

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 19 November 2013

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE13/0016) PROGRAMME – 4.3: Offshore Asylum Seeker Management

Senator Macdonald (L&CA 46) asked:

CHAIR: I am wondering what you say to the claim by Mr O'Neill in the PNG parliament that 'it is alarming to note that our Papua New Guinea business men and women are not given the opportunity to participate, and that was the whole intention of setting up this centre in the first place'. Mr Bowles: I think there is probably a little bit of confusion about two issues. Mr Cormack can give you the numbers of locals engaged in a minute. On the broader issue of going to the market for contracts, anyone can apply under those arrangements. I am not sure which PNG companies have applied. CHAIR: Was that part of the deal? Was that a deal made between the government and the PNG— Mr Bowles: I think there was always an expectation. I cannot recall that there was any specific deal, such as you have to have X number of these people or these contracts in it. Chair: Perhaps you could take on notice to report back to me on whether there was a deal and, if so, what it was - not what was promised or what was not promised

Answer:

No there was no specific deal. A procurement strategy was agreed with the PNG government ensuring that all contracts would maximise opportunity for subcontracting of PNG entities for reimbursable works, subject to compliance with Australian Free Trade Agreement obligations and the Australian *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*.