

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio
2015-16 Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing
22 October 2015

DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

TOPIC: Commercialisation assistance

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 22 October 2015, page 90)

QUESTION No.: SI-31

Senator McKIM: I have only been in the Senate a short time, but on my preliminary look at this issue, I would like to submit that there are gaps for internet-based start-ups. Senator Ryan might wish to refute that. My question goes back to priority sectors. I am struggling a little to know why you would badge five areas as priority sectors if you are trying to argue that they do not get priority assistance. What is the priority here?

Ms Beauchamp: There has been a fair bit of work done in this area looking at Australia's competitive and comparative advantage. These areas have been identified through various means, but that does not mean that other sectors are not important outside this portfolio. I think what you are raising is certainly what has been raised under the new PM and our new ministers, in terms of an area that we might need to look at about jobs and productivity, and that is the ICT sector and start-ups. There are certainly some views and comments coming forward in these round tables and through the innovation task force that is being run by PM&C.

Senator McKIM: But you have not been asked to review the structures of the program as yet?

Ms Beauchamp: Not formally, but of course we are looking at what can be done within existing programs.

Senator McKIM: I do not want to belabour the point, but I am struggling to understand the program in the context that you have identified five priority sectors. Do they receive priority assistance if they qualify under those five sectors?

CHAIR: You just asked that question.

Senator McKIM: With respect, I do not fully understand the answer, because if they are priority sectors, surely they would receive some priority assistance.

CHAIR: I am keen for you to be heard and get your answers, but if you could just ask your question—if you do not like the answer, I am sorry, but you cannot keep re-asking it.

Senator McKIM: Just so that there is no perceived insult, it is not a question of me not liking the answer, it is a question of me not understanding the answer, so I am seeking some clarification. If you fall within those five sectors, do you receive priority assistance?

Ms Beauchamp: For some programs, and perhaps we might be able to take on notice the programs that are provided across government in relation to tech start-ups, in particular.

Senator McKIM: I would be happy for you to do that. I thank you for the offer and I accept that.

ANSWER

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science has identified five (5) programmes and activities that provide assistance to technology startups through this department and the Australian Taxation Office.

Department of Industry, Innovation and Science

Accelerating Commercialisation

Research and Development (R&D) Tax Incentive

Venture Capital Limited Partnerships (VCLP)

Early Stage Venture Capital Limited Partnerships (ESVCLP)

Australian Taxation Office

Employee Share Scheme