

From: s 22
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd: Home Affairs Estimates - Cyber Wardens [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 24 October 2023 2:42:43 PM

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From: s 22 [REDACTED]@dss.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 3:04 pm
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Subject: Home Affairs Estimates - Cyber Wardens [SEC=OFFICIAL]

SENATOR PATERSON: 89 degrees east. In response, the Department said that it was not aware that 89 degrees east would be leading the delivery of the Cyber Wardens program. And I think the implication of that, that it was a Treasury Department decision to effectively award the contract to 89 degrees east. Is that fair? Summary?

HOME AFFAIRS: That's correct, Senator.

SENATOR PATERSON: How, having said that, COSBOA made a submission to the Cyber Security Strategy and it was dated on the 14 April, it says in its submission proposing this Cyber Wardens program that 89 degrees east developed the Cyber Wardens solution. That seems to contradict the Department's view that it didn't have visibility of 89 degrees East's involvement.

HOME AFFAIRS. So, I think there's two separate issues there, Senator. The first one is a submission to a public inquiry supporting the development of the Cyber Security Strategy. So, the Department was absolutely aware that that was in the submission by the Council of Small Businesses of Australia, but the Department was not involved in the decision making process in relation to the funding of that particular program that was taken forward by Treasury.

SENATOR PATERSON: But in the answers that you've provided, it says that this proposal was developed in the context of considering the Cyber Security Strategy. It appears to have come out of the Cyber Security Strategy.

HOME AFFAIRS: The proposal was agreed and announced by government in the budget.

SENATOR PATERSON: Yep. And it was, as far as I can tell, the proposal was made to the Government as part of the consultation for the Cyber Security Strategy.

HOME AFFAIRS: So, there was a submission by COSBOA which outlined that program of work and there was also a budget decision led by Treasury on that program of work. So, maybe we just haven't explained the difference of the two separate processes that we're running at the same time.

SENATOR PATERSON: Okay, just clarify for me. Where does the \$23.4 million come from? Where is it funded from?

HOME AFFAIRS: For the cyber wardens. Yes. Well, I can tell you that that was a proposal put forward by Treasury in the context of the budget and it appears in budget paper number two.

SENATOR PATERSON: Did Treasury pay for it or did Department of Home Affairs pay for it?

HOME AFFAIRS: I'll have to ask who funded that? I'm not aware that the Department funded that. No.

SENATOR PATERSON: Right.

HOME AFFAIRS: We understand, Senator. It was Treasury.

SENATOR PATERSON: Treasury funded it.

HOME AFFAIRS: Right.

SENATOR PATERSON: And so any issues to the management of conflicts of interest that arise out of this granting of \$20 million of taxpayers money in a non-competitive tender process should be directed to Treasury.

HOME AFFAIRS: Correct.

SENATOR PATERSON: Because the relevance here, obviously, is that I won't name the individuals, it's not necessary to do so. But this is a firm that has a number of prominent Labor affiliated former Labor staff and other things, and that's a lot of money to give to an organisation with apparently no process at all. And not much effort appears to be put into managing potential conflicts from that. But Home Affairs is saying, not our responsibility.

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