



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2022-2023

Mr James Milligan MLA (Chair), Mr Andrew Braddock MLA (Deputy Chair),
Dr Marisa Paterson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Asked by MS LAWDER AND MS LEE on 25 August 2022: MR RAMSAY took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 25 August [PAGE 415]]

In relation to: Recruitment of the Chief of Staff to the Chief Executive Officer of the Cultural Facilities Corp

MS LAWDER: I have a question for Mr Ramsay as CEO of the Cultural Facilities Corporation. It is about the CFC chief of staff role. My understanding is that the position was not there prior to the appointment of Mr Ramsay as the current CEO. Can you confirm whether that is the case?

In addition, I note that the role was gazetted about four weeks after Mr Ramsay started at the CFC, with Mr Ramsay as the contact person for the role. But it was only open for one week, from 12 to 19 January—arguably, during the quietest time of the year in Canberra. Was that an appropriate length of time to attract a suitable range of applicants? How does that fit with the minister's earlier comment about the selection process for the CEO? I think the minister specifically mentioned the usual public service selection process. I am not sure that one week in January would be viewed as the usual public service selection process.

Mr Ramsay: The appointment process for that new role arose from conversations that I had had with the outgoing CEO at the time of my commencement. As the minister indicated earlier today, Ms Elvin worked with me in some significant periods of handover. She indicated to me that it was her view that the organisation was one position in the leadership team, the executive or the leadership team, short, and that was creating significant pressures around a range of matters, particularly in what was then called the corporate team, or the finance team, which is now the central team of the Cultural Facilities Corporation.

Arising out of those conversations with the former CEO, and also arising out of conversations with the CFC board, it was my determination, as the chief executive officer, that the most appropriate position, having considered a few different ones along the way, was that of an organisational chief of staff position. That position was created in accordance with the processes under the Cultural Facilities Corporation and the ACT public service for the creation of a position.

It was, as you say, advertised. We were extremely pleased with the quality of the applications that came in. The selection process was overseen by a panel that was duly put together. The panel comprised me, another member of the senior leadership team from the CFC and a member of the

board. On the basis of the applications that came in, which were high quality, the process was an interview process and then appointment.

The reason that it moved quickly was that, as Ms Elvin had indicated to me, as the board had indicated and as I reflected on it as well, in my decision as CEO, the gap in the leadership team was creating flow-on effects right through the organisation. One of the key areas of this particular position was leadership and oversight in the HR area of the organisation, which had previously fallen to the responsibility of the chief financial officer. We believed that it was appropriate for the HR area to be separated from the chief financial officer, to allow the chief financial officer to provide more detailed oversight of the finances, including the financial development of the organisation. Also, part of the core work of the organisational chief of staff is organisational strategic collaboration. We have been working with the board on a number of particular projects that that person has been leading since then as well.

MS LAWDER: What about the timing and the one-week period?

Mr Ramsay: There is a range of time that is available within the ACT public service. I took advice in relation to that from within the organisation. It was publicly advertised for that period of time. As I say, I thought that the quality of the applications that came in was excellent, and we were able to proceed with the appointment on that process.

MS LAWDER: How many applications were there, how many people were short listed and who was involved in the short listing process?

Mr Ramsay: Starting at the back and moving forward, the short listing was by the selection panel—as I say, it was me, a member of the leadership team and a member of the board. That is a standard ACT public service selection panel process. I will have to take on notice the number of applications that came in. It is my recollection that two people were short listed, but I will confirm that and get back to the committee.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. As the CEO, did you write the position description or was someone else responsible for that?

Mr Ramsay: Ultimately, it was my responsibility to finalise the position description. That is the case with appointments within the CFC. The delegations for all employment within the CFC sit with the chief executive officer. As delegate, it is my responsibility to finalise or to approve all position descriptions across the CFC.

In terms of this particular one, it was done in consultation with members of the existing leadership team; with the chief financial officer, given that it was impacting on his particular working responsibilities; and with members of the executive of the board.

MS LAWDER: Who wrote it? Did you write something and send it to the CFO or did the CFO write something and send it to you?

Mr Ramsay: I did more of the drafting than others, yes, but it was done in consultation with others as well.

MS LAWDER: Are you able to table a copy of the position description for the committee?

Mr Ramsay: Yes, I can take that on notice and get the position description.

MS LAWDER: I understand that the position was advertised as temporary. Is it still temporary or is it now permanent?

Mr Ramsay: The position is a permanent position.

MS LAWDER: When was that decision made?

Mr Ramsay: I will take details of the particular dates on notice.

MS LAWDER: Who made that decision?

Mr Ramsay: The CEO has the delegate responsibility for all matters of employment within the Cultural Facilities Corporation.

MS LEE: Mr Ramsay, I understand that the candidate who was ultimately successful in this role was your former chief of staff when you were a minister in this place. Did you have any contact with the chief of staff during the application process, either initiated by you or by her, about the role?

Mr Ramsay: It is my recollection that I did not, but I will be happy to confirm and to advise the committee if that is not the case.

MS LEE: Can you also confirm, whilst you are doing that—or you might recall—whether, if you did have contact, you discussed the nature of that contact with anyone else in the CFC, including the selection panel?

Mr Ramsay: I can advise the committee that, in accordance with ACT public service employment matters, each member of the panel was asked to declare any previous engagement with any person who was an applicant to the position and, because of that, any potential risks around conflict. That is a standard matter with every employment process. That was done by me and by the other two members of the panel in relation to more than one person who had applied for the position.

MS LEE: How did you manage that conflict? Did you recuse yourself from the interviewing of your former COS or were you sitting in on that interview?

Mr Ramsay: I was part of that, but we had worked through with the panel and with the chair of the board the process of the declaration of any former engagement that members of the panel had with this applicant and other applicants. That was, again, standard process for ACT public service employment to be able to manage that. The person that we were consulting primarily on that was the chair of the board of the CFC.

MS LEE: From recollection, you mentioned there were two candidates short listed?

Mr Ramsay: That is my recollection.

MS LEE: Were both short listed candidates interviewed?

Mr Ramsay: Yes. My use of the term “short listed” is short listed for interview.

MS LAWDER: Can I clarify that the person who was successful in the role, who was, from my understanding, working somewhere else at that time, just happened to see the ad for the position in the one-week window and applied for it without any contact from anyone to suggest that they might apply—someone from CFC, for example, to say, “Hey, have you seen this?”

Mr Ramsay: It is my recollection that the advertisement was placed and there was not drawing that to anyone’s attention. We were confident that, with the importance of this particular piece of work, it would draw a good round of applications, and we were pleased with the quality of the applications that came in.

TARA CHEYNE MLA: The answers to the Member’s questions are as follows:

The Cultural Facilities Corporation, an independent body with a governing board, advises that:

- a) There were seven applications received for the Chief of Staff position. Two applicants were shortlisted
- b) A copy of the Position Description is at [Attachment A](#)
- c) The Chief of Staff position was created, advertised, and filled as a permanent position
- d) There was no contact between the Chief Executive Officer, Cultural Facilities Corporation, and the Chief of Staff during the application process.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2022-2023

Signature: 
By Minister for the Arts, Tara Cheyne MLA

Date: 