

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES – 26 – 27 MAY 2014

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(BE14/142) PROGRAMME – 2.3 and 2.4: Regional Cooperation

Senator Hanson-Young (L&CA 100 - 101) asked:

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Mr Bowles, apologies for having to come back and clarify, but I want to be clear about this. I know you are going to take the amounts of the legal costs on notice. I accept that. But you were also going to clarify for me whether Australia was funding the legal costs in relation to the Cannings inquiry as well as the opposition constitutional challenge. There were those two separate issues. Are you able to clarify the Cannings inquiry for me?

Mr Bowles: Given that it is part of the regional-processing arrangements in PNG, I would envisage that we are. The figure I gave you earlier was around \$370,000 in PNG, and I believe that is across Cannings and the Belden Namah one. It will be both of those. As far as Nauru goes, I believe the only legal work we have done there is for the people on charges for the riots. I do not think we have paid that yet, but we will because it is related to the case and is part of that MOU, as I mentioned earlier.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: That 370, or whatever it ends up being once clarified—is that the extent of it or have we also provided in-house legal advice? You have your own legal teams in the department. Has that been taken into consideration or are we just paying money and that is it?

Mr Bowles: My legal team do not provide advice in PNG. They obviously provide advice to me, but that is not included in any of that. Your question went to what we are paying for in the PNG context—it is only for advice to be provided in PNG for PNG-related issues in relation to regional processing.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Thank you very much.

Answer:

From 1 July 2013 to 31 May 2014, the Australian Government paid a total of 393 584.28 AUD towards the matter of the enforcement of basic human rights brought by Justice Cannings. No funds were provided prior to this time.