

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Budget Senate Estimates

2 June 2009

Question: BR-11

Topic: Managing Director of Tourism Australia

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Senator Ronaldson asked:

Senator RONALDSON—Everyone around here knows, and the officers know, and I can see by the looks on their faces that they know, that Greg Hywood was offered this job and he knocked it back. On what date did Mr Hywood advise that he would not be accepting the position?

Senator Sherry—We will take that question on notice. As has already been indicated, the recruitment process is still ongoing. There has not been an appointment made.

Senator RONALDSON—No. You know why it is ongoing, Minister. It is because you offered the job to someone and he knocked it back. Do you want me to tell you what the reason was? Everyone around this table knows what it is, but maybe if you do not then I will tell you. The reason was regarding the future of Tourism Research Australia, the TRA. That is why Mr Hywood knocked the job back. Everyone at this table knows that is the reason, but no-one is prepared to fess up that he was offered a contract and knocked it back because of his concerns about TRA. Does anyone want to proffer an opinion at the table, or are we all going to think, ‘We all know what he is talking about but we do not want to talk about it.’ Is that the way we are going to approach this today?

Senator Sherry—No. We will take questions on notice. There is an ongoing appointment process and it has not been completed.

Senator RONALDSON—But it was completed, wasn't it?

Senator Sherry—The process of appointment has not been completed. No appointment has been made.

Senator RONALDSON—Are you going to take on notice whether Mr Greg Hywood was offered the job?

Senator Sherry—Yes.

Senator RONALDSON—You are?

Senator Sherry—Yes.

Senator RONALDSON—You are going to take on notice whether a contract had been prepared by the department for his signature?

Senator Sherry—Yes.

Senator RONALDSON—Are you going to take on notice that he refused to take the job?

Senator Sherry—Yes.

Senator RONALDSON—Are you going to take on notice that the reason he refused to take the job was regarding the future of Tourism Research Australia?

Senator Sherry—Yes.

Senator RONALDSON—Thank you. Just to double check, have Spencer Stuart claimed any part-success fee because they found Mr Hywood, but then he refused to take the job because of some argy-bargy with the minister's office in relation to TRA? Have they claimed any success fee in relation to getting Mr Hywood?

Senator Sherry—Mr Buckley has already answered that. He will take it on notice to see if there have been any payments made, but he does not know, and he has already stated that very clearly. If any other witness has any detail about whether any payments have been made, they may be able to answer, but Mr Buckley cannot.

Senator RONALDSON—You will take on notice whether any requests were made by Spencer Stuart for a success fee payment?

Senator Sherry—We will certainly take it on notice

Answer:

Spencer Stuart was engaged by Tourism Australia in December 2008 to assist with the recruitment of a new Managing Director. This process is ongoing. It would not be appropriate to reveal any details regarding individuals involved in the recruitment process.

As of 30 June 2009, Spencer Stuart had received a progress payment of \$40,000.