

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates Hearings May 2014
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications

Question No: 534

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Topic: Independent Audit of the NBN Policy Process

Senator Urquhart asked:

Senator URQUHART: Thank you. How many people has Mr Scales sought to interview?

Mr Robinson: My understanding is that they have interviewed in the order of 40 people.

Senator URQUHART: That was going to be my next part of the question—how many they have interviewed. How many were sought?

Mr Robinson: We would have to refer how many they sought to the audit. I think it is important to note that Mr Scales was engaged by the government. He is conducting this audit. Although the department is arranging admin and paying the costs essentially, he is conducting the audit separate from us. The staff in his secretariat are not previous department staff.

Senator URQUHART: Are you able to take that on notice and provide that information?

Mr Robinson: We would have to refer it to Mr Scales. But we can do that.

Senator CONROY: Dr Horne was actually the secretary of the department a few days after Mr Turnbull announced that fabulous \$10 billion plan that Finance had never seen. That is to add to the completeness of your answer.

Mr Robinson: As I was mentioning, all the engagements in the audit team were agreed by Mr Scales. So they were not government engagements of the secretariat and they particularly were not department decisions about engagements because—

Senator URQUHART: You have said that he interviewed 40 people.

Mr Robinson: That is my understanding.

Senator URQUHART: I guess to complete the question, if you are able to get the answer to how many people he sought to—

Mr Robinson: We will ask Mr Scales that question.

Answer:

The Independent Audit Secretariat has advised that in the course of conducting the Independent Audit, Mr Scales held discussions with 33 individuals.