

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: NISA ASL

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 2 March 2017, page 92-93)

QUESTION No.: AI-30

Senator KIM CARR: That is obvious. With one person, they would be running very little, wouldn't they? You have managed to get 444 in corporate and, according to this table, in national innovation and science agenda, one person.

Ms Beauchamp: The unit that was set up to deliver the national innovation and science agenda that was announced in December 2015 consists of a number of our own staff and a number of secondments from other agencies, including Prime Minister and Cabinet. I think that is why there would be only one, because there is one departmental officer and a range of officers seconded into that unit.

Senator KIM CARR: That one person is obviously very busy. What do they actually do?

Ms Beauchamp: As I have mentioned, there is a delivery units around the implementation of the national innovation and science agenda. Our role is to coordinate and lead progress on the delivery of the 24 measures of the national innovation and science agenda. So, yes, the people are very busy monitoring progress against that.

Mr Hazlehurst: I can slightly expand on the secretary's comments. When we moved into the implementation phase for the agenda, we set up a small team, which was effectively a project management team, supporting the governance of the implementation. There was a team initially of about seven or eight staff, some of whom, as the secretary mentioned, were secondees. As we have got further through the process of the implementation of those measures that team has wound down, and there are really only perhaps two or three people in that team at the moment, but that is because their primary function is not to do the actual implementation; it is around the coordination of the project management.

Senator KIM CARR: So there are two or three in the team, not one.

Mr Hazlehurst: Yes. But I think the other two are either secondees or contractors.

Senator KIM CARR: I see, they are contractors.

Mr Hazlehurst: There might be one contractor.

Senator KIM CARR: What is the one contractor? This gets better all the time. Who is that?

Mr Hazlehurst: I forget the person's name. I am happy to take that on notice. It is simply someone who is helping with project management.

Senator KIM CARR: Why do we need a contractor?

Mr Hazlehurst: It is someone providing some assistance around the project management of the project.

Senator KIM CARR: Project management: what, you get a contract in to contract manage?

Mr Hazlehurst: There are times when we bring in outside assistance for project management.

Senator KIM CARR: Yes, I can see that. But why do you need a contract manager to manage the contracts?

Mr Hazlehurst: It is not a contract; it is a project manager.

Senator KIM CARR: What is the project they are managing?

Mr Hazlehurst: The implementation of the agenda.

Senator KIM CARR: You just told me that they have all been disbursed, because they are not implementing it.

Mr Hazlehurst: There is a residual group—much smaller now, because many of the measures have now been implemented.

Senator KIM CARR: I am having a bit of trouble following this. How much do you pay this external consultant?

Mr Hazlehurst: It is not a consultant.

Senator KIM CARR: What is the external contractor?

Mr Hazlehurst: It is someone on a short-term contract.

Senator KIM CARR: How much is the contract?

Mr Hazlehurst: I will need to take that on notice.

Senator KIM CARR: You said there were three people. What is the other one? You have one—I presume the one in the list—that is an APS person, is it?

Mr Hazlehurst: Yes.

Senator KIM CARR: One is a contractor. What is the other one?

Mr Hazlehurst: I do not have the details in front of me. I will need to take that on notice. But the explanation for why there is one ASL referred to is that that team started quite large and it is smaller now.

ANSWER

As at 28 February 2017, there were two staff in the National Innovation and Science Agenda Delivery Unit: one SES Band 2 officer (seconded from another APS agency) and one Executive Level 2 officer (non-ongoing employee).

The Unit was established to drive and monitor implementation of the package of measures announced as part of the launch of the Agenda in December 2015. Work to effect the delivery measures remained the responsibility of the relevant line and support areas within this department and in other departments and agencies.

The staffing profile of the Unit has been adjusted to reflect the different levels of work effort required over time. It has had up to 11 staff at a time, engaged under a variety of arrangements: temporary transfer from elsewhere in the department; secondment from another department; non-ongoing employment; and under contract. The winding down to the current staffing level reflects the substantial progress made on implementation of measures, with monitoring increasingly taking place as part of business as usual arrangements for delivery of programs.