

Written questions for Grant Thornton
Answers due 27 November 2017

In an email dated 18 October 2017, Mr Andrew Behman of CLH Lawyers put forward a request for his client Mr Stephen Dixon of Grant Thornton to appear at the hearing via teleconference, because to appear in person would 'unduly deplete the assets of the Bankrupt Estate'. This position was reiterated by Mr Behman in a subsequent email on 24 October 2017.

At the hearing on 17 November, at which Mr Dixon and Mr Behman appeared in person, Mr Behman informed the committee that his client, not the bankrupt estate, had paid for his travel and accommodation costs.

- 1) Please confirm that the travel or accommodation costs for Mr Behman were paid for by his client, Grant Thornton.
- 2) Will Grant Thornton be passing these travel and accommodation costs on to the bankrupt estate?
- 3) Will Grant Thornton be passing the travel and accommodation costs for Mr Dixon on to the bankrupt estate?

During the hearing, Mr Behman informed the committee that 'the cost of preparation in preparing of the appearance' would be billed to the bankrupt estate. The relevant exchange is as follows (page 2 of proof transcript):

Senator WILLIAMS: Who paid for your travel and accommodation?

Mr Behman: My client.

Senator WILLIAMS: Your client?

Mr Behman: Yes.

Senator WILLIAMS: Who's your client?

Mr Behman: Grant Thornton and Mr Dixon.

Senator WILLIAMS: I was quite concerned about your email of 18 October, Mr Behman, where you said, at point 7, that the costs of appearing at the hearing would unduly deplete the assets of the bankrupt estate.

Mr Dixon: Yes.

Senator WILLIAMS: You were going to come to this hearing and bill the bankrupt estate?

Mr Behman: The cost of preparation in preparing for the appearance.

Senator WILLIAMS: When you say 'the cost of appearing', that was the cost of preparation and not your travel and accommodation?

Mr Behman: That's correct.

- 4) Provide a total and itemised breakdown of the 'preparation' costs charged by Mr Behman to the bankrupt estate. The list is to include details such as the task undertaken, the time billed for it, and the cost.
- 5) Do the preparation costs include the correspondence and phone calls Mr Behman had with the committee secretariat in organising the hearing appearance? If yes, provide details on the task, the time billed for it, and the cost.
- 6) Will the cost of preparing answers to questions on notice and reviewing the proof transcript be billed to the bankrupt estate? If yes, provide details on the task, the time billed for it, and the cost.
- 7) Will Mr Dixon be charging the bankrupt estate for his time in preparing for and appearing at the hearing?

- 8) Please confirm whether the bankrupt estate will be billed for any costs associated with either Mr Dixon or Mr Behman providing evidence to the committee.
- 9) Are there any other costs related to the committee's inquiry that will be borne by the bankrupt estate?



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27 November 2017

Mr Stephen Palethorpe
Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Lending to Primary Production Customers

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Dear Sirs

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM SENATOR WILLIAMS TO GRANT THORNTON

I refer to your email dated 21 November 2017 and the written questions on notice from Senator Williams. I respond to those written questions in the same order below:

1. The travel and accommodation costs of Mr Behman were paid for by Grant Thornton.
2. No.
3. No.
4. Mr Behman was mistaken. I have clarified with Mr Behman that his costs and that of his firm will be paid by Grant Thornton, and not by the Bankrupt Estate.
5. No.
6. No.
7. No.
8. The Bankrupt Estate will not be billed for any costs associated with either Mr Behman or me providing evidence to the committee.
9. No.

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Yours faithfully

Stephen Robert Dixon
Joint and Several Trustee of the Bankrupt Estate of Lindsay Morris Dingle
Partner – Financial Advisory Grant Thornton Australia Ltd

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