

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
2016 - 2017 Additional Estimates
2 March 2017

DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: Tel Aviv Landing Pad

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 2 March 2017, page 90-91)

QUESTION No.: AI-29

Senator KIM CARR: How long have they been operational?

Ms Urquhart: There are differing dates in each landing pad case.

Senator KIM CARR: I am asking about the Tel Aviv one.

Ms Urquhart: Each one is also tailored to the innovation environment concerned. Again, I would support the minister's comments.

Senator Sinodinos: It is a bit early to evaluate how effective they are going to be.

Senator KIM CARR: I can accept that line of argument. I am saying to you that I was surprised at how small this centre was. Who actually services it? How many people?

Ms Urquhart: That sort of detail could be provided by Austrade.

Senator KIM CARR: I did not see any Commonwealth employees there, did I? Were there any Commonwealth of Australia personnel involved with this?

Mr D Wilson: I could not answer that.

Ms Beauchamp: We will take those on notice because we will need to talk to Austrade.

Senator KIM CARR: And how long has it been established for?

Mr D Wilson: They have all been operational. It was originally announced on 8 December 2015.

Senator Sinodinos: As part of the NISA—

Senator KIM CARR: I understand that. It was announced in '15. When was it actually set up?

Ms Urquhart: Again, for that sort of detail, we would have to confirm with Austrade because—

Senator KIM CARR: But it has been over a year, hasn't it?

Ms Urquhart: No doubt there is a nuance to the detail of operation. We could be talking about procurement of the property; we could be talking about the start-ups arriving at the landing pad. It would be preferable if we could consult with Austrade to bring you accuracy in these answers.

Senator KIM CARR: I put it to you that I was there and I was led to believe it had been operating for over a year, and there were eight companies in a year. How much are we spending on this place?

Ms Urquhart: I think we would be misrepresenting the situation if we were to respond to that. I really believe we should be consulting with Austrade.

Senator KIM CARR: The total funding envelope is \$11 million. Is that correct?

Mr D Wilson: That is correct—\$11.3 million.

Senator Sinodinos: Over what period, though?

Mr D Wilson: I would need to check that.

Mr Lawson: As it was announced in NISA—and we will correct this if it is wrong—it would have been over the forward estimates. It is also important that the announcement was on the Landing Pads program, not the particular landing pads. Their locations were selected subsequently. I have visited the one in San Francisco with a minister. I think that was the first one that was set up.

Ms Weston: That was launched in February 2016.

Mr Lawson: That one is currently running through its second cohort.

Senator KIM CARR: How many people have been through?

Mr Lawson: I would have to take it on notice, but I remember around a dozen start-ups there. I was actually very surprised about how—

Senator Sinodinos: It sounded quite busy to me.

Mr Lawson: They were extremely—

Senator KIM CARR: In a little room with a dozen people

Mr Lawson: No, it was not a tiny little room; they were modest facilities. It was not an expensive start-up, but they were a very excited group of people who were making a great—

Senator KIM CARR: Invariably that is the case.

Mr Lawson: Indeed, but they were learning from each other, they were showing products and they had learnt from the previous incarnation.

Senator KIM CARR: I will put some questions on notice. What I saw in Tel Aviv was that very few people had been through the centre. The biggest thing in the place was the Australian flag. I just wondered how many officers you have had—

Senator Sinodinos: There is no shame in having a big Australian flag.

Senator KIM CARR: There would not be much room for much else. Have we had any departmental officers visit the site?

Mr D Wilson: I do not have the answer to that.

Senator KIM CARR: Mr Lawson, it might be a good idea if someone could have a look at it. It is a cupboard. A big cupboard. That is what it is.

Ms Urquhart: Just to follow up on the \$11 million, it is over four years. In total, the Global Innovation Strategy was appropriated \$36 million over four years and some \$25 million of that came to this portfolio, leaving around \$11 million towards the—

Senator KIM CARR: It is \$11 million, there are five centres, so that is about \$2 million apiece. I want to know what we are getting for \$2 million.

Ms Urquhart: Austrade will—

Ms Beauchamp: We will get the facts for you so we do not mislead you and will ensure we address the issues that you have raised.

ANSWER

Austrade is responsible for implementing the Landing Pad initiative. Austrade is supported by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (DIIS).

Questions on the implementation of the Landing Pads including the number of start-ups that have attended each site, the budget for each site and resourcing available for the initiative should be directed to Austrade.

1. What date was the Tel Aviv Landing Pad announced?

8 December 2015.

2. When was the Tel Aviv Landing Pad operational?

May 2016.

3. How many Department of Industry, Innovation and Science officials have visited the Tel Aviv Landing Pad?

None.