

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

—Additional Estimates Hearing—February 2014

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Senator Brandis' bookshelf**

Question: **163**

Hansard Page No **54–56**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 11 April 2014

Senator LUDWIG: How big is it? What size is the bookshelf?

Ms Mills: I am sorry; I do not have the actual metreage on me, but I can certainly provide that on notice. It is quite a large bookcase. We have designed it in such a way that it can be easily broken down into three smaller bookcases so that we can re-use it if such a large bookcase is not required in the future.

...

Senator LUDWIG: You might want to deal with this on notice, but I was after the time line. Firstly, who requested the bookshelf originally and how did that request come to you? If you know the answer to that question—

Ms Mills: I can answer that in broad terms. I probably have to go back to a question on notice in terms of the exact date and detail, but as I understand it staff in my department were first approached by the Senate department after the election to seek our advice as to whether the existing bookcase in what had been Senator Brandis's office could be moved.

Senator LUDWIG: Yes, I recall hearing that on the service.

Ms Mills: So, not only with Attorney-General's but also with Finance and other agencies, where in the past we had a fairly loose arrangement, I have pointed out to agencies that we are no longer in that position, and therefore a co-contribution would be, as I said, mutually beneficial.

Senator LUDWIG: I wonder if you could today find the date that you had that conversation?

Ms Mills: Certainly.

Senator LUDWIG: Who installs it, then, and was there any request about how that bookshelf was to be installed?

Ms Mills: Yes, obviously there were discussions. I am not party to the details, so I cannot comment on specifics, but there were discussions with either the senator or representatives of the senator, I do not know, about the design needs you and the amount of space that he required. We then sourced a couple of quotations, and Designcraft, a locally based company, was successful in bidding for the work, and they both manufactured and installed it.

Senator LUDWIG: So it went out to tender, and they manufactured and installed it. Were there any requests?

Ms Mills: Sorry, it probably would not have gone to tender because of the price, it would have gone to a select tender process.

Senator LUDWIG: Perhaps you could get that on notice.

Ms Mills: Certainly more than one quotation was sought.

Senator LUDWIG: In the installation were there any special requirements made by Senator Brandis or his office, or through the Attorney-General's office, or from yourselves as DPS?

Ms Mills: The only one that I am aware of, and if there are more I will certainly be happy to answer that, was that, because of the meterage of shelving asked for, it meant that, as you alluded to, it was higher than we would normally have installed, and so I believe a small step ladder had to be procured, not by DPS but by Finance or A-G's, to allow safe access to the higher shelves.

Senator LUDWIG: So we have now got a little stepladder, have we?

CHAIR: We are just fortunate Senator Brandis is so tall, otherwise it would be a large stepladder.

Senator LUDWIG: You might know him a bit better than I.

Ms Mills: That is what I understand. But to be honest, as we alluded to, I do not normally get involved in such levels of detail, so some of this I will have to take on notice.

...

Senator LUDWIG: All right. Can you just check whether or not there were any special requirements about that for me, just to set my mind at rest?

Ms Mills: I am very happy to do that. Certainly, Senator.

Answer:

The bookcase is 5200mm wide x 3000mm high.

The bookcase was originally requested by the acting Chief of Staff in Senator Brandis' office. The request was received via email to DPS from the Department of Finance on 25 September 2013.

I spoke by telephone with Mr Wilkins, Secretary, Attorney-General's Department on or around 26 November 2013 (see detailed response to Question on Notice 162).

Designcraft was selected from two quotes that were sought from the Department's panel of suppliers (Deed of Standing Offer for Furniture DPS 09008).

An additional 12 shelves were requested by the Attorney-General in person while the bookcase was being installed.

No special requirements beyond the actual bookcase were received.