

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

Question No: 6

Program No. 1.1

Hansard Ref: Page 15, 25 November 2014

Topic: Nihal Gupta and the SBS Board

Senator SINGH asked:

Senator SINGH: You may or may not be able to answer this either: was Nihal Gupta proposed to the SBS recruiters by an organisation or someone, or did he just respond to the advertisement?

Mr Clarke: I am uncomfortable with the depth of your questions—in regard to the privacy of individuals—on the process, and that is one of the reasons I would prefer to take it on notice. Given that these folk have been appointed, the fact of their interest is, by definition, on the record, but I am not confident that it is appropriate to reveal the actual pathways by which they came to the attention of the nominations panel. With your indulgence, I would really like to take that question on notice.

Answer:

The *Merit and transparency in appointments to the ABC and SBS boards - Guidelines and information for potential applicants for non-executive director positions on the ABC and SBS boards* provides that all applicants must submit an expression of interest cover sheet which is accompanied by a current curriculum vitae and a statement that addresses their suitability for appointment to the Board with reference to the selection criteria for the position and any relevant experience, knowledge, skills and attributes. This information must be provided by the applicant and there is no provision for third parties to independently submit applications on a person's behalf.

In the most recent process, all applicants were required to provide this information to Amanda O'Rourke Executive Search (AOES) which had been engaged by the Department to assist the Nomination Panel with the various stages of the merit-based selection process. The Department can confirm that Mr Gupta submitted an application to AOES.

While the Department cannot comment on what prompts individuals to submit an application, it is important to note that all applications received are assessed on merit by the Nomination Panel against the relevant selection criteria.