

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

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Food Strategy report**

Question: **44**

Written **Senator Wong**

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

With reference to Senator Wong's question on notice 21 from the 2016-17 Supplementary Budget Estimates relating to the Australian National Audit Office Performance Audit Report Managing contracts at Parliament House (No. 19 of 2016-17) and the advice that the Department of Parliamentary Services would establish a new in-house catering operation that will launch from 1 January 2017:

Senator Wong asked that:

'Given the Australian National Audit Office states that the Department of Parliamentary Services "has not developed a business case to demonstrate how it will improve the standard of catering or deliver value for money" and the absence of "a strong evidence base underpinning the consideration of these options", on what basis was this decision made?'

[These quotes are from page 34 of the report.]

Given the Department of Parliamentary Services was not guided by the Food Strategy report in determining the appropriate model for delivery of improved catering services at Parliament House, leading the Australian National Audit Office to make the observations quoted in Senator Wong's question, and the evidence of the Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Services, Mr Stefanic, at page 26 of the proof Hansard that:

'That consultancy occurred before I came on board. Had I been here, I would have had certain viewpoints that I would have fed into that. One would have been that I did not think the consultants appropriately understood the parliamentary environment. Having come from running a catering operation at the New South Wales parliament, I was confident, given we have a market here which is effectively captive, that we could provide a service with more variety and with better value to the parliament.'

1. Has the Department of Parliamentary Services discussed its chosen approach with the Australian National Audit Office?
2. Has the Australian National Audit Office provided any subsequent feedback?

Answer

1. No. A final decision on a chosen approach was not made until DPS completed its analysis which was after the ANAO concluded its enquiries. However DPS provided the ANAO with its response to their report in accordance with section 19 of the *Auditor-General Act 1997* in September 2016.
2. No, the DPS response was contained in the published report.