

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
—Additional Estimates Hearing—February 2017**

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Switchboard**

Question: **39**

Written **Senator Wong**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 13 April 2017

1. Is it the case that at a point in time, switchboard staff were relocated from one location within the building to another?
2. When did this occur?
3. For what reason?
4. Was a commitment given by former departmental secretary Carol Mills that switchboard staff would return to the room in which they were originally located?
5. When was this commitment given?
6. Why have switchboard staff not yet returned to the room in which they were originally located?
7. When will the switchboard staff return to the room in which they were originally located?

Answer

1. Yes.
2. April 2014.
3. There was an immediate need to relocate the switchboard operations for a variety of reasons including structural issues impacting on their location at the time. A major joint failure in the ceiling cavity above N1.60 was identified and needed to be repaired.
4. Yes.
5. Ms Mills provided evidence at the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration Legislation on Monday 24 February 2014 indicating that this was a temporary relocation.
6. In September 2014, before the remediation was completed, the Australian Security Threat level was increased and APH security arrangements were revised. This change to APH security has made it inappropriate to relocate the switchboard operators back into a public space.
7. In February 2015 it was agreed with the contractor that manages the switchboard service that the switchboard operators would not go back to the original area.