

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee

Additional estimates 2010-2011; February 2011

Questions on notice from **Senator Trood** to Austrade

Austrade Business Board

A. Does Austrade have a Business Board?

B. If not, why hasn't this been established? Is the plan still to proceed with this initiative?

Answer

A. No.

In June 2003, Mr John Uhrig AC presented to the Australian Government a *Review of Statutory Authorities and Office Holders*. As part of its response to the review, the then Government decided that Austrade would cease to be governed by a Board under the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act and become an agency under the Financial Management and Accountability Act and Public Service Act, managed by a Chief Executive Officer who reports to the Minister for Trade. Amendments were made to the Australian Trade Commission Act to give effect to this decision and these amendments came in to effect on 1 July 2006.

B. There are no current plans to establish an Austrade Business Board.

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Securrency

1. Can Austrade confirm informing Securrency in 2007 and 2008 that its Vietnam agent was suspected to be a representative of the Vietnamese Government?
2. Can Austrade reveal precisely what it told Securrency about Mr Luong's suspected position?
3. How many other companies has Austrade recommended Mr Luong to as a partner in Vietnam?
4. Did Austrade's former commissioner to Vietnam, Elizabeth Masamune, help organise visa arrangements for Vietnamese officials travelling through the United States on Securrency sponsored business? If so, when did this happen and what was the nature of the assistance?
5. What did Austrade inform Securrency about its agent Abdul Kayum Syed Ahmad in Malaysia?
6. Did Austrade inform Securrency Mr Kayum was involved in trading arms?

Answer

(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6)

Given the ongoing Australian Federal Police (AFP) investigation, Austrade has sought AFP advice on responding to these questions. The AFP advice is as follows:

- The AFP confirms that currently there is no evidence that Austrade, or any of its employees acting on its behalf, have engaged in criminal activities.
- Austrade is cooperating fully with the ongoing AFP investigation and is providing all information requested to the AFP. As such, a range of staff have been involved in this assistance including, for example, in providing documents.
- Questions about the investigation should be directed to the AFP, not to Austrade.