

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(159) Output 1.3: Enforcement of Immigration Law

Senator Ludwig (L&C 13) asked:

“In relation to the Vivian Solon matter, can you say whether those persons were interviewed in respect of the receipt of that email? Can you confirm whether they received that email? Can you indicate whether a reply was provided back to the sender of the email or to any other officer in respect of that email? Can you indicate whether there was any questioning of any of those officers associated with that email as to what action they decided to take or not to take in respect of it by your department?”

Answer:

The Ombudsman’s office spoke to a number of senior officers in the course of conducting the investigation into Ms Solon’s case. The Department understands that, as part of the investigation, the Ombudsman’s office provided a confidentiality undertaking to officers in relation to the content of their interviews. Accordingly, the Department is not in a position to ask the Ombudsman to disclose what information was discussed during the interviews.

The Government referred Ms Solon’s case to Mr Comrie and the Ombudsman last year to ensure that it was thoroughly investigated by an independent body, rather than conduct an internal investigation. This investigation has been finalised and it is clear from the Ombudsman’s report that his investigation considered the email of 19 July 2001. Given this, the Department cannot add anything further to the extensive investigations that the Ombudsman has undertaken in relation to the matter.