
Sent: Monday, 21 May 2018 12:57 PM
To: DPS-Department
Subject: Recent reports regarding Parliament House security

Dear colleagues

You are likely to be aware of a series of media articles reporting on so-called “suspicious powder” incidents in Australian Parliament House and you may have viewed the Department’s Estimates appearance earlier today. Although I am unable to give you all the information that is known, I can advise you that the reports are based on misleading or incomplete information. DPS receives regular intelligence reports and advice from relevant agencies and there is no cause for our building occupants to be concerned about the reports.

Our joint approach with the AFP in managing events of potential concern reflect contemporary risk-based practice—it is no longer the case that the first response is to close down operations for every instance.

The content of the articles also reflect an unauthorised disclosure of security-classified information by one or more members of the PSS. The effect of these breaches—particularly the screen shot of documents, as appeared in a recent article—has been to undermine trust in the professionalism of our PSS and severely damage their reputation.

On this basis, I have consulted with the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police with a view to these security breaches being investigated. To safeguard building occupants, I have begun exploring options for some of our security functions to be augmented by other agencies until confidence can be restored.

I recognise that this damages confidence in the many PSS staff members who approach their roles with diligence. I note that many PSS members have approached me and other senior DPS staff in recent days to directly express their dismay and disappointment. I thank those staff for their professionalism and commitment.

DPS staff (and former staff) may use the provisions of the Public Interest Disclosure Act to bring information to official notice in a confidential way, via pid@ombudsman.gov.au.

I realise that this may be an unsettling time for some of you so I would like to remind you all of the Department’s Employee Assistance Provider (EAP), whose counsellors may be contacted confidentially on

Thank you all for your cooperation as we meet these challenges together.

Regards

Rob Stefanic
Secretary

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