

Additional Estimates Question on Notice — March 2017

104 **Senator the Hon. Penny Wong:** asked the President of the Senate—

With reference to the President's answer at page 10 of the proof *Hansard*:

Those gaps might be in the entirety of the rosters, so I think critical points would always be covered to ensure that Parliament House is secure. Can I tell you that, as far as the presiding officers are concerned, security is a very important for issue for us and has been many years. None of what you have suggested and what you indicate has been raised with the presiding officers. I can certainly support the Usher of the Black Rod and say that it has not come through the Security Management Board or indeed through the security task force.

- (1) Will the President now familiarise himself with the content of 2016-17 Supplementary Budget Estimates question on notice 13, in which the Department of Parliamentary Services stated:

It is, however, reasonable to state that Security Branch has experienced daily instances where operational demand has exceeded available resourcing. While a shortfall in staffing capacity is undesirable, security posts are staffed according to risk to ensure the safety and security of Parliament House and its occupants.

- (2) Is the President concerned to learn that there are “daily instances where operational demand has exceeded available resourcing”?
- (3) Is the President also concerned it is a regular occurrence for rosters for security personnel to include a number of lines rostered as “open shift”, which is understood to mean that at the time the roster was published there were no staff to fill the positions, even after calling staff who would be on rostered days off on the days of the roster?
- (4) Will the President raise these matters with the Security Management Board and the security task force?

Answer

- (1) Yes.
- (2) I have previously indicated, on many occasions, that the security of this building and all who work in and visit it is a very important issue for me. The committee has been informed at previous estimates hearings that the full security staffing complement has not yet been achieved and that it is likely to take a further two recruitment campaigns to do so. That result is expected by the end of 2017.

- (3) The outcome of having not yet achieved a full staffing complement is that there will be some open shifts and that some PSS officers will be asked to work additional shifts. Neither of these things is desirable and I am advised that a full staffing complement will significantly reduce their frequency.

In the meantime effective strategies are in place to ensure that Parliament House is a secure environment. The roster pages being relied upon in this question are taken at a point in time. By the time staff turn up for duty at actual security points all critical points are filled.

I would be happy to brief the committee privately in more detail.

- (4) The matter has been listed for discussion by the Security Management Board at its April meeting.