

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27-28 May 2013

IMMIGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP PORTFOLIO

(BE13/0016) PROGRAM – Internal Product

Senator Cash (L&CA 36-37) asked:

Senator CASH: Could I briefly turn to some staffing issues. A story that ran in The Australian on 17 May 2013 that a former press secretary to immigration Minister Brendan O'Connor had apparently been hired by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Has a former press secretary of the minister been employed by the department? If so, in what capacity?

...

Senator CASH: In relation to the role itself, was it a role that had previously been in the department?

Mr Bowles: It is working in one of those areas that has always been there, yes. I will just have to find out more detail on the specifics.

Senator CASH: Could you also, please, find out for me, given that the position was not advertised, the process whereby the former press secretary of the immigration minister was employed by the department, including how he was approached to take on the role? When were you advised of the decision to hire Mr O'Connor's former press secretary?

Mr Bowles: I cannot remember. I will have to go back and have a look.

...

Senator CASH: When did she commence?

Mr Bowles: I do not know. That is what I said. I will have to come back to you. I do not know any of the detail. I do not even know if she has commenced, to be honest. She may have.

...

Senator CASH: Can also find out whether or not the contract includes a redundancy clause and, if so, what the terms are.

Mr Bowles: I imagine it would not. It would be a normal, non-ongoing contract arrangement. But I will come back to you on that.

Senator CASH: Can you also find out whether or not Mr Sandi Logan was involved in the appointment at all of this particular person and, if so, what his role was.

Mr Bowles: He would have been because he manages that particular area. But I will come back to you on the detail.

Answer:

Yes. The person commenced employment in a temporary role with the department as a Public Affairs Officer 3 for up to 11 weeks from 3 June 2013.

The person has been employed on a non-ongoing contract and, as the duration of employment is less than three months, the role did not need to be advertised.

The terms of the contract do not provide for access to the Redeployment, Redundancy and Retirement provisions of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship Enterprise Agreement 2011-2014.

The recruitment arose from a need for a short-term public affairs officer in the internal and strategic communications section of the National Communications Branch, of which Mr Logan is the Assistant Secretary. Mr Logan was aware of the contractor's availability, requested her CV, and upon checking her availability, advised the Secretary on 10 May of his intention to offer a short-term non-ongoing contract to undertake strategic communications planning, social media and other associated communications functions.