

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Budget Estimates Hearing—May 2014

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Queen's Dining Set**
Question: **194**
Hansard Reference **pp 44, 49-50, 26 May 2014**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 July 2014

Senator WONG: I had some questions about a dining set that is on display currently. Is it the Queen's dining set?

Ms Mills: Yes, we have a set called the Queen's dining set.

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Senator WONG: So some of it is in the Speaker's suite and some of it is in the President's suite?

Ms Hanley: Yes.

Senator WONG: And how long has that arrangement been in place?

Ms Hanley: I cannot answer that. I do not know.

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Senator WONG: Are you able to tell me how many other additional allocations of the Queen's crockery have been made to the Speaker since September?

Ms Hanley: I cannot.

Senator WONG: Is that because there were not any or because you would need to check?

Ms Hanley: We would need to check.

Senator WONG: Okay. I would appreciate it if you take that on notice. Could you check also why it is that the Speaker has so much more of this crockery than the President?

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Senator WONG: So there are no guidelines and no protocols—they can use it for whatever they like—and you are not aware whether or not anybody has used it before. And you will take on notice the history of the allocation?

Ms Hanley: Yes.

Senator WONG: What I am interested in is: how long has the Speaker had this many, how did it get up to 248? If you have got 248 pieces, that this a full dinner for how many people? I do not know; I do not do catering; it is a lot of people.

Ms Hanley: It would be, yes.

Answer

The Royal Minton dinner service (referred to as the Queen's dinner service) was purchased by the Prime Minister's Department for Her Majesty the Queen's visit in 1954 and after the royal visit it was commonly used in the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms at Old Parliament House. Ownership of the dinner service was transferred to the Joint House Department in 1964.

DPS understands that pieces of the Queen's dinner service have been stored in the kitchens of both Presiding Officers suites and in the DPS Art Store since 1988. There is no set allocation and pieces of the dinner service are moved between suites and storage to meet operational requirements.

In December 2011, the President's suite underwent an extensive refurbishment and DPS was asked to remove the pieces of the Queen's dinner service for storage. The dinner service was not returned to the President's suite after the refurbishment concluded, and as a consequence the Speaker's suite has held a larger amount in storage than the President's suite.

In March 2014, DPS was advised by the Department of the House of Representatives that 240 pieces of the dinner service were in the Speaker's suite.

Since September 2013 DPS has allocated eight additional plates to the Speaker's suite.