



Speaker

Mr Brendan Smyth, MLA
Chair
Select Committee on Estimates 2014-2015
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Civic Square, London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Mr Smyth

Detailed below are the responses to questions taken on notice at the Office of the Legislative Assembly's appearance at last Friday's Estimates Committee.

During the hearing a number of other matters were raised, and I wish to provide the committee with additional information.

"At a hearing of the Select Committee on Estimates 2014-15 held on Friday 13 June 2014, Mrs Jones MLA asked the Office a number of questions, as follows:

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 - (a) How many reports of bullying have been made in the OLA;
 - (b) What process is used for dealing/unpacking these reports?
 - (c) How many of the reports were substantiated?

Following inquiry, Mrs Jones' office subsequently clarified that she wished the question to relate to the past 10 years.

In response to the question, the answers are:

- (a) 1.
 - (b) Any reports would be handled under the Policy and procedures for dealing with Workplace Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying, last updated for the Assembly in March 2012.
 - (c) The matter was resolved.
- 2
 - (a) Have any cases of sexual harassment been lodged relating to the OLA;
 - (b) If yes, were any of these reported cases substantiated?

Following inquiry, Mrs Jones' office subsequently clarified that she wished the question to relate to the past 10 years.

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In response to the question, the answers are:

- (a) nil;
- (b) n/a

3. In relation to the contracts entered into by OLA, could OLA advise:

- (a) The number of contracts entered into with ACT based businesses (and value); and
- (b) The number entered into with businesses external to the ACT (and value).

In response to this question:

- (a) There were 19 active contracts for the period (1 July 2013 – 13 June 2014). Of those, 10 were contracts where the relevant party (company or individual) had an ABN registered in the ACT. The total value of contracts with ACT-registered parties is \$1.37m; and
- (b) Nine contracts were in place where the other party was registered interstate. The total value of contracts with interstate-registered parties is \$2.61m”

Accessing video clips from daily on demand service

Currently, as advised at the hearing, to provide a member with an audio visual record of a segment of proceedings rather than the whole file of a session is resource intensive. The Hansard, Technology and Office Library has advised that it could take between 30 and 45 minutes to isolate the required section and edit the file and then burn it onto a DVD. So at the moment it is not practical to offer this as a regular service.

Hansard Technology and Library is investigating what refinements could be made in the upgraded system.

Purchasing Library research services from APH

As advised at the hearing, OLA has in the past made overtures to the Parliamentary Library for research services with no success. The Assembly Librarian made another such contact immediately after the client needs analysis report was finalised but has had no reply, including after follow up. Her approach was in response to recommendation #19 of the client needs analysis: “that the Library examine options for commissioning a series of research briefs on significant public policy issues”. The report also stated that “Any such addition to Library service offerings would need to be carefully scoped, costed and funded before it could proceed. A trial involving the production of a small number of research briefs (perhaps up to two or three) might be a sensible means of proceeding, allowing for alternative approaches and the value of the service to be assessed. “

The Librarian has provided further information which needs to be considered in the context of the Library's funding capacity such as whether funds could be better spent by providing access to databases such as "Nexis news" and "Ibisworld Industry reports". Putting a complete media database in the hands of each MLA's office should enable staff to undertake more customised research about their specific policy needs bearing in mind that much of the work of MLAs relates to local issues which may not be part of the research briefs generally provided by the Parliamentary Library.

OLA's limited access to funds has generally sent it down the path of providing better access for MLAs, staff and public servants to find their own information through a greater range of databases rather than funding limited research on a small range of topics. Nevertheless, OLA will endeavour to elicit a response from APH to at least examine whether this is a viable option.

As indicated to the committee, I will be exploring this option further in light of advice received.

Yours sincerely



Vicki Dunne MLA
Speaker
Legislative Assembly for the ACT

25 June 2014