

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 21 October 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000845

OUTCOME: 10 - Sport and Recreation

Topic: FFA/World Cup bid

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Xenophon, Nick

Question:

On June 3 this year I wrote to the Auditor-General requesting his office examine the provision of financial assistance by the Australian Government to support the FFA bid.

In particular, I highlighted the issue of an approx. \$500 000 payment made by FFA in 2010 to the Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF), whose former President was Mr Jack Warner. It's widely accepted that the payment made its way to Mr Warner and was not used to further football facilities in the region.

The response from Auditor-General Grant Hehir, on 2 September 15, outlined a problem identified by the Commonwealth with that payment. The payment had initially been claimed by FFA as part of the publicly funded bid process, with little or no explanation provided, as part of its sixth progress report dated 17 December 2010, covering the period 1 August 2010 to 3 December 2010.

In January the Deputy Secretary of the Department of PM & C wrote to the then-FFA Chief Executive outlining the Government's concerns with the claim for the payment, including that it was "of such significance (and) was made without specific discussions with the Commonwealth" and the Department "requested full details of the background, rationale and process leading to the payment, as a matter of urgency".

Subsequent meetings between the Commonwealth (PM&C) and FFA led to the FFA lodging a revised progress report on 16 February 2011 in which it no longer claimed the \$500,000 payment back from the Commonwealth.

Was the Commission aware of this issue at the time?

Answer:

The Office for Sport, including the World Cup Bid Taskforce, was located within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) at the time of the matter in question. The PM&C Deputy Secretary referenced in your question had overall responsibility for the Australian Government's role in supporting the World Cup Bid, including management of the Funding agreement with FFA, including in relation to this issue.