

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

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Asbestos testing**

Question: **86**

Written: **Senator Wong**

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

With reference to the precautionary asbestos testing that took place in late January, as advised in two Department of Parliamentary Services information circulars dated 25 January and 3 February 2017:

1. Was the testing initiated because of the known presence of asbestos in the areas concerned, or as a matter of routine prior to the commencement of building works?
2. Can you confirm the testing did not result in the detection of any asbestos fibres?
3. Are there any areas of the building where asbestos is known to be present?

Answer

1. Initial testing was carried out as a matter of routine prior to the commencement of building works. This identified the presence of asbestos in mastic sealant, which was rated as 'very low risk'. Subsequently, DPS arranged precautionary testing to ensure the safety of building occupants. This is the testing referred to in the information circulars dated 25 January and 2 February 2017.
2. Yes.
3. As noted above, mastic sealant containing around 10% asbestos was identified in the glazing in the Main Committee Room skylight and the Great Hall skylight; and between the base of window frames and floor at the Ground Floor House of Representatives entrance. A small sheet of fibre cement, believed to be from leftover formwork, was located in a crawl space near NG61. This was confirmed as containing asbestos in June 2016. Precautionary testing in the area for any loose asbestos fibres proved negative. The sheet was removed by licenced asbestos removal contractors in August 2016. Any residual material was sealed, labelled and will be inspected annually.