

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 17 October 2016

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE16/015) - Screening of staff - Internal Product (DIBP)

Senator Carr, Kim (L&CA 66) asked:

Senator KIM CARR: And why is there such a long delay, if it is true? If it is not eight years, how long is it? And is it true, Mr Pezzullo, that everyone in the minister's office has a security clearance?

Mr Pezzullo: That would be a matter for the minister to address.

Senator Cash: I would need to take that on notice for you, Senator.

Senator KIM CARR: Through the appropriate screening—because there are different methods of securing a security clearance. Do the same rules apply to the minister's office?

Mr Pezzullo: I will not speak for those employed under the MOP(S) Act directly by the minister, but as to the DLOs—

Senator KIM CARR: Of course. You would expect the DLOs to be covered by departmental process. I would like to know: are the minister's office employees covered by the same provisions?

Mr Pezzullo: I would have to refer that to the minister.

Senator Cash: Again, I will take that on notice for you.

Senator KIM CARR: Has that screening process been outsourced, or is it undertaken by the Federal Police?

Mr Pezzullo: Generally, screening across the Commonwealth is undertaken, with very few exceptions, by the Australian government's screening-security vetting authority in the Department of Defence but, again, to the extent to which it applies to ministerial staff, we will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

Consistent with the requirements of the Australian Government's Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF), all Departmental employees are required to undergo employment screening and hold a minimum Baseline security clearance. This requirement applies to all Departmental employees who perform Departmental Liaison Officer and related functions within the Minister's office.

Security clearance requirements for all staff employed by Ministers (including Parliamentary Secretaries) under Part III of the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOPS Act) are governed by the Special Minister of State's Determination 2012/1.