

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2009-2010**

Outcome 4 - Employment & Participation Policy

DEEWR Question No. EW0837_10

Senator Cash provided in writing.

Question

**DECISION MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT AT ARM'S LENGTH FROM THE
MINISTER AND GOVERNMENT**

In the fact sheet the Minister states that "decision (*sic*) in these processes was (*sic*) made by the Department at arm's length from the Minister and Government".

- a) What are the specific reasons for the Minister highlighting his claim that arms length decision making occurred in respect to the selection of providers for Disability services program A.
- b) Are there specific reasons as to why the Minister is highlighting the issue of arms length decision making. If so, what are they?
- c) Please provide a summary of the "arms length decision making process" and what this entailed.
- d) Will the Minister give a guarantee that he had absolutely no involvement whatsoever in the selection of providers for disability employment services Program A.

Answer

a, b, c, d

Decisions regarding the outcomes for Disability Employment Services were made by the Department and were in accordance with the published *Request for Tender* and Invitation to Treat Process.

The entire tender process was managed within the Department from the release of the Request for Tender for Disability Employment Services 2010-2012, lodgement of tender submissions, assessment, and notification of successful and unsuccessful tenderers following the department decision.

A for information brief was provided to the Minister for noting after the department's decision was finalised. The Minister had no involvement in the selection of providers.

Details of the Department's purchasing process for the Request for Tender for Disability Employment Services 2010-2012 are set out in the Answer to Question EW0838_10

The independent external probity adviser, Clayton Utz, has given an unqualified sign off of the tender process.