



**Australian Government**

**Department of Veterans' Affairs**

**ACT OFFICE**

Dr Kathleen Dermody  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Dermody

Further to my letter to you of 20 October 2011, I seek to correct evidence given by myself and two other officers of the Department of Veterans' Affairs to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Additional Estimates Hearing on 19 October 2011.

On page 94 of the proof Committee Hansard, in relation to collocation of premises, I stated: "The approach that we take in relation to market-testing or investigating commercial properties in different locations is that we use commercial consultants and/or local real estate agents and we also use the government property repository, which has available on it any government property locations that may be coming available. We tend to use panels that have been established for this type of thing, and it is typically less than \$10,000 or up to around \$10,000." This is incorrect and the correct information is:

"The approach that we take in relation to market-testing or investigating commercial properties in different locations is that we engage independent commercial consultants. DVA contracts with two independent commercial property firms who operate nationally and have no vested interest in the properties selected. They interact directly with local real estate agents and developers anonymously on DVA's behalf. The cost associated with the market testing varies depending upon the complexity and nature of the enquiries. For similar types of searches such as this one it is typically up to \$10,000."

On page 95 I gave evidence: "As I said, we go to panels and use panels and use commercial consultants because we are looking for commercial property." The evidence is incorrect and I provide the correction below.

"We contract with independent commercial property consultants because they understand Commonwealth commercial office requirements."

On page 101 I gave evidence: "We typically use local agents but we do not always; it is dependent on the size and the location and the number of real estate agents within the area." I would like to advise the correct evidence below.

“DVA contracts with independent commercial property firms. These firms operate nationally and are not located in Lismore. They interact directly with local real estate agents and developers anonymously on DVA’s behalf.”

On page 102 I stated that - “I was operating under my understanding at the time that what we typically do is use either local real estate agents or those who have knowledge of the local area. Unfortunately, in Lismore, my understanding is that there are only two local real estate agents.” This evidence is incorrect and the correct information is:

“I was operating on my understanding at that time in May. I have subsequently checked and can confirm that DVA engaged specialist independent commercial consultants, from outside of Lismore, who interacted directly with the local real estate agents and developers anonymously on our behalf.

I have also checked and there are more than twenty local real estate agents in Lismore, and I have been advised that of these two regularly deal with commercial office space.”

On page 92 of the proof Committee Hansard, in answering a question concerning the training contract for the course *Understanding Military Culture and Mental Health*, Mr Winzenberg advised that the provider was O2C. This information is incorrect and was provided to Mr Winzenberg at the hearing by a colleague who unfortunately misunderstood the question asked. Mr Winzenberg offers the following correct information:

“By way of background, this two hour session has been developed and delivered by a South Australian based staff member. Originally it was developed to address the location’s need to increase staff awareness of military culture and mental health literacy. The staff member who devised the package is currently working in the Mental Health Policy team and has post graduate studies in psychology. He is an ex-serviceman (Army) and is also the son of a Vietnam veteran.


From 2009 onwards the session has been delivered to Veterans’ Services Centre staff as part of their induction. The session is delivered either face-to-face or by video conference. Sessions have been held in South Australia, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania. To date around 150 staff have attended this session.”

On page 108 of the proof Committee Hansard, in relation to BEST Grants, Ms Stevenson stated “They provide them in their application form, which also asks for the number of hours of telephone inquiries they take...”. This is incorrect and Ms Stevenson offers the following correct information:

“They provide them in their application form, which also asks for the hours of welfare assistance provided ...”.

I would be grateful if you could provide these corrections to the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Narelle Dotta  
General Manager  
Corporate Division  
30 November 2011