

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations

Outcome/Program: 2 – Indigenous

Topic: ORIC Investigations

Senator: Rachel Siewert & Cory Bernardi

Question reference number: 62

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Question:

Mr Beven: Our process is that if we conduct a criminal investigation, that is not public, but any outcome from our investigation is public and we do publish it on the website.

Senator SIEWERT: How many of those have you carried out over the last two years?

Mr Beven: In terms of investigations or outcomes?

Senator SIEWERT: Investigations first and then we will go to outcomes.

Mr Beven: I will have to take that on notice.

CHAIR: I should take the advice that I gave to Senator Peris before and not discuss state things. Mr Beven, in conclusion, Senator Peris asked you about how many corporations you administer, and the new ones coming on board. How many investigations have you undertaken over the last 12 months and what have been the results? How many have resulted in organisations getting into administration or other external authority?

Mr Beven: Senator Siewert asked that question and I said I would take that on notice. In terms of outcomes, last financial year was quite a big one for our office. We had 32 prosecutions just in relation to minor offences, but we had some very significant criminal and civil matters come before the courts that were finalised. Probably the largest one we had was on 5 February 2014. We had a former CEO of an Aboriginal and Torres Islander corporation in New South Wales. He was fined \$500,000 and ordered to pay compensation of \$705,000 and he was disqualified from being associated with any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporation for 15 years. This \$1.2 million in fines and compensation with disqualification for 15 years is the most significant result my office has achieved in just under 40 years of operation. We are sending a very strong message in terms of ensuring that CEOs and directors do the right thing.

CHAIR: I presume you are taking the question on notice from Senator Siewert and you will table a list of the inquiries, the actions and the results?

Answer:

Since 1 July 2012, the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations has commenced formal inquiries into 34 matters. Investigations are underway or concluded in 28 matters. No further action was taken in relation to six matters.

All investigations conducted by the Registrar that have resulted in criminal or civil litigation are publicly reported on the Registrar's website under 'Prosecution outcomes' at <http://oric.gov.au/prosecution-outcomes>. The outcomes for each financial year are publicly reported in the Registrar's yearbooks, which are available at <http://oric.gov.au/news/oric-publications/yearbooks>.

In the 2013-2014 financial year the Registrar finalised two major criminal prosecutions, three major civil penalty matters, one major administrative law matter and 32 minor criminal prosecutions.