

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings October 2015

Communications Portfolio

Australia Council

Question No: 149(h)

Australia Council

Hansard Ref: Written, 2/11/2015

Topic: Staffing – employment of non-Australian citizens

Senator Ludwig, Joe asked:

I refer you to section 22 (8) of the Public Service Act 1999 which says:

"An Agency Head must not engage, as an APS employee, a person who is not an Australian citizen, unless the Agency Head considers it appropriate to do so."

1. Does the department have guidelines or similar to assist Agency Heads to assess when it is appropriate to hire non-Australian citizens? If no, do individual agencies have their own guidelines? If yes to either:
 - a) Please provide a copy.
 - b) When did they come into effect?
 - c) Can Agency Heads decide to go against the advice? If yes, under what circumstances?
2. Are Agency Heads required to provide a reason to anyone for hiring non-Australian citizens? If yes:
 - a) Who are they required to report the reason to?
 - b) Does this reporting happen before or after the hire has been made?
 - c) Is this reason provided in writing? If no, how is it provided?
 - d) Can you please provide a list of reasons that have been used since the Federal election in September, 2013.
3. Are there any provisions to over-rule a Head of Agency's decision to hire a non-Australian citizen? If yes:
 - a) Who can over-rule this decision?
 - b) Under what circumstances can it be over-ruled?
 - c) How many times has this occurred since the Federal election in September, 2013.

Answer:

1. a) The Australia Council Recruitment and Selection Policy notes: Ordinarily, the Australia Council recruits only Australian citizens or permanent residents. When an applicant does not possess Australian citizenship or a relevant visa to demonstrate their working rights, the hiring manager must consult the Human Resources team before progressing the candidate to an invitation to interview.

The Australia Council Recruitment and Selection Policy is an internal operational document and therefore is not publicly available.

1. b) Created in 2007 and updated in 2010.

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c) Unless the Agency Head considers it appropriate to engage the person through support of a visa to establish work rights, the candidate will not progress through to the next stage of the selection process.

2. No.

3. No.