

Responses to Questions taken on Notice

Inquiry into the appointment of Mr John Barilaro as Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner to the Americas

Hearing Date – 2 November 2022

Question (page 32)

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you also understand that going directly to a Minister in March of this year, which is some time after you've joined the public service, to a reasonable person would be highly inappropriate? I've never come across —

STEPHEN CARTWRIGHT: Two things I'll say to that, Mr Mookhey. The first is the Minister invited me to reach out to him and gave me his mobile number in case I ever needed to, and it got to the point where my relocation allowance had run out. I was desperately trying to secure a property to live in and there was just nothing coming out of my department. One minute they would say, "Yes, we are paying your rent", then it would be, "Oh, hang on a minute, we've changed our mind." I got to a point where I said there's got to be a game breaker here, somewhere. I was given the offer to contact the Minister if ever I needed to, so I thought this is one of those situations.

But I'll add to that, Mr Mookhey, something else, and that is that on 28 September I received an email from Ms Brown which advised me that Cabinet had decided to adopt an alternative approach to the appointment of the agent general involving the drafting of legislation so that the appointments of the agent general and the New South Wales commissioners would be made by the Minister of trade. She then went on to say, "We expect your existing conditions will be grandfathered to this new arrangement, and we are going to have meetings between the CEO of Investment NSW, Minister for trade," — which was the Minister that I wrote to — "over the coming weeks to work out the legislative arrangements and the transition, and we have a number of those meetings lined up over the next few days —"

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Do you mind tabling that email, Mr Cartwright?

STEPHEN CARTWRIGHT: I'll seek approval to do that, which is what I'm instructed to do, Mr Mookhey. I'm instructed that if you call for any documents —

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: Sure, if you want to take that on notice?

STEPHEN CARTWRIGHT: I'll take it on notice. But let me say to you that I have never received any communication that counteracts this email.

Answer

The email referred to by Mr Cartwright contains information relating to Cabinet deliberations and potential future matters for Cabinet consideration. Documents containing cabinet in confidence information are unable to be produced.