



Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

DEPUTY SECRETARY

Ref: EC20-000402

Dr Jane Thomson
Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on COVID-19
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Thomson

I would like to provide a clarification of evidence given at the hearing of the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 on Thursday 4 June 2020 regarding the contract for Resolve Strategic.

During the hearing, the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the National COVID-19 Coordination Commission, Mr Malcolm Thompson, and I advised Resolve Strategic was selected using a panel. I can confirm that Resolve Strategic was selected utilising the Department of Finance whole-of-government Campaign Advertising Supplier Register (CASR). Consistent with the arrangements relating to panels, the CASR is a pre-qualified pool of potential suppliers that have been independently assessed by the Department of Finance as qualified to assist with communications work.

Additionally, during the hearing I advised the Committee that I did not know who made the decision to award the contract to Resolve Strategic. In checking the transcript, my staff have brought to my attention that I gave approval to commit the relevant funds for this contract. It was part of the Deputy Secretary Governance role to approve all consultancies over \$80,000, not just those within Governance Group. I receive a number of contracts and consultancies to approve, and I did not recall approving this particular contract at the time of the hearing.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Foster

10 June 2020