

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry and Science Portfolio
Additional Estimates 2014-15
26 February 2015

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: Innovation Australia Board

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 26 February 2015, page 105)

QUESTION NO.: AI-13

Senator KIM CARR: Is it true that the minister attended a meeting of the innovation board and told them that they had been abolished as well?

Ms Peterson: It is true that the minister did attend the board meeting in September 2014. It is not correct that the board have been told that they will be abolished.

Senator KIM CARR: No, but they were advised that the government was going to abolish them. Is that the case?

Ms Peterson: Sorry, was not going to?

Senator KIM CARR: The minister advised the board that they were to be abolished?

Ms Peterson: No, I do not believe that that is correct.

Senator KIM CARR: The way it was put to me is that the minister made the statement and then it was drawn to his attention that the innovation board is actually covered by an act of parliament. Would it be possible that the minister would go to a board meeting and make a statement like that without departmental advice that the board could not be abolished without legislative change?

Senator Ronaldson: This officer said that that comment was not made by—

Senator KIM CARR: That is not what she said. She did not know.

Senator Ronaldson: No, she said that the comment was not made. She said that the minister did not advise the board.

Senator KIM CARR: Is that what you are saying? It did not happen?

Ms Beauchamp: If you are referring to exactly what the minister said, it is probably wise that we take it on notice—

Senator KIM CARR: It is probably very wise.

Ms Beauchamp: rather than speculate in terms of exactly what was said.

Senator KIM CARR: I am also asking if it is possible to see a situation where the minister will go to the board and advise them that the government intended to abolish them, then to be told that it could not be done without legislative change?

Senator Ronaldson: That is hypothetical. The question has been taken on notice, and we can get you the answer.

ANSWER

The Minister attended an Innovation Australia meeting on 17 September 2014 via video conference from the department's AusIndustry office in Melbourne. The meeting record indicates that the Minister discussed a number of matters with the Board, including its role in the context of future Ministerial advisory arrangements, noting that Innovation Australia is a statutory body and that underpinning legislation would need to be reviewed.

REMOVE BEFORE TABLING:

Note to the Executive: Ms Peterson was not in attendance at the Innovation Australia meeting on 17 September and relied upon the meeting record to inform her response at the Estimates hearing.