

# 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: **Reconciliation Action Plan progress**

Question: **32**

Hansard Reference **p 48, 49; 19 October 2015**

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

**Senator McKENZIE:** Can I ask how the current RAP is going. Are you happy if we go to some of the outcomes?

**Ms Hinchcliffe:** I am happy to go to some of the outcomes.

...

**Senator McKENZIE:** Excellent. Under 'Find ways to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' there is:

Develop a Community Engagement Plan.

Have we developed that?

**Ms Hinchcliffe:** I am not aware of us having developed a community engagement plan. I might need to take that on notice to see what has happened in that space.

...

**Senator McKENZIE:** Moving to 'Meeting with congress', how often do you meet with congress?

**Ms Hinchcliffe:** I am not aware that we have met with congress, but I will get back to you on that one.

...

**Senator McKENZIE:** One of the main components of the 'Opportunities' section of your RAP is increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers. In terms of reviewing the procurement policies so that barriers can be identified and addressed, can you tell me where that review is and some of the recommendations out of that review?

**Ms Croke:** We did review that when the government put out a policy suggesting that we modify our procurement guidelines. We have done that. We did that within a very short time—I would have to get the exact dates, but our procurement policy was amended to reflect that, and we did provide advice to all staff. I have not got those dates with me, but I can get that for you.

**Senator McKENZIE:** Excellent. So my obvious next question is how successful is it and how has procurement within the department changes as a result of that, for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers?

**Ms Croke:** Again, I would need to take that on notice to see if we can extract some data from recent times that would show any change in procurement pattern.

**Senator McKENZIE:** Ms Hinchcliffe, one of the action items from March 2014 was:

DPS to request commercial precinct operators to stock at least one food or wine product from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander company.

Has that happened?

**Ms Hinchcliffe:** I will need to take that on notice.

**Dr Heriot:** It is my memory that we have had that conversation, but I am afraid that I cannot give you more than that. We will take that on notice.

**Senator McKENZIE:** Thank you. Under:

Develop an employment strategy focusing on the attraction, recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to the Australian Parliamentary Service

There are a whole range of strategies from June 2014 that you are to have undertaken. How many have been employed as a result of that?

**Ms Hinchcliffe:** Sorry, Senator, how many?

**Senator McKENZIE:** How many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have been employed as a result of the RAP?

**Ms Hinchcliffe:** I would need to take that on notice.

## Answer

- (a) Develop a Community Engagement Plan. Have we developed that?

A RAP Community Engagement Plan has been drafted. It will be updated following consultation with the Indigenous Advisory Group and key community stakeholders to reflect the activities currently underway and planned for the next 12 months. Over the past twelve months DPS has undertaken a community engagement program offering events and exhibitions, especially during National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.

- (b) How often do you meet with congress?

DPS officials met with officials from the National Congress of Australia's First People (the Congress) on 6 August 2013 and 16 September 2013. There was also informal contact between the two organisations to commence consideration of potential projects including a research internship and participation in an engagement framework. On 5 February 2014, DPS was informed that the policy officer that DPS had been working with was finishing at the Congress due to budget constraints. DPS wrote to the Congress on 2 June 2014, noting their reduced funding but seeking to resume dialogue with the Congress whenever that might become possible in the future.

- (c) Implementation of the Indigenous Procurement Policy

In support of the release of the Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) from 1 July 2015, DPS updated the internal suite of Procurement Manuals and Templates to reflect the requirements of this policy. The Acting Secretary approved these on 20 July 2015, and the changes and new requirements were communicated to staff on 22 July 2015 in a publication of a DPS intranet page outlining the requirements. On 24 July 2015, there was a presentation at the DPS Procurement and Contracting Practitioner's Forum and then on 5 August 2015 the CFO sent an email to all DPS staff. There was also an article in the August Edition of the @DPS newsletter.

Since release of the new Manuals and Templates on 20 July, DPS staff have been required to document the particular IPP implications for their procurement as part of the endorsement to proceed to market.

Since implementation of the IPP:

- One approach to market has been made to an indigenous supplier under the mandatory set-aside requirements (for procurements between \$80,000 and \$200,000) which is still being evaluated;
- Three approaches to market have included the mandatory minimum requirements for indigenous participation for high value contracts in the proposed draft contract. These processes are still underway; and
- Four procurements involving subcontracts with indigenous enterprises involving acquisition of artworks for the Australian Parliament House art collection are underway this financial year. These procurements have a total value of \$80,900 incl. GST.

- (d) How has procurement within the department changed as a result of that, for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suppliers?

The introduction of the Indigenous Procurement Policy is expected to make the most difference in relation to DPS procurement is in relation to the high value procurement activities. Given the relatively long lead times associated with these activities, it will be some time before DPS can accurately quantify the impact the changes have had.

(e) Commercial precinct operators stocking Indigenous products

DPS understands that verbal requests were made but has not found any records to confirm the details of such requests. DPS will pursue this action item by encouraging operators in writing to stock products from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander companies. In 2015-16 in the context of new retail licences and in 2016-17 in the context of a new catering contract or contracts, DPS will explore requiring operators to stock at least one food or wine product from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander company.

(f) How many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have been employed as a result of the RAP?

It is not possible to determine how many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have been employed as a result of the RAP. As at 30 June 2013 Department of Parliamentary Services had 4 employees identifying as indigenous. As at 19 October 2015 Department of Parliamentary Services had 10 employees identifying as indigenous.