

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000097

Senator the Hon Doug Cameron asked on 1 March 2017, Proof Hansard page 139

FOI requests and Senate Orders

Question

Senator CAMERON: That was a letter that was never signed or sent, that was part of the documents that were provided.

Senator Birmingham: Okay, I will take your word.

Senator CAMERON: Was there ever an alternative letter drafted and sent?

Senator Birmingham: To Senator Day?

Senator CAMERON: Yes.

Senator Birmingham: I will take that on notice, although I think we have, in response to FOI requests and Senate orders, pretty much released anything that there is to be seen. So if you have not found one in documents released, then I can say with confidence that there was not.

Senator CAMERON: So in your speech to the Senate on that, you said there were changes to the original student builder proposal. Can you explain why the final proposal for the project was not included in part of the order to produce?

Senator Birmingham: The final proposal—I will take that on notice and have a look, but as I say, as far as I am aware all documents in relation to the order and the FOIs have been provided.

Senator CAMERON: Why were none of the project proposals produced in response to the Senate order?

Senator Birmingham: I just indicated— as far as I am aware, all documents relevant to the Senate order were produced. Now, if what you are meaning by project proposal differs from what was released in the Senate order or came after the time line of the Senate order, perhaps that is the explanation.

Senator CAMERON: Okay, so I think you have taken on notice to produce the project plans and all the documentation related to these projects. The Australian National Audit Office are auditing the pilot scheme. Is it all the schemes, or is it just the one scheme?

Senator Birmingham: They are auditing the program, as I understand it—the apprenticeship pilot program—and the department is cooperating with it.

Senator CAMERON: Has the department been advised as to when we can expect an outcome?

Ms Hewlett: The ANAO anticipates releasing its report in April.

Answer

The letter Senator the Hon Doug Cameron refers to was an early draft and was not sent. There was no alternative letter drafted or sent.

The pilot project proposals and project plans contain information that is deliberative in nature and may contain commercially sensitive information.

See answer to SQ17-000095 for pilot project summaries.