

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: State border travel exemption for Mr Neville Power's travel to Mount Isa

Senator: Watt

Question reference number: 0076

Type of question: Hansard, page 21, 4 June 2020

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 18 June 2020

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator WATT: Just before I get into those contracts: Mr Power, with that trip on your jet to Mount Isa, which I think you said was for cattle station business, did you obtain an exemption for that trip as well?

Mr Power: Yes, I did.

Senator WATT: What was the nature of the exemption? It wouldn't have been sort of official government business, would it?

Mr Power: No, it wasn't. I've forgotten the exact wording of the Queensland exemption, but it was for agriculture workers.

Senator WATT: Agricultural workers?

Mr Power: That's correct.

Senator WATT: And you fit into that category?

Mr Power: Yes, I do. I do all of the helicopter mustering on the cattle station—myself and my son.

Senator WATT: Okay. Maybe you could just take on notice the exact nature of that exemption.

Mr Power: Certainly, yes. It's called 'essential industries' or some such, but I'll get you the exact name of it.

Answer:

Queensland Travel Pass – Specialist worker critical to key infrastructure, services, utilities, industries or businesses.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Whole-of-government communications personnel salaries

Senator: Watt

Question reference number: 0077

Type of question: Hansard, page 22, 4 June 2020

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 18 June 2020

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator WATT: These whole-of-government communications personnel—what salary level are they at?

Mr Thompson: I'll have to take that on notice. I think there's one SES band 1, one executive level 2, and one APS6 person.

Answer:

The salary level of the three whole-of-government communications personnel are:

- SES Band 1
- Executive Level 2
- APS 6.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Award of tender to Resolve Strategic headed by Mr Jim Reed

Senator: Watt

Question reference number: 0078

Type of question: Hansard, page 22, 4 June 2020

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 18 June 2020

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator WATT: Who actually made the decision to award the tender to Mr Reed?

Mr Thompson: I'd have to take that on notice. I don't have that information, sorry.

Senator WATT: Does Ms Foster know that?

Ms Foster: I don't know. I'm assuming it would be one of the staff in the chain, so most likely—

Senator WATT: In that communications unit?

Ms Foster: Most likely, but we should take it on notice and get you an accurate answer.

Answer:

Please refer to the letter of clarification of evidence from Deputy Secretary, Ms Stephanie Foster, received by the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 on 10 June 2020.

Senate Select Committee on COVID-19

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Previous employment of founder and CEO of Commtract

Senator: Watt

Question reference number: 0084

Type of question: Hansard, page 23, 4 June 2020

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 18 June 2020

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator WATT: Just very briefly, the other contract I wanted to ask about is a \$42,000 contract awarded to a communications services company called Commtract, for creative design and editorial services. This is another instance. The company's founder and CEO is a former Liberal Party staffer and adviser to Mr Robb, one of the former ministers. Was anyone in the department aware of that former Liberal Party connection?

Mr Thompson: I certainly wasn't. It probably falls into the category of the other questions that you've asked that I've taken on notice. That contract was also in support of whole-of-government communications—that is, not NCCC business as such.

Answer:

The company was selected from a panel of approved providers on the Digital Transformation Agency's Digital Marketplace (standing offer notice SON3413842) to provide labour hire services. The identity of the company's founder was not known to staff accessing the panel.