

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

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

Department of Human Services

Topic: Harvard Scholarship – knowledge management

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Senator: Campbell

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Question:

Senator CAMERON: As knowledge comes in to organisations, their job is to capture that and keep it for posterity so that, if you leave, the lessons you learnt in your three weeks of high-level, high-quality training do not leave with you, that they are captured and maintained within the department. Why wouldn't we do that?

Ms Campbell: That is something we can take back and consider. The skills that Mr Rimmer was taught and different perspectives on how to apply them is something that he has brought back to the organisation. He has spoken about the fact that he talked to the executive committee and he talked to his staff. He has talked to other executive service members. He is implementing those things he may have been refreshed on or newly learnt. But I take your point on board. That is something we will have a look at.

Senator CAMERON: I am not being critical. I am just saying that, if a lot of money is being spent on high-level executives to go overseas and learn new techniques and new systems, there should be some means of capturing that knowledge and keeping it within the department because they may leave.

Ms Campbell: We will take on board your point. I think that what we have done to date has been very useful. Mr Rimmer has been able to talk to staff in a practical, hands-on way and apply what he has learnt in the workplace.

Senator CAMERON: Can you take on notice this question and come back to me at the next estimates to see if there has been any progress on this or any ideas on how to get this done within the department.

Answer:

It is general practice that when Senior Executives undertake development opportunities they provide briefing on their learnings to their colleagues and to other business areas where the knowledge may be applied. In some cases, Senior Executives may provide written reports to the Secretary.

The department is currently reviewing the procedures to ensure that learnings are more systematically captured and retained in the future.