

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 26 FEBRUARY 2015 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Child Support matter – standard contract terms

Question reference number: HS 9

Senator: Xenophon

Type of question: Hansard page 27

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 April 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

Senator XENOPHON: It is my intention to put a standing question on notice, as this matter continues, about the costs. Your standard contract terms about refusing to answer questions of costs suggest it is not a problem to reveal monetary aspects of contracts to the Senate. I refer you to clause 15, in particular, and clauses 14.3 under 'confidentiality' and 14.3(d) that 'without limiting the application of this clause, 14.3, is disclosed in order to respond to a question or a direction of a House or a request by a committee of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia or such equivalent bodies of the parliament of the relevant state'. Do you agree that in this process, if you are asked questions about how much a particular matters costs, you ought to disclose that?

Mr Hutson: As I said, I will take that question on notice.

Ms Campbell: We will abide by those directions of the Senate.

Senator XENOPHON: You have not previously.

Ms Campbell: I will go back and review that as to where that has occurred.

Senator XENOPHON: These were previous answers on notice provided.

Answer:

The department agrees that unless an issue that warrants a claim for public interest immunity arises, the department should answer questions about legal costs in relation to particular matters.