

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES
21 OCTOBER 2019**

Home Affairs Portfolio

SE19/110

Paladin

Senator Louise Pratt asked:

Senator PRATT: Has it been misconstrued in some way? Journalists don't make up these kinds of allegations.

Mr Pezzullo: I'm sure lots of things have been misconstrued. Not as at the last time we checked, which was April of this year.

Senator PRATT: And what about now?

Mr Pezzullo: I'll take that on notice. I'll cause more inquiries to be made, in light of Mr Baker's article. It's not clear to me, and Senator Keneally was very helpfully highlighting elements of the article because I hadn't read it, whether any more contemporaneous information has come to light that postdates April of this year.

Note: context is around the alleged \$8 million dollar bribe request.

Answer:

As advised at the Legal and Constitutional Committee (Department of Home Affairs) Budget and Supplementary Senate Estimate hearings of April and October 2019, the Department holds no information in regard to an AUD\$8 million payment requested of Paladin.

In April 2019 a comprehensive check of relevant Departmental electronic records (Records Management System, Issues registers, mailbox and individual emails) was undertaken and no documents were located in regard to an alleged request to Paladin for payment of AUD\$8 million.

At that time, the Department also sought information specific to this allegation from staff who worked directly with Paladin Group and Papua New Guinea (PNG) Immigration and Citizenship Authority. These Departmental officers had no record of, or awareness of, a request from a PNG official to Paladin for a payment of AUD\$8 million.

Subsequent to Supplementary Budget Estimates on 21 October 2019, another comprehensive check of relevant Departmental electronic records was undertaken. Again, the Department was not able to locate any record of such a request, or a record from Paladin advising of such a request.