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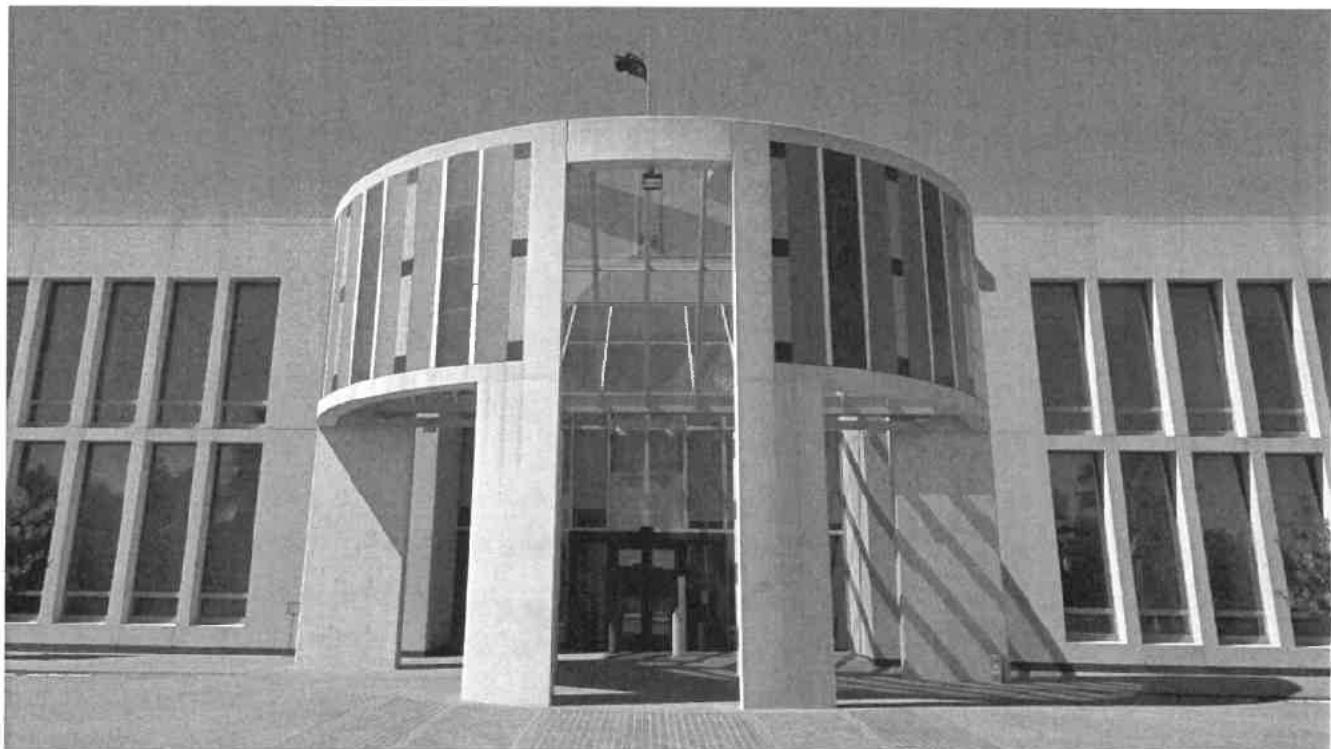
WORKPLACE GOVERNMENT & DEMOCRACY

Why is DPS asking about staff citizenship status?

The Department of Parliamentary Services has asked staff to confirm citizenship but hasn't explained the move or the odd 1984–2002 date range.



TOM RAVLIC • JUL 23, 2025 • 2 MIN READ

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(AAP Image/Mick Tsikas)

Parliamentary Services is yet to respond to questions about why the department asked its staff via email to confirm their citizenship details.

The email, sent on July 14 by assistant secretary Andrew Banfield from the research branch, informed staff that the department required some citizenship data.

"The department is collecting some administrative data," Banfield wrote. "Can you please reply directly to me, and I will collect the responses for the branch."

They received a deadline of close of business yesterday.

"There is no additional action required," Banfield added. "As always, I am happy to chat."

The two questions staff members were asked to answer related to having citizenship of a country other than Australia.

"Have you ever held citizenship of a country other than Australia?" was the first question. A further query followed this if team members responded in the affirmative: "Were you conferred, or did you apply for, citizenship between 1984 and 2002?"

A request for an explanation regarding why the question related to citizenship was asked went unanswered, as did a question seeking clarification about the importance of the date range 1984-2002.

DPS management also failed to respond to a question about why there was no explanation in the email for staff about the rationale for collecting the information.

The department's failure to respond to questions about why it needed information about the citizenship of its staff follows almost two years of controversy.

Repeated questions have been asked by senators Jane Hume and Malcolm Roberts about cultural concerns, including issues with former senior management such as Rob Stefanic, the previous DPS secretary.

Stefanic's employment was terminated after speaker Milton Dick and Senate president Sue Lines expressed a loss of confidence in him.

Hume also nudged DPS management on frequent occasions about its spending on furniture, and its failure to further consider an onsite GP for sitting weeks for parliamentarians and others working in parliament.

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About the author



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Tom Ravlic is a journalist and author with a deep expertise in accounting, corporate governance and regulatory affairs. He has worked as an accounting academic, policy adviser for one of Australia's three major accounting bodies, and consulted on the development of accounting curriculum for universities and professional associations.