

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Inquiry into the DEEWR Tender Process to award employment services contracts

EEWR_SIH_H69

Senator Fifield asked on 11 June 2009, EEWL Hansard page 85.

Question

Could you confirm whether Mission Australia was advised that it was a preferred tenderer in the Nepean ESA in the email sent by the Department on 16 March? If Mission Australia was not advised at that stage on what date and at what time they were advised that they would be offered business in the Nepean ESA?

Answer

Mission Australia was not advised that it was a preferred tenderer in the Nepean ESA in any email sent by the Department on 16 March 2009.

Mission Australia was advised of the final decision on the outcome of their tender by email despatched at 10.51 am on 2 April 2009. Mission Australia was advised of the outcome in the Nepean ESA at this time.

As specified in part 4.14 of the RFT, the department issued preliminary advice to preferred tenderers on 16 March 2009. No final decisions had been made at the time of the preferred tenderer advice.

The period between the preliminary advice to preferred tenderers and the final decision gave preferred tenderer organisations the opportunity to bring any relevant matters, to the Department's attention. This was particularly critical where some organisations could have proposed to use the same subcontractor.

Also, around that time the release of the new unemployment figures provided a more detailed picture of the extent of the impact of Global Financial Crisis.

A final review was undertaken to ensure that the level of service available was consistent with the demand for the service and that job seekers would be well serviced into the future with new services delivering better, more tailored assistance and with a greater emphasis on assisting employers in addressing skills shortages.

As a result of this review, additional providers were identified as being required for certain ESAs. One of these was the Nepean ESA, in which three further tenderers received business, including Mission Australia. All these tenderers were so advised on 2 April 2009.

Detailed consideration, assessment and quality assurance, all overseen by the probity adviser, preceded the department's final decisions being made.