

Question: 1

Topic: Complaints to the Anti-Dumping Commission related to the Department's paper supplier

Asked: 17 October 2016

Senator McALLISTER: So the last decision to change was undertaken early in 2015, I think you said.

Ms Callinan: Yes, that is right. We first starting phasing out the Reflex and purchasing the new one in June mid last year.

Senator McALLISTER: In making that decision did you investigate whether there had been any complaints to the Anti-Dumping Commission in relation to the new manufacturer and country of origin?

Ms Callinan: I do not recall that detail. I would have to go back to check whether that was a relevant factor for us to consider and whether it was in fact considered. I am afraid I do not recall that right now.

Senator McALLISTER: If you could take that on notice, we would appreciate it.

Ms Callinan: Certainly.

Answer:

When making the procurement decision in early 2015, which resulted in the procurement of Impact A4 paper manufactured in Austria, no investigation was undertaken as to whether there had been any complaints to the Anti-Dumping Commission (ADC) in relation to the manufacturer of the paper and country of origin.

As a non-corporate Commonwealth entity, the department applies the Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs). When applying the rules the department must ensure that all procurements: achieve value for money; encourage competition; are efficient, effective, economical and ethical, and are accountable and transparent. Encouraging competition under the rules includes non-discrimination and, in this regard, the rules state:

The Australian Government's procurement framework is non-discriminatory. All potential suppliers to government must, subject to these CPRs, be treated equitably based on their commercial, legal, technical and financial abilities and not be discriminated against due to their size, degree of foreign affiliation or ownership, location, or the origin of their goods and services (Commonwealth Procurement Rules, para 5.3).

While the department must also take into consideration 'Procurement-Connected Policies', none of the relevant policies relate to anti-dumping or the work of the ADC.

The department procures general office paper through the whole of government Stationary and Office Supplies (SOS) Panel Arrangement. The use of the SOS Panel Arrangement is mandatory for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities.

During its future reviews of A4 copy paper procurement, the department will give consideration to the work of the Anti-Dumping Commission in relation to copy paper, within the constraints of the CPRs. It is also expected that the Department of Finance, which administers the SOS Panel Arrangement, would take these matters into account, as relevant, when selecting and reviewing the suppliers it places on the panel.

It is noted that, at present, the information on the ADC website indicates that the Commission's recent investigations into A4 copy paper from certain countries does not include Austria.

As a point of clarification, while the answers provided during the hearing related to A4 copy paper, the department also procures a small amount of A3 paper, and that paper is A3 Reflex (made in Australia and 100% recycled).