

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13  
17 October 2012

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

**TOPIC:** Small Business Commissioner Candidates

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard, 17 October 2012, pages 60-61)

**QUESTION No.:** SI-27

**Senator RYAN:** Can you tell me who was on the decision making panel, the appointment panel for the Small Business Commissioner, or if there was a panel?

**Senator RYAN:** Conducted by?

**Mr Pettifer:** Dr Russell, myself and Jim Murphy from the Department of the Treasury were the interview panel for that process.

**Senator RYAN:** Take me through the process from that point forward.

**Mr Pettifer:** We provided advice to the minister on the candidates that we thought best met the selection criteria. The final decision then was one for the minister.

**Senator Lundy:** It is appropriate, given that it was announced this morning, that the Small Business Commissioner is Mr Mark Brennan. He will be beginning his employment formally on 2 January 2013. We have been talking about it for a while now and I thought it was important to congratulate him on the record on his appointment.

**Senator RYAN:** Fair enough too. Did the minister then interview or meet with the various people you recommended?

**Mr Pettifer:** The minister certainly had a discussion with the preferred candidate.

**Senator RYAN:** So you recommended one, not many.

**Mr Pettifer:** No, there was more than one, but in the sense of making up his mind about his preferred outcome I know he spoke to the preferred candidate. I do not know whether he had discussions with the others.

**Senator RYAN:** Without using names—and I do not know how many people made expressions of interest—how many did you recommend to the minister as meeting the selection criteria?

**Mr Pettifer:** We recommended three as strongly meeting the selection criteria.

**Senator RYAN:** Can I take it from what you said earlier that Mr Brennan was one of the three?

**Mr Pettifer:** Yes.

**Senator RYAN:** Senator Lundy, can you take this on notice: we know that Mr Pettifer said that the minister spoke with the successful nominee, but did he speak with or meet with the other two who were strongly recommended? I do not have any idea who they are, for that matter. Mr Pettifer, you only know that he spoke to one?

**Mr Pettifer:** Yes. We did our part of the process. We provided advice to the minister and that was a matter for him to consider. The other candidates would be people who the minister would meet with from time to time. It was not like they were people that he had no awareness of whatsoever.

**Senator RYAN:** Senator, can you take on notice whether the minister spoke with the other two strongly recommended candidates about the role, as he obviously did with Mr Brennan, at any point after he received advice from the department?

**Senator Lundy:** I will pass that on to the minister—yes.

**Senator RYAN:** Does that qualify as taking it on notice?

**Senator Lundy:** I think it does.

**ANSWER**

No.