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Senator Alan Eggleston
Chair
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Legislation Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
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Dear Senator

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings – 21 November 2013 – Additional Information

Austrade appeared before the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee at the Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings on 21 November 2013.

During the Hearings, Senator Brown asked a range of questions seeking to clarify Ministerial responsibility for the tourism function in light of the new Administrative Arrangements. In response, I indicated that I had written to my counterparts in state and territory governments advising of the new Ministerial arrangements and undertook to provide the Committee with a copy of that letter. The relevant excerpt from the Proof Hansard is at [Attachment A](#).

I would like to correct this evidence.

On 4 October 2013, I met with my state and territory counterparts via teleconference in the lead up to the Tourism Ministers Meeting on 11 October. During the course of this meeting I discussed the new Ministerial arrangements for tourism. However, I have not formally written to my state and territory counterparts on this matter.

I understand that Hansard is a formal transcript of proceedings and cannot be altered. However, I request this revised information be made available to Committee members to ensure they have the most current and accurate information available to them.

If you require further information in regard to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Lewis
General Manager – Tourism

9 November 2013

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
21 NOVEMBER 2013**

Senator CAROL BROWN: My question really has not been answered satisfactorily. I understand what you are saying, but where is the tourism division? I cannot see that on your organisational chart through Austrade.

Senator Cormann: If I might assist you, I suspect the reason for that is that the transfer of responsibilities is still in train, and in fact most of the active logistical transfers will be happening throughout December. What I can confirm for you is that Austrade is now responsible for all tourism policy programs and research, and about 80 to 90 staff covering these functions are in the process of being transferred to Austrade from the Department of Industry. Obviously that involves quite a bit of detailed work, which is now underway. Formal personnel transfer is expected to occur in December 2013, with physical co-location with Austrade's Canberra office in early 2014. Obviously, the sorts of questions that you ask are directly related to those physical transfers actually having occurred. Right now we are essentially in a period of transition that is expected to be finalised as soon as possible.

Senator CAROL BROWN: Thank you, Minister. What I am actually trying to do is give clarity to the industry out there about where they would go. It is not on the organisational chart, and I understand in terms of your response, but where does a tourist operator call if they are looking it up? Do they go to the Austrade, DFAT, or Industry websites?

Ms Lewis: Tourism operators would go to Industry primarily, or to state and territory government representatives. My division works closely with state and territory governments, who are involved in tourism. Since the election we have had a meeting of all tourism ministers across Australia. Minister Robb chaired that meeting. He has written to all tourism ministers across Australia. I have written to officials at my level across Australia as well, and the industry peak bodies are aware of the arrangements.

Senator CAROL BROWN: Thank you. You have just told me that Minister Robb is responsible for domestic and international tourism; Parliamentary Secretary Baldwin, we think, has got a little bit about winding up grants—so far, so good; and on the DFAT website on the front page there is a link. But you are expecting the industry out there, thousands and thousands of members of the industry, to log on to the industry website. Don't you find that confusing?

Ms Lewis: As the minister just advised, we are working through the process of moving internet pages across to the Austrade portfolio. There is that link on the Austrade portfolio website. There have been a number of announcements that tourism policy programs and research functions are going to be done in Austrade, so I think we are clearly working through administrative arrangements, but I do believe we have let the industry know where we are, and all of our contact with our state and territory counterparts has continued since the election. Those people have all of the contact details of my staff. They are clear about the role that we are undertaking.

Senator CAROL BROWN: That information you just gave me was the basis for the letter you said you have sent out? You have written to—

Ms Lewis: I wrote to all of my counterparts in state and territory governments, yes. And I have met with them since the election as well. I speak to them regularly.

Senator CAROL BROWN: And Minister Robb's letter indicated the same—?

Ms Lewis: I do not have a copy of that with me, but it would have been clear that tourism was in the DFAT portfolio and that tourism programs and research was in the Austrade department.

Senator CAROL BROWN: Can we have a copy of your letter that you wrote to the states and territories?

Ms Lewis: I do not have that with me. I can take that on notice.

Senator CAROL BROWN: That means you will provide it on notice?

Ms Lewis: Yes.