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_W38

Senator Back provided in writing.

Question

Has DEEWR conducted a Risk Analysis of the tender process and outcomes?

Answer

Risk analysis and assessment are intrinsic elements of the entire tender process.

Job Services Australia was designed to provide better, more tailored assistance to job seekers, particularly disadvantaged Australians, and place greater emphasis on assisting employers in addressing skill shortages and filling job vacancies.

The tender process was designed to achieve this objective by contracting not-for-profit and for profit organisations that demonstrate ability to deliver high quality services.

To achieve this:

- the Request for Tender was designed to achieve the policy objectives of the new services

- tender documentation included a set of guidelines covering all stages was signed off by the Probity Adviser prior to the tender closing

- all staff involved in the tender received probity training

- tender assessment and reviews were undertaken by departmental staff with detailed understanding and local knowledge of the Employment Service Areas(ESA) and the capacity and expertise to test and verify claims and validate the appropriateness of local services and strategies and their relevance to the ESA.

- there were multiple levels of assessment and review as well as credential and financial viability checks. A formal quality assurance process throughout the whole process was overseen by legally qualified staff

- the tender process was supported by robust governance arrangements reporting and a Tender Review Committee comprising of senior Departmental officers. An internal legal advisor, the independent Probity Adviser and purchasing experts were also present when this committee met.

The independent external Probity Adviser has given an unqualified sign off of the tender process.