

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING : 08 February 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(AE16/191) - Secretary's speeches - Internal Product (DIBP)

Senator Bilyk, Catryna (L&CA) written:

Can a copy of any speeches delivered by the Secretary of Immigration and Border Protection at any staff meetings in 2015 please be provided?

Answer:

The Department does not routinely record or transcribe speeches delivered to staff by the Secretary. The transcript of a speech delivered on 2 July 2015 at the launch of the Strategy 2020 by Secretary Pezzullo is attached

Michael Pezzullo
Secretary
Department of Immigration and Border Protection
Strategy 2020 Launch

Checked Against Delivery

Thank you, Peter, and can I also welcome to the stage my friend and colleague, the Commissioner. Can I commence by congratulating Roman on his appointment. It's a very special thing that can happen in your professional career for you to be appointed to a new office, indeed sworn into it under law, at a ceremony presided over by the Prime Minister of Australia. I'd like to personally acknowledge Roman's achievements, and in this auditorium congratulate him personally. Well done, Roman.

Can I also take the opportunity to thank personally everyone who was involved in making yesterday happen, not just on the day, although our events team, our media team, the people division, staff and no doubt others that I might not have mentioned by name did a wonderful job pulling it all together. It created a wonderful atmosphere, a great positive start to the life of the new organisation. Again, to have the leader of the nation, the Minister, the senior office holders and then of course the actual swearing in event that had legal as well as professional significance was not a small task. But yesterday was not just the event that had been worked on all that time. All of the underlying elements of reform, integration, making all of the underlying pieces come together, yesterday was but the mere consummation of all of that vast work. So everyone is to be congratulated for that work.

From the time that Mr Morrison the former Minister made his announcement in May of 2014 that the coalition government had decided to move in this direction, to get from that point in May of 2014 to the point that we achieved yesterday was remarkable, was truly remarkable, and I'm personally very grateful to the entire team. The new Commissioner, the deputies, all of the officers who worked directly on reform and integration, all of the officers across each and every group, both in the former Departmental and Customs groups, and then increasingly from July last year the integrated divisions and groups, everyone pulled together. This was teamwork of the highest order. It wasn't reform being done to the organisation by some little outfit with a consultant off in some other building across the road, it wasn't being done in spite of day to day to work as everyone constantly reminds me as I get into lifts or as I bump into people at shopping centres. This has become central to what we do. It's become all consuming. It's changed the nature of how we work.

Sometimes reform comes along and it's an inconvenient change on the org chart and I've got to change my business cards, and reform can sometimes be an inconvenience to daily work. Well this

has been that, I know. And I know there is a personal impact about where your desk is, who works around you, who you work with, I know that that's been churn and turmoil, and in some cases we've adjusted decisions and in fact rearranged branches and whole divisions within groups as we calibrated our efforts. Please don't think that this effort has been embarked upon merely to cause you to have to change your desk or change where your coffee mug is and where you place your picture of your cat. I don't like to be inconvenienced in my life either. Believe me, I like nice, stable working environment as do many of you. So we're not doing this for the fun of it. We're not doing it because we like to make removalist agents and service providers rich. It's just simply part of what you need to do to effect change.

What the change is, is something much more than that. Much more than where your desk is, much more than where you put your coffee mug. It's about how we, how we undertake a mission on behalf of the nation, and that's what I want to talk about today. Today's event, the first town hall meeting in the headquarters with the advent of the new Department and the creation of the Australian Border Force is an opportunity to launch. As Peter said in his introductory remarks, the third, and in a sense most important part of a trilogy of reform documents that started with the Blueprint as Peter said, went through then, the Plan, which was informed by your comments and your feedback on the Blueprint and now has been replaced by an all-encompassing, all-consuming and singular strategic document, our Strategy for 2020, deliberately cast over a five year period.

Strategy 2020 has been refined based on your feedback on the Blueprint, on the Plan, on the work that we've done around culture and values, the work that we've done around our mission, the work that we've done around our vision. The work that we've done, and thank you so much for your feedback, on how we should collaborate together, that is it say with one another internally, but also how we should collaborate together across the government with States and Territories, with the community sector and civil society, with service providers, with industry groups, overseas partners and many other stakeholders.

So this document, Strategy 2020 which has been released today, I urge everyone to read it. From our newest recruits and graduates, to staff who might think that they are in low level ranks allegedly merely doing operational work allegedly, you are as important to this mission and its success as anyone else in the organisation. So from our most junior staff, our newest recruits through to the most senior officers, please read this document, please comprehend what it's saying, please comprehend what it means for you, for your team and for what your contribution to the greater effort is. I won't go through the document, that would not be the best use of time, but I do want to make a couple of observations.

First, if you turned up to work yesterday morning and you've certainly then turned up to work today, by law you turned up to work in a brand new organisation. By law the Department of Immigration that was set up in July 13 1945 actually ceased to exist at midnight on Tuesday night. A sole purpose

department with a great history that we commemorated last week at the conference and with a splendid publication, a splendid publication. I should take the opportunity to both congratulate and thank all the hard working staff, some of whom did the work over and above their daily duties, who put together the Immigration history book, it's just a fantastic publication, as well as the commemorative book that deals with the history of the customs function from 1901 to 2015, 114 proud years of service. Both of those publications are tremendously valuable resources, both for the current generation and they'll become iconic, indeed collectable items for future generations. So thank you to everyone who was involved in the production of those two splendid publications. We revere our history, we build on our history, and we commemorate our history. We are not prisoners of our history.

If you turned up to work yesterday morning, or indeed if you were working at one minute past midnight on Tuesday night, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection assumed at that instant by law, by the direction of the community that we serve through its Parliament, that Department where we took on the responsibilities in addition for migration which has been the core mission, indeed the sole mission at times since 1945, took on the additional missions of the control of our customs and trade systems, the movement of cargo and goods across our borders, and our maritime security. These are not incidental additional bolt on functions to the old immigration department. They are a central set of responsibilities as the 1945 responsibilities, and on some days frankly they are more important, depending on what's happening, what the key risks and threats to the nation are and what the key imperatives of the day are. None of that is to subsume or override or diminish the immigration mission, but it is now one of our core, key missions amongst others.

Similarly, if you turned up to work or you happen to be working at one minute past midnight, the old customs service in its various manifestations going back to federation days as we're reminded in our publication, the old customs service ceased to exist. It wasn't just a matter of saying, well I'm still really in customs and I'm just really going to focus on goods and cargo and I'm not really going to pay attention to the immigration stuff, and, yeah, the bosses in the head shed want me to wear this new uniform. It's a bit interesting, it's got a bit more bling on it but my job hasn't changed. I'm sorry, if you were thinking that at one minute past midnight on Tuesday night, you were sadly mistaken.

It is really fundamentally important that we all realise that we're one team, we have multiple responsibilities across a span and spectrum of issues and that things have changed. They haven't changed because some consultant told us to change; they haven't changed because the management wanted to torture themselves and everyone here with getting new business cards and changing desk arrangements and all the rest of it, breaking up long standing teams just for kicks.

They changed because the nation asked us to undertake a new mission by law. And so Strategy 2020 distils into a concise fashion and I also want to congratulate all the staff, principally in Policy Group but contributed to by every single group and every single division in this splendid publication which I think very pithily and concisely outlines our future mission which I quote "is to protect

Australia's border and manage the movement of people and goods across it. In doing so we contribute to the achievement of three principle outcomes strong national security, a strong economy and a prosperous and cohesive society. That is our mission and we reported for duty at midnight on Tuesday night.

We have a vision, how are we going to achieve our mission, that's our vision. We are Australia's trusted global gateway; we are the gateway between Australia and the world facilitating trade, travel and migration while protecting Australia from threats in everything we do. In doing so we must uphold the trust of the Australian people and its government that stems from the privileged place that we hold at the border and in the community generally. That's our vision.

The document and again, I won't give you a précis of the whole document because I really do want everyone to read it in the department and in the ABF to achieve our mission and to achieve as we stride for our vision we will work in a cohesive culture which is exemplified by positive values. The statement of culture I draw to attention, that we are a high performing organisation that demonstrates positive values, behaviours and professional standards which we show to both each other and to all our stakeholders. We operate as a team that is committed to each other, to our mission and to performance excellence and that the dedication, professionalism and passion of our people is evident in everything we do.

The document goes on to state our four core objectives and, again, I'll only just summarise those. Objective one and it is objective one is to protect Australia. When in doubt you choose to protect Australia. If there is a balance in your decision making you protect Australia. It's not our sole objective, not everything is reduced down to that objective but when there is any doubt or any requirement to prioritise be very clear, we protect Australia. Again, I want to stress, this is not a recommendation from a consultant, this is not a recommendation from a publicist who just wants to develop a glossy document, this is not, again, just the executive up on the fifth floor deciding what is it that we can do to cause disruption, cause churn, cause you to change your business cards and all those other things I talked about before. This comes straight from the people of Australia, through its Parliament and its government. Because we are professional public servants we understand what it is to perform a mission as directed. Objective two is to promote responsive migration permanent, temporary, short term, long term. Objective three is to advance trade and revenue goals. And objective four, in everything to do is to lead innovation. I commend those objectives and the detailed exposition of those details in the document.

In order to enable all of this activity we have set a number of key strategic responses which, again, I'll just summarise. In everything we do our responses will be marked by the following characteristics. We will treat the border as a continuum rather than a line or a physical boundary. We will always use an intelligence led risk based approach in all of our decision making, both strategic, operational and tactical. We will maintain our standing and indeed seek to extend our influence as a world leader in our field. We will always pursue collaborative partnerships to achieve our outcomes. We will be credible and consistent in our approach to client service and provide an increasingly seamless experience for all of our stakeholders. We will be an agile and innovative organisation with the capability to meet current and future challenges. And, of course, going back to the point of culture, we will embody a culture of professionalism and unwavering integrity.

Can I just conclude by making this observation? I recognise as I've inferred through these remarks that change is difficult, it has been difficult. From the mundane, moving around and changing daily arrangements, through to quite existential and profoundly challenging features of change, a fundamental change of mission. I know in some cases some colleagues are in this auditorium, and those that will be listening and watching this broadcast, joined the Customs Service or the Immigration Department in some cases many years ago. You have rendered faithful, loyal, professional service over many years. I know in some cases, because you've spoken to me about it, that service extends over three and in some cases four decades. None of that is being lost to history. None of that is being airbrushed from the archive. None of that is being devalued, trashed or in some way where we want you to feel that service hasn't been of value. In fact our ability to do what we've done from May last year when the announcement was made through to yesterday and through to today's launch of the strategy draws on the strength of our history of your service, of our traditions, of our legacies. In the same way that the Immigration Department in July 1945 started with 24 people – six in Canberra, six in Melbourne and interestingly and tellingly and indicative of the culture of the time, 12 in London. They probably would have turned up to work on the 14th of July, the day after Mr Caldwell had said as the Minister – "Well, we just set up a new department today" – and they probably didn't have quite the swearing in ceremony and all of the bling and all of the ceremony that we had yesterday.

I'm sure on the 14th of July 1945 when there was a war still going on, people were tired and hungry, they literally had gone through years of both depression and then rationing as a result of war, and the world was broken. We sometimes look around the world today and think the world is broken. No, it's not broken. We have many challenges, in some cases we are confronted by what my daughter calls first world problems. You know, our internet provider was a bit slow yesterday, the app didn't download quickly; the online purchase came in 36 hours rather than the standard offering of 24 hours. In the world of 1945 our predecessors thought that they were witnessing the end of the world and they hadn't even contemplated, because the world did not know or they did four weeks later, that man possessed the capacity to destroy cities with one bomb. Imagine what our colleagues would have felt like when they turned up to work on the 14th of July saying – "Now, what do they want us to do again?" – We draw on those strengths, we draw on those traditions and we're going to get the job done.