

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

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Functions held in PH**

Question: **207**

Written: **Senator Rhiannon**

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

1. Given Parliament House, and its rooms and facilities including MPs' suites, are publicly funded, on what basis do are facilities allowed to be hired out free of charge?
2. What are the guidelines for holding party political fund-raising events in APH rooms and facilities?
3. What is the process to ensure that APH rooms and facilities are not used for political fund-raising events?
  - a. If so what are the rules around this?
  - b. Are they publicly available?
4. Please supply a list of party fundraising events that have been held in APH rooms and facilities in the last three years?
  - a. Including details of what the event was, what room it was held in, who booked the room, what organisation hosted the event?
  - b. If an existing list cannot be provided, why that list not publicly available?
5. If the DPS does not have clear guidelines on managing party political events and political fund raising events held in parliament, does the DPS have the power to draft such guidelines or would that have to come from the Minister's office?
6. Could such guidelines be considered under the Ministerial Code of Conduct or some similarly relevant procedural document?

#### **Answer**

1. Certain venues in Parliament House are available for hire through the catering contractor, IHG. These venues are: the Great Hall; Marble Foyer; Theatre and Theatre foyer; Mural Hall; Senate and House of Representatives alcoves; Private Dining Rooms; and the Queen's Terrace Café, Terrace and Gallery.

Up to 220 parliamentary events are funded as part of the catering contract, with DPS meeting the cost of any additional parliamentary events. Operating Policy and Procedure 24 (Use of the Parliament House Facilities for Functions and Events) outlines what events are parliamentary (funded) events and what are events are non-parliamentary (non-funded) events. The categories of funded functions include:

- a. a function for any parliamentary purpose, including the Parliament's education and public relations activities under the auspices of the International Community Relations Office (ICRO) and the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO)—this category also includes special ceremonial events, such as the Opening of Parliament;
- b. a function arranged by the Executive Government, which is supported by the Parliament as a whole—primarily national events arranged by the Ceremonial and Hospitality Unit (CERHOS) of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet;
- c. free public performances;
- d. functions that are supported by the Presiding Officers in their capacity as Presiding Officers;
- e. official functions that are held by one of the three parliamentary departments (note that this does not include social functions);
- f. certain meetings or functions held by Approved Parliamentary Groups;

- g. functions that relate to the activities of the Parliament as a whole, or of one House, such as swearing in of the Governor-General; and
- h. functions held by Parliamentary Joint Committees, or Committees of either House.

All non-parliamentary events are charged on a full cost recovery basis.

- 2. There are no specific guidelines relating to party fundraising events. Functions and events held in venues hired through the catering contractor must comply with guidelines, approved by the Presiding Officers, relating to the use of Parliament House facilities for functions and events.
- 3. See 2. above.
- 4. DPS holds information relating to venues in Parliament House that are hired for functions and events through the catering contractor, IHG. At the time of booking a venue for a function or event, the organiser is asked to provide the catering contractor information about the proposed function or event. Organisers are not required to disclose whether an event is for party fundraising.

The answer to Question on Notice 187 sets out a list of functions and events held during the last three financial years, in venues hired through IHG, in which the information provided by the person booking the venue to IHG indicates that the purpose of the event involves fundraising (including where 'fundraising' is for the purpose of recouping costs) or that there will be fundraising at the event.

- 5. Guidelines relating to the use of Parliament House facilities for functions and events are a matter for the Presiding Officers.
- 6. Questions relating to the Ministerial Code of Conduct should be directed to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.