



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

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13 December 2013

Ms Lyn Beverley  
Secretary  
Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee  
The Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Beverley

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARING  
18 NOVEMBER 2013 – DEPARTMENT OF THE SENATE  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE**

At the hearing on Monday 18 November 2013, the Department of the Senate took questions on notice. The discussion and questions covered a range of areas, and the responses are provided below.

*(a) How the request for the bookcase was made*

Requests for service by senators are typically made in a number of ways: e-mail, telephone call, and informal discussions.

The relevant file indicates that the request was made in person by Senator Brandis to the former Usher of the Black Rod (Ms Andrea Griffiths). A copy of the e-mail advising of Senator Brandis's request is attached at Attachment A.

The purchase of the bookcase was approved by the then Deputy Black Rod (Mr Nick Tate) in accordance with the Financial Management and Accountability Regulations 1997. The supporting financial documentation is at Attachment B.

*(b) How the bookcase was moved and the cost of moving*

As I indicated in my evidence on 18 November 2013, the movement of the bookcase in May 2010 was carried out by an external contractor, Right Now, which was engaged to carry

out a range of tasks for senators and the department. The total cost for these tasks for the period was \$1,014.75.

A copy of the invoice (and associated informal list of tasks for the period) is attached at Attachment C.

*(c) The process for assessing a request from a senator*

As part of its service to senators, the Department of the Senate may, from time to time, provide additional furniture to senators. When receiving a request from a senator for additional furniture, the approach of the department is to first examine its existing holdings of furniture to determine whether the request may be met from those holdings.

Where the department does not hold a particular item, the department may seek to borrow the item from other parliamentary departments. If this is not possible, it may seek to purchase the item externally. Each request is examined on a case-by-case basis by the Usher of the Black Rod (or her delegate) having regard to a range of factors, including relevant Commonwealth procurement guidelines, the cost of the request and the utility of the item to be purchased.

*(d) A list of additional furniture provided to senators*

Since January 2008, the department has purchased four items of specific furniture for senators:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Senator</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost (inc. GST)</b>
January 2008	Brandis	Bookcase	\$ 6,957.50
September 2008	Fielding	Credenza with pigeon holes	\$ 2,673.00
March 2009	Xenophon	Meeting table (office)	\$ 1,051.60
November 2011	B. Brown	Meeting table (party room)	\$16,879.50

The supporting financial documentation is at Attachments D, E and F.

For completeness, I note that the department has also provided a range of other furniture to senators. The table below sets out the additional furniture provided for the period of January 2008 to November 2013:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Senator</b>	<b>Suite</b>	<b>Item</b>
Jan-08	Brandis	SG.34	Bookcase ordered: \$6957.50 (Inc GST)
Apr-08	Stott Despoja	S1 101	Baby cot provided - drawn from stock
Jun-08	Macdonald	S1.38	2 additional 'status B' bookcases were provided to replace existing shelving, at the request of Design Integrity
Jun-08	Marshall	SG.117	Round meeting table - drawn from existing stock

<b>Date</b>	<b>Senator</b>	<b>Suite</b>	<b>Item</b>
Jul-08	Polley	SG.35	A computer desk was installed -drawn from stock
Aug-08	Brandis	SG.34	Step stool: \$211.30 (Inc GST)
Aug-08	Hanson -Young	S1.42	Baby cot provided - drawn from stock
Aug-08	Hanson -Young	S1.43	High chair purchased: \$159.00 (Inc GST)
Sep-08	Fielding	SG.61	Free standing credenza with pigeon holes purchased: \$2,673.00 (Inc GST)
Sep-08	Ryan	S1.51	A computer desk was installed - drawn from stock
Oct-08	Coonan	SG.90	Meeting table - drawn from stock
Dec-08	Brandis	SG.34	additional credenza (status B) - bottom only
Mar-09	Xenophon	S1.56	Meeting table purchased: \$1,051.60 (Inc GST)
Mar-09	Williams	SG.108	Two additional tub chairs
Jul-09	Humphries	S1.34	A computer desk was installed - drawn from stock
Apr-10	Brandis	SG.96	Additional meeting table & eight chairs were provided - moved from previous suite
Apr-10	Minchin	SG.55	Small round meeting table in lieu of coffee table - drawn from stock
May-10	Brandis	SG.96	A computer desk was installed - drawn from stock
Oct-10	Kroger	SG.98	Additional workstation installed in the reception area
Nov-10	Fierravanti-Wells	S1.22	Additional status B bookcase was provided
Dec-10	Cormann	SG.34	Additional meeting table and chairs were provided - drawn from stock
Dec-10	Joyce	SG.109	Staff office converted into a meeting room. A lounge, two meeting tables and chairs were provided. The furniture was drawn from stock and another departmental repository
May-11	B.Brown	SG.112	Lounge and coffee table provided- drawn from stock
Jun-11	Heffernan	S1.40	A computer desk was installed - drawn from stock
Jul-11	Bushby	SG.95	A computer desk was installed - drawn from stock
Jul-11	Parry	SG.44	A computer desk was installed - drawn from stock
Jul-11	Waters	S1.51	Baby cot provided - drawn from stock
Sep-11	B.Brown	SG.112	Small meeting table and chairs provided to Chief of Staff - drawn from stock
Sep-11	Fierravanti-Wells	S1.22	A computer desk was installed - drawn from stock
Dec-11	B.Brown	SG.114	New Party room table was installed: \$16,879.50 (Inc GST)
Dec-11	Polley	SG.106.2	A computer desk was installed - moved from previous suite
Feb-12	Wong	MG 60	Baby cot provided - drawn from stock
Mar-12	Collins	SG.106	Additional workstation installed when the senator became Manager of Government Business in the

Date	Senator	Suite	Item
Senate			
Mar-12	McLucas	S1.52	Two additional workstations installed in the Parl. Sec suite to accommodate additional staff
May-12	Bushby	SG.98.4	A computer desk was installed - moved from previous suite
Aug-12	Collins	S1.106	Round meeting table- drawn from existing stock
Aug-12	Smith	S1.31	A computer desk was installed - drawn from stock
Oct-12	Brandis	SG.96	Additional workstation installed
Oct-12	Ludlam	SG.61	Small occasional table - drawn from stock
Oct-12	Siewert	SG.113	A computer desk was installed - drawn from stock
Apr-13			Replacement baby cot and mattress procured: \$345.00 (Inc GST)
Jul-13	Cameron	S1.48	A computer desk was installed - drawn from stock
Sep-13	Smith	S1.33	A computer desk was installed - moved from previous suite
Oct-13	Fierravanti-Wells	S1.48	A computer desk was installed - moved from previous suite
Oct-13	Mason	S1.104	Additional status B bookcase supplied - drawn from stock
Oct-13	Polley	SG.27	A computer desk was installed - moved from previous suite
Nov-13	Birmingham	S1.52	One additional meeting table to be supplied - to be drawn from stock
Oct-13	Collins	S1.22	Small round meeting table provided
Nov-13	Collins	S1.22	One step stool supplied - drawn from stock
Nov-13	O'Neill	S1.47	A computer desk to be installed - to be drawn from stock

During this time, furniture has also been provided to senators to address work, health and safety issues:

Date	Item
Oct-12	A computer monitor arm was installed: \$253.00 (Inc GST)
Oct-12	A computer monitor arm was installed: \$253.00 (Inc GST)
Mar-13	A computer monitor arm was installed: \$253.00 (Inc GST)
Oct-13	Ergonomic Life chair: \$1,413.50 (Inc GST)

*(e) The consultation process for the bookcase, specifically design integrity*

The file indicates a range of internal departmental and external discussions were held in respect of the procurement of the bookcase, but the full details of those discussions are not

recorded on the file. However, an e-mail on the file indicates that the Department of Parliamentary Services (which has responsibility for design integrity issues) was consulted in respect of the wood to be used for the bookcase and the overall design. A copy of this e-mail is attached at Attachment G.

*(f) The request to move the bookcases to the Ministerial Wing*

Finally, in the context of a discussion relating to the possible loan of the bookcase, I note that I provided evidence suggesting that the bookcase would not fit within the Senator Brandis's ministerial office because of the curved configuration of the building. We understand from the Department of Parliamentary Services that the bookcase in its entirety would not fit into Senator Brandis's current office, but it is an assumption on our part that this was due to the building's configuration.

Yours sincerely

(Rosemary Laing)