

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Budget Estimates 2015-16**

Question on Notice – No. 4

Senator Ludwig: asked the President of the Senate on 25 May 2015 the following:

Hansard, 25 May 2015, p. 25.

The President: Thank you, Chair. As I indicated earlier, we have challenged that advice from time to time so it is not just a matter of a decision being made by the task force; it is advice given to us and we astutely look at that advice and we take further advice if we are not satisfied with the advice we are getting.

Senator WONG: Who drafts the advice?

The President: Various departments. It is worked through various departments.

Senator WONG: Who signs off on the advice?

The President: The Presiding Officers sign off on the advice—

Senator WONG: No.

The President: Well, the advice coming to us is signed off by the Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Services.

Senator WONG: So the advice that is being worked through the task force is signed off to you and Madam Speaker by the Secretary of DPS?

The President: Correct.

Senator WONG: On all occasions?

The President: Yes, I believe so.

Senator WONG: In relation to all the capital works programs?

The President: Yes, I believe so.

Senator WONG: And on notice you will clarify if that—

The President: If I am wrong, I will correct that, but I do not believe I am.

Senator WONG: Going back to Senator Gallagher's question about the resolution of the Senate, which I was told would be complied with: does that advice get co-signed by the Usher?

The President: The DPS advice to us, no, I do not believe it does.

Senator WONG: Do you not regard it as 'advice on security matters affecting senators, Parliament House and the parliamentary precincts'?

The President: Yes, it would be advice that would fit into that category.

Senator WONG: So it would be covered by the resolution of the Senate that was referred to?

The President: It would be.

Senator WONG: Does that mean now that the Usher will co-sign all advice, including emanating from the task force that she is not represented on?

The President: I will have to take that on notice, Senator Wong.

Mr President, the Hon Stephen Parry answers:

I have written to the Acting Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Services instructing her that any advice on security matters affecting senators, Parliament House and the parliamentary precincts tendered by her (or another officer of the department) is to be co-signed by the Usher of the Black Rod or another officer of the Department of the Senate nominated by the Clerk.

I have clarified that is my expectation that such advice would come from the Acting Secretary in her role as Chair of the Security Management Board of which the Usher of the Black Rod is a board member.

Advice on capital works for the building is distinct from such advice.