

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Cross Portfolio

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000096

Senator Cameron asked on 01 June 2015 on proof Hansard page 22

Question

Revised guidelines

Senator CAMERON: Is there a new document on this?

Ms Leon: I will just have to check to see if that came in the form of a document or some other form of advice.

Senator CAMERON: Could you table, if possible, any documentation in relation to the revised guidelines—if we can use that term, as you have—in the broad term?

Ms Leon: Perhaps we should refer to it as the commissioner's understanding, or the commissioner's application of the policy.

Senator CAMERON: The commissioner's understanding?

Ms Leon: I will try to find the document, but I think it was the commissioner's application of the policy.

Senator CAMERON: The commissioner's application. I think Senator Sinodinos has been helpful. Could we have any correspondence on that, whether it is a document, or an email or whatever? Has there been any telephone discussion since? Mr Wyers, have you had discussions with the Public Service Commissioner's office on what these changed understandings are?

Mr Wyers: It is as the secretary has put it. It is a change in the application of the policy. We have had a change in Public Service Commissioner. He has had a look at how the policy is written and he, through his staff, has advised the department that there is a change in application and that we do not need to precisely cost some of those productivity measures.

Senator CAMERON: Is there correspondence on this to help you?

Mr Wyers: I do not actually recall any correspondence that we received. But the secretary has undertaken to check that.

Answer

The Australian Public Service Commissioner provided verbal advice to the Department on how productivity proposals would be considered under the Australian Government Public Sector Workplace Bargaining Policy. The Commissioner did not issue any formal written correspondence on this matter however all draft agreements require the approval of the Commissioner, who must be satisfied that the proposed remuneration increases are affordable and offset by genuine productivity gains, in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Finance.