

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S PORTFOLIO

Group: 2

Program: Other Agency

Question No. SBE14/026

Senator Macdonald asked the following question at the hearing on 20 November 2014:

Senator Brandis: Senator, I read this document and, unless I missed something, apart from the rather general words that I pointed out to Senator O'Sullivan—to which Professor Triggs has just referred—there is certainly nothing in there to say it is part of our work plan for 2013-14 to hold an inquiry into children in detention.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister: I was reading the wrong section about what we are doing. As at 20 September—

Senator Brandis: That document was sent to me on 20 September—that is not necessarily the date of the document in fairness to Professor Triggs.

CHAIR: but certainly at 13 September—notwithstanding that Professor Triggs had been thinking about this since February of 2013 and had discussed it with previous ministers prior to September 2013—it had not yet morphed into anything more substantial than that; is that correct, Professor?

Prof. Triggs: This document was produced around about July that year, so it was a forward sense of where our work was taking us to the extent that it had then been agreed. So at any stage, if we choose—or I decide—we can conduct an inquiry, even if that is not in the work plan or the forward thinking.

CHAIR: I appreciate that but I was just wondering—

Prof. Triggs: This would have been around July of 2013.

CHAIR: Did you send this to the minister before Senator Brandis?

Prof. Triggs: Yes, we did.

Senator Brandis: That would have been Minister Dreyfus.

CHAIR: When was that sent?

Prof. Triggs: The previous Attorney would have received a copy of this.

CHAIR: When was that sent—perhaps on notice?

Prof. Triggs: I will take it on notice, but it would have been around July.

CHAIR: Can you let us have a copy of your letter to the previous Attorney with any attachments. That would be helpful. If nobody has any more questions, thank you very much

again, Professor Triggs and Ms Raman, for your evidence. I am sure we will see you again sometime.

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

After referring to the Commission's records, I can confirm that the Commission's document *Our Agenda: A Guide to the Commission and its Activities for 2013-14* was not publically released until late September 2013. The document was therefore not provided to Attorney-General the Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP prior to the federal election, but was provided to Attorney-General the Hon Senator George Brandis QC on 20 September 2013.