

Senate Inquiry Access to APH by Lobbyists Inquiry

Question on Notice no. 04 – 08 April 2024

Senator Richard Colbeck asked the Department of Parliamentary Services on 08 April 2024:

CHAIR: That was going to be my next question. Ms Tunningley, you said there were about 10,000 passes when we made the change, but what was the cycle of review and expiry of passes previously, for example? For me, as a senator, when I first came there was no cycle because I didn't have a pass. And, to a certain extent, when I rock up to my office every morning and swipe my pass to access and unlock my office for the first time, I object to being monitored when I come and go from my place of work. A bug goes off in the back of my head. I forget about it when I get my desk, but it goes off because the free movement and access of MPs and senators through the building is an important part of the concept of a democracy. So understanding how those flows have changed is important. From recollection, I'm pretty sure the Senate resisted the change from a key to a pass for a period of a few years after the House of Representatives, if I'm not mistaken.

Mr Stefanic: It did take a little bit longer during the security upgrades. We did upgrade—

CHAIR: I was part of some conversations where we weren't too keen on signing off on it for the purposes I've just discussed.

Mr Stefanic: Yes.

CHAIR: Other events have taken over and it has become ubiquitous, and that is what it is, but I'm interested to understand the flows of people...

Answer

A decision was made in September 2014 by the then Presiding Officers to cease the issuing of unaccompanied (day) passes. This required visitors from this point onwards to be signed in, by an authorised passholder, and escorted at all times in the private areas of Parliament House.

No statistics have been retained on the number of unaccompanied (day) passes issued up until September 2014. Likewise, no statistics are maintained on the number of escorted visitor access passes now issued.