



Submission No 51

Inquiry into Australia's Overseas Representation

Supplementary Submission

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Parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Public Hearing
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Australia's Overseas Representation
19 March 2012

You Topic: Ukraine land set aside for Australian mission

Question on Notice (Page 1)

Mr Danby

Has the government of Ukraine set aside land in Kiev for a possible Australian mission?

***Mr DANBY:** I have an answer to my question on notice about the Ukraine, and it says that the post in Vienna does not know anything about it. It does say that it is standard practice worldwide for governments to set aside land for it, but it says, 'We cannot discount the possibility that there may have been land set aside in Kiev by the government of Ukraine.' Wouldn't it have been appropriate for someone in the department to ring up the Ukrainian government and ask them if that is true?*

***Mr Richardson:** We could have done. We can do that.*

***Mr Richardson:** We will ask the Ukraine Government.*

Answer

We are confident the Ukrainian Government would facilitate access to an appropriate site, should Australia decide to open an Embassy in Kyiv (as is the receiving country's obligation under the Article 21 of the Vienna Convention). However, we have no record that the Ukrainian Government has offered Australia a specific site, nor is the Ukrainian Embassy aware of any offer. The Ukrainian Government, in opening their Embassy in Australia, opted to access commercial premises rather than negotiate to lease Crown land. A land swap was not considered as Australia was not intending to open an Embassy in Kyiv.

We also understand the Ukrainian Chargé d'Affaires wrote to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade on 23 February to correct the transcript of his previous testimony to remove any suggestion that he had confirmed an offer had been made. In subsequent discussions, the Ukrainian Chargé has confirmed he has received no further advice from Kyiv on this issue, nor did he expect to do so.

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Topic: Expanding Australia's overseas network

Question on Notice (Pages 6 and 8)

Mr Danby

Using \$25 million, \$50 million and \$75 million – could the department work out a list of posts that it would open, based on the priorities outlined in supplementary answers?

Could the department also consider whether it would open new posts or expand existing posts with additional A-based policy officers?

***Mr DANBY:** If I were to wave a magic wand and give you three figures - \$25 million, \$50 million and \$75 million – could you, with that amount of money, work out a list of posts that you would open, given the priorities that you have outlined in the supplementary answers?*

***Mr Richardson:** Yes."*

*continue to page 8 "**Mr JENKINS:** Could I just clarify: we have got the 'magic wand' question from Mr Danby, and I take it that the department will use these possibilities in a response to that question. It is not only starting up new missions but whether you would want to just expand."*

Answer

For the purposes of this exercise, the department has considered the impact of additional annual funding for DFAT of \$25 million (\$100 million over the forward estimates – Low), \$50 million (\$200 million – Medium) and \$75 million (\$300 million – High). As our highest priority post opening – Chengdu, China – was recently announced, this has not been included in the options.

The options below describe a mix of new posts and new positions at existing posts. For the Committee's information, the options include a one-off set-up capital component and then an ongoing operating component. The set-up capital is to fit out and secure the Chancery as well as Head of Mission and staff residences, and to purchase the equipment needed to operate the post (e.g. motor vehicles, computers). This would generally be spent over the first 12 months.

Low option

A funding injection of \$25 million per year (\$100 million over the forward estimates) could establish around **12 new positions** at existing posts (prioritising G20 and consular locations) and **five new posts**, at the following locations:

- Astana, Kazakhstan
- Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- Dakar, Senegal
- Phuket, Thailand
- Funafuti, Tuvalu

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Medium option

A funding injection of \$50 million per year (\$200 million over the forward estimates) could establish around **32 new positions** at existing posts (prioritising G20, regional and consular locations) and **10 new posts**, at the following locations:

- Algiers, Algeria
- Luanda, Angola
- Chongqing, China
- Bogotá, Colombia
- Astana, Kazakhstan
- Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- Dakar, Senegal
- Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- Phuket, Thailand
- Funafuti, Tuvalu

High option

A funding injection of \$75 million per year (\$300 million over the forward estimates) could establish around **50 new positions** at existing posts (prioritising G20, East Asia Summit, smaller posts and consular locations) and **13 new posts**, at the following locations:

- Algiers, Algeria
- Luanda, Angola
- Chongqing, China
- Bogotá, Colombia
- Astana, Kazakhstan
- Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
- Rabat, Morocco
- Oslo, Norway
- Dakar, Senegal
- Bern, Switzerland
- Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- Phuket, Thailand
- Funafuti, Tuvalu

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Topic: Decrease/increase in LES since 1996

Question on Notice (Page 5)

Dr STONE

Has the amount of LES increased or decreased since 1996?

***Dr STONE:** Given this 14 per cent decline, as you say, overseas – five per cent all-round – has ediplomacy managed to fill any of those gaps? I understand Mr Dao has this area. I notice you say in your submission that we have present ageing systems in terms of ICT support, so you are obviously not terribly happy about where you are up to with those either. There is in fact no substitution for these staff who are missing in action. What about locally engaged staff? Have you increased the numbers of those staff during that same period or have they similarly declined?*

***Mr Richardson:** I would need to take that on notice in terms of LES.*

Answer

The number of Locally Engaged Staff (LES) increased from 1,607 staff in 1996 to 1,644 staff in 2011.