

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION — PORTFOLIOS — BUSINESS SCAM

5852. Mr B.S. Wyatt to the minister representing the Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Electoral Affairs:

I refer to the online news article published by the ABC online on 17 August 2016 in relation to scammers stealing \$500,000 from West Australian businesses over the past two years as reported by the Department of Consumer Protection, and I ask:

- (a) have any WA Government agencies within the Minister's portfolio of responsibility fallen victim to these scams over the past two years;
- (b) if so which agencies have been impacted;
- (c) for each agency impacted, what was the nature of, and the dollar amount lost in connection to each scam;
- (d) have criminal charges been laid against any persons or entities in connection to these scams; and
- (e) what measures have you taken to ensure that public funds are not lost to scammers via WA Government agencies?

**Mrs L.M. Harvey replied:**

Department of Aboriginal Affairs

- (a) No.
- (b)–(d) Not applicable.
- (e) The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has several robust financial controls to ensure appropriate use of public funds, including electronic approval, separation of duties, ongoing monitoring and reporting, regular reconciliation and acquittal of all financial transactions. The Department also circulates, to appropriate personnel, details of known scams as they come to light through various information networks.

Department of Education

- (a) No.
- (b)–(d) Not applicable.
- (e) The Department of Education ensures the appropriate use of public funds through its financial control framework that includes reconciliation of financial transactions, electronic approvals, separation of duties and ongoing monitoring and reporting. Details of known scams are circulated internally to appropriate personnel. The Department of Commerce, Consumer Protection alert letter on this issue was circulated within the Department of Education on 23 August 2016.

Country High School Hostels Authority

- (a) No.
- (b)–(d) Not applicable.
- (e) The Country High School Hostels Authority ensures the appropriate use of public funds through its financial control framework that includes reconciliation of financial transactions, electronic approvals, separation of duties and ongoing monitoring and reporting. Details of known scams are circulated internally to appropriate personnel. The Department of Commerce, Consumer Protection alert letter on this issue was circulated within the Country High School Hostels Authority on 23 August 2016.

Department of Education Services

- (a) No.
- (b)–(d) Not applicable.
- (e) The Department of Education Services has implemented a number of internal financial controls to ensure the appropriate application of both controlled and administered public funds. This includes electronic transaction approval by a minimum of two officers, an appropriate level of segregation of duties, ongoing monitoring and reporting of potential irregular transactions, monthly financial reconciliations and regular acquittal of all financial transactions. The Department also circulates to the relevant personnel, details of any known scams as they are advised by other agencies or our banking partners via various information networks.

School Curriculum and Standards Authority

- (a) No.

(b)–(d) Not applicable.

(e) The School Curriculum and Standards Authority has strong financial controls to ensure the appropriate use of public funds. These include electronic approval for reimbursement, separation of duties, ongoing monitoring and reporting, regular reconciliation and acquittal of financial transactions. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority also circulates, to appropriate personnel, details of known scams as they come to light through various information networks.

Western Australian Electoral Commission

(a) No.

(b)–(d) Not applicable.

(e) The Western Australian Electoral Commission has strong controls in place to guard against bogus invoices including electronic approval and reconciliation of invoices against requisitions with double checking of all payments. The Commission's finance and IT staff are notified of known scams and suspicious invoices are appropriately investigated.