorandum of Agreement with the Office of Hearing Services within the Department of Health.
- The research that the National Acoustic Laboratories conducts which is critical to helping people lead more fulfilling and productive lives.
- An analysis of the industry environment and stakeholders.
- Risks and benefits of future ownership options.