

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates Hearing 26 May- 5 June 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Office of the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security

Outcome/Program: Outcome 1

Topic: Radio National program

Senator: Xenophon

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Question:

Senator Xenophon: Finally, you are aware of the matters raised and on the public record, for instance, on Radio National's *Background Briefing*, about whether someone who worked for government either for a department or within government then works for another agency – and I am not putting it any higher than that. Are they matters that you would consider in the course of exercising your functions?

Dr Thom: I am sorry, I am not aware of the briefing you are talking about.

Senator Xenophon: The radio program *Background Briefing*. Perhaps I will put it on notice and attach a transcript of that program.

Dr Thom: Yes.

Answer:

In the transcript of the Radio National *Background Briefing* provided for the purpose of this question the program presenter, Hagar Cohen, said:

During the ongoing impasse with the Timorese, Woodside has hired a number of former Australian government officials. For example Woodside's two most recent representatives in Dili... are formerly of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. In 2011, Woodside hired Alexander Downer for a short time...

My functions under the IGIS Act in relation to the oversight of Australia's intelligence agencies do not ordinarily go to the actions of government officials who work in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and do not include inquiring into an action taken by a current or former Minister.