

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—October 2015

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: External reviewers
Question: 31
Hansard Reference p 47; 19 October 2015

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 4 December 2015

CHAIR: My specific question goes to a matter which was referred to a company called CPM Reviews. Is that one of the external reviewers that you use?

Ms Croke: It is, yes.

CHAIR: The matter referred was in relation to an incident involving a member of security. I will not mention the name of the individual specifically. It was referred to this company by someone within DPS. It may just be a coincidence, but this company has on their list of employees someone with exactly the same name as the person within DPS who referred it to them.

Ms Croke: The person you are referring to within DPS was previously employed by that company some time ago but has been with us as a non-ongoing member of staff, certainly since I have been here—since last December.

CHAIR: A non-ongoing member of staff.

Ms Croke: His contract, as I understand it, is as a non-ongoing member of staff. He has been here since at least December 2014 when I started, and he is no longer employed by that firm.

CHAIR: No longer employed by that firm. He is not on leave from that firm? When you ring that firm, you get different slightly different answers.

Ms Croke: Let me check that. As far as I know he is no longer doing any work for that firm. I will check whether he does have any connection with that firm.

Answer

The non-ongoing staff member commenced with DPS on 3 February 2014.

The staff member has indicated that he was engaged by CPM Reviews as a sole trader, that he undertook consultancy work on an occasional basis as a senior reviewer between March 2012 and December 2013. He is not on leave from that CPM Reviews as he was an independent contractor and paid on a fee for service basis.

The Department has a written assurance from the staff member that he has not undertaken any work with CPM Reviews since being employed by DPS.

The Director of CPM Reviews has confirmed that the individual concerned has not undertaken any work with them since the end of 2013. A copy of the letter from CPM Reviews confirming the arrangement (with the name redacted for publication purposes) is attached for the Committee's information.

CPM REVIEWS

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By email

Dear Ms Croke

██████████ – NATURE OF BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP WITH CPM REVIEWS PTY LTD

I am writing to clarify the nature of ██████████ business relationship with CPM Reviews Pty Ltd.

From 2 March 2012 onwards ██████████ commenced working on an occasional and casual basis as a Senior Reviewer with CPM Reviews, contracted as a sole trader (GST registered with an ABN).

At the end of 2013 ██████████ advised CPM Reviews that he would not be available until further notice as he had accepted contract work with the Department of Parliamentary Services. From that time on we ceased all business dealings with him, such that he has not been receiving our internal communications or attending our annual conferences. Because of the fact that he had only been working on a casual basis as a contractor there was no need for any leave or secondment arrangement to be put in place.

CPM Reviews did not expect and would not expect to derive any advantage from ██████████ accepting contract work with the Department of Parliamentary Services. Furthermore, the number of contracts awarded to CPM Reviews over the period 2014 to 2015 does not show that the number increased materially during ██████████ time with the Department, relative to the corresponding period 2008 to 2013 prior to that.

Because our initial impression was that ██████████ contract with DPS would likely only be a short one, ie for 3-6 months, and that he might therefore wish to work with us again, we did not remove him from the CPM Reviews website, so as to avoid having to have him put back on the website only a matter of months later. With hindsight this was an unfortunate approach on our part, the more so given that his initial contract with DPS was subsequently extended.

I might note, however, that quite a number of our reviewers work with us in a similarly sporadic manner, meaning that they work for a year or two, then do something else, and then return to work with us at a later date. Sometimes they are removed from the website, whereas on other occasions they remain on the website for the duration of their absence. I should note that we have now removed ██████████ from our website, and will indeed for similar reasons be removing any other reviewers who are not currently working for us.

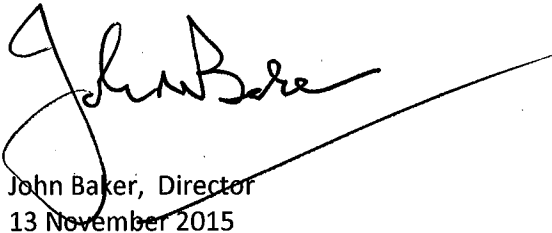
Providing Reviews of Decisions and Actions, Workplace Investigations
and Related Strategic Advice to the Public Sector and Other Organisations

CPM Reviews was established in mid-2008 and since that time has provided continuing occasional consulting services to DPS (and to most other government departments and agencies) in the reviews and investigations field. Our work for DPS has continued to the present and we have seen no need to withhold our services from DPS when asked for quotes, given that we have no continuing business relationship with [REDACTED]

I hope this letter provides the clarification you require. However, please don't hesitate to contact me if you require any additional information.

We are agreeable to your providing a copy of this letter to the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee if you judge that would be appropriate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Baker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J". A long horizontal line extends from the end of the signature across the page.

John Baker, Director
13 November 2015