

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 27 February 2017

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE17/070) - Number of jobs listed on the CSOL - Programme 1.2: Border Management

Senator Pratt, Louise (L&CA 112) asked:

Senator PRATT: The minister said he believes there are too many jobs listed on CSOL and is looking to consolidate and condense that list. Is there an indication of how many jobs could be removed?

Mr Pezzullo: I think, as Mr Wilden made clear, the minister has tasked his council. I think the acronym was used.

Mr Wilden: MACSM—the Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration.

Mr Pezzullo: I would be reluctant for any officer at the table to pre-empt the findings of an independent ministerial council.

Senator PRATT: You are not able to advise us on how many jobs might be removed or what consultation, if any, is going on with industry, business and unions?

Mr Pezzullo: As a result of this review? No, because the review is being conducted by the minister's independent council. It might well be that we are assisting with data. I presume we are assisting.

Mr Wilden: We are. We are providing reports, information on records and secretariat services to that council for their meetings et cetera.

Senator PRATT: What is the best way of us accessing information about that review?

Mr Pezzullo: We will take it on notice for the minister to consider. It is his council and I presume he will give consideration to stating something publicly once the review has reported to him.

Senator WATT: If the department is providing secretariat services to that council, and presumably doing a range of other tasks related to it as well, you must be aware of whom the council is consulting with?

Mr Pezzullo: We might well be aware, but, notwithstanding the privilege of the Senate, whether it is for us to reveal what the council's scheme of engagement is—that is something we would have to take on notice. It is a matter for the council.

Senator PRATT: From the point of view of estimates, this is the portfolio in which we ask these questions.

Mr Pezzullo: Indeed.

Senator WATT: Is Senator Cash aware as the minister representing?

Senator Cash: I will have to take that on notice and refer it to the minister.

Senator PRATT: If you can provide advice on how we can access that information, that would be useful.

Mr Pezzullo: I presume you are asking, so therefore we will see if we can give you an answer. Is that not the best way for you to access that information? I cannot think of any other way to give you the information.

Senator PRATT: Normally we would be able to ask, but it seems as if this portfolio question is almost not within the portfolio because it has been outsourced to a separate review.

Mr Pezzullo: The minister has asked an independent council to look at the matter, yes.

Senator PRATT: Are you making a submission to that review—if you are not formally part of it?

Mr Pezzullo: I will take some advice from Mr Wilden.

Mr Wilden: I would have to go back and check. I do not think, as part of a consultation, we have provided a formal submission. But I will take that on notice.

Senator PRATT: Either you are making a submission because you are not the review or you are part of the review—or you are not influencing it at all. Which is it?

Mr Wilden: We are providing support through the provision of data et cetera to that review. If along the way we are asked questions of clarity we provide that. But I will take on notice whether we have provided formal input to that review.

Senator PRATT: Whether you have or whether you will?

Mr Wilden: Whether we have.

Senator PRATT: Will you provide a copy of that submission to the committee, if there is one?

Mr Wilden: Again, I will take that on notice. My recollection is that we have not provided what you would normally consider to be departmental input to a review—as in, we have done a report that was tabled. It has been, to coin a phrase, more organic than that in that we have been providing data and support to help the council with their deliberations on—

Senator PRATT: Okay.

Answer:

The Ministerial Advisory Council on Skilled Migration (MACSM) is an independent tripartite body comprising industry, union and government representatives that provide advice to the Minister on Australia's temporary and permanent skilled migration programmes. Questions regarding MACSM's review of the Consolidated Sponsored Occupation List (CSOL) are best directed to the chair of that council.

The Department provides secretariat support and information in response to requests from MACSM. The Department has not provided a formal submission to MACSM on the CSOL review, but has assisted the MACSM through the provision of statistics, modelling and information papers.