

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 2009-10**

Outcome/Agency 4

DEEWR Question No. **EW655_10**

Senator CASH asked on 21 October 2009, EEWHR Hansard page 99.

Question

Is the department aware of the details of any meetings between representatives of A4e and government ministers and their officers since July 2008?

Is the department aware of any communications between Minister Gillard's office or Minister O'Connor's office regarding A4e, regardless of the time frame?

Answer

In January 2008 the then Minister for Employment Participation the Hon Brendan O'Connor MP sought suggestions for improvement to assistance to the unemployed.

A senior advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP met with executives from British work placement firm A4e in February 2008. This meeting was also attended by an advisor to the then Minister for Employment Participation. The meeting discussed the Government's plans to reform employment services for Australia's unemployed. The meeting and any communication between A4e and the Minister's office occurred well before the process for purchasing employment services had commenced.

It is expected that, as part of ongoing business, Government and departments will have continuing interaction with relevant stakeholders. The usual work continues separately to any tender process, including the development of tender processes.

With the publication of the *Request for Tender for Employment Services 2009-12*, the single communication protocol that applied to the Employment Services Tender (*Communication Protocol for Dealing with Existing Service Providers and Tenderers*, which was set out at Appendix E) came into effect. Ministers voluntarily abided by the Protocol.

The Department is not aware of any contact between the Offices regarding A4e.