

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 23-24 OCTOBER 2014 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Telstra Call Centre Facility Service

Question reference number: HS 11

Senator: Cameron

Type of question: Hansard pages 38-39, 24 October 2014

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 12 December 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) Senator CAMERON: What does this contractual arrangement that you have with Telstra to provide telephony services actually say that you claim allows you to use a couple of hundred Telstra employees in DHS? Tell me that clause. What is it?

Ms Campbell: I do not think they are Telstra employees. Telstra would act to facilitate some of that support.

Senator CAMERON: So, it is Telstra or contractual employees—let's not split hairs.

Mr Tidswell: As I understand it—and we will make sure we get this exact for you in terms of the contract arrangements—there is a provision in the contract that we have signed with Telstra most recently that provides the ability for Telstra and us to be involved in projects and activities. That arrangement was in the previous contract that we had with Telstra, which I understand expires this calendar year, and our plans are to use that clause along with normal procurement processes. But, as the secretary said, we are having the conversation. We have started the conversation and we have not finalised the details in that sense, so we are still working through the arrangements.

Senator CAMERON: That is good. I am interested from my perspective on this. So projects and the clause you were saying—

Mr Tidswell: There is a broad category there—

Senator CAMERON: Projects and—

Mr Tidswell: I did not say anything more than projects, in the sense of projects and activities.

Senator CAMERON: Project and activities.

Mr Tidswell: I will stand to be corrected. We will make sure we get the exact information to you.

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- b) Mr Tidswell: On the understanding of us and Telstra, that is the clause in the contract that enables us to talk to Telstra about assisting us with improving our performance in our contact centres.

Senator CAMERON: Who negotiated the clause?

Mr Tidswell: I am not quite sure who negotiated that clause.

Ms Campbell: We will take that on notice. It was some years ago.

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- c) Senator CAMERON: Can I just be clear on this, Ms Campbell. There is a clause that roughly says that Telstra can provide projects and activities. That has been there for some years?

Ms Campbell: For a couple of years, yes.

Senator CAMERON: A couple of years. In the contract, is there a definition of projects and activities?

Ms Campbell: I am not sure. We will take that on notice.

Answer:

- a) and c) Following the completion of consultations with staff, the department will decide whether or not to procure call centre services from Telstra. If the department decides to procure such services, the department's preference would be for the services to be provided as "Project Services" under the contractual arrangements between the department and Telstra dated 22 June 2012 for the provision of managed telecommunications services.

Clause 1.4.2 of Part A of Annex 2 of Attachment A of the Official Order signed by the department and Telstra under the Australian Government Telecommunications Arrangements head agreement sets up a framework to enable Telstra to provide a range of Project Services to the department, as agreed between Telstra and the department from time to time.

- b) The negotiation of the contract with Telstra dated 22 June 2012 was managed by the Chief Information Officer Group, with legal advice provided by the department's internal and external legal services providers.