

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015

Outcome 1 - Employment

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000056

Senator Cameron asked on 10 April 2015 on proof Hansard page 21

Question

Tenders - average score

Senator CAMERON: Was there an average score for each program nationally?

Mr Parsons: There could well have been, but it is not something we calculated. I could easily go back and calculate it—it was not used.

Senator CAMERON: If you could take that—

Ms Leon: Averages played no part in the allocation of the business. The scores were allocated and then ranked from highest to lowest.

Senator CAMERON: I am asking for the average score. Mr Parsons indicates—

Ms Leon: I think Mr Parsons indicated that we have not produced an average score.

Senator CAMERON: But he says he could get that easily.

Ms Leon: We will take that on notice.

Senator CAMERON: Why wouldn't you provide that? Why would you want to take that on notice?

Ms Leon: I think you are aware that there is a question of principle about whether estimates committees can ask the department to go and undertake work rather than provide you with documents or work that already exists. As Mr Parsons has indicated, we did not produce an average score for this process. I have taken on notice whether it is appropriate in those circumstances to provide it.

Senator CAMERON: You are aware that every question the Senate asks requires some work.

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Ms Leon: It is not about work. Obviously, we undertake all of the work that is required to fulfil our accountability requirements, but there has been the question raised—and I think it has been the subject of advice to committees in the past—that committees cannot ask departments and agencies to go and produce material, documents, analysis and so on.

Senator CAMERON: But Mr Parsons said this could be easily done.

Ms Leon: And we have taken it on notice to see whether it is appropriate.

Senator CAMERON: Mr Parsons said it could be easily done.

Ms Leon: I am the secretary of the department

Answer

The tender process did not calculate average scores from bidders at any point and any attempt to derive average scores would not be meaningful. The five services tendered are not easily comparable in terms of scores as they all have different criteria and weightings. It should be noted that each Employment Region had different characteristics that were taken into account in the scoring. Each bid for each Employment Region was assessed and awarded a score for that particular region and service.