

FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE  
**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – BUDGET ESTIMATES – May 2016**  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS – Department of Parliamentary Services**

No	Program: Division or Agency	Senator	Broad Topic	Question	Proof Hansard Page or Written Q	Date Rec'd	Date Tabled
1	DPS	Wong	Security works spending	<p><b>Senator WONG:</b> I am going to refer to questions on notice 3407 and 3408. My question may be from the last round or maybe it was a chamber question on notice to you, Mr President. I am sorry; I cannot recall. I was asking about the expenditure on internal and external security works in the ministerial wing. I was told that between September 2014 and March 2016, just under \$11.3 million has been spent by the government on security works in the ministerial wing. I also asked a question about the total spend across the building on security works, and that was \$16.3 million. That is around 70 per cent of the allocation on security measures only in the ministerial wing.</p> <p>Can I first ask: why was the decision made to allocate such a large proportion of the security works budget only to the ministerial wing?</p> <p><b>Mr Stefanic:</b> Perhaps I could take that on notice.</p> <p><b>Senator WONG:</b> You're kidding!</p> <p><b>CHAIR:</b> The question has been taken on notice.</p> <p><b>Senator WONG:</b> All right. I will explore it. Who made the decision to allocate 70 per cent of the security works to be done on the parliament to the ministerial wing? Why is everybody looking down?</p> <p><b>The President:</b> If I could just add: there are some sensitivities in relation to security measures. That is the first issue. Secondly, there have been moneys not spent that had been allocated in the previous financial year, or the current financial year and the previous financial year, and I am just wondering whether that might be a distortion in percentage.</p> <p><b>Senator WONG:</b> Well, they are your answers, Mr President.</p> <p><b>The President:</b> I realise that, Senator Wong. However, that is just a snapshot at one particular point in time. Can we just consider that, hold that question and maybe come back to you, hopefully in the course of the DPS segment?</p> <p><b>Senator WONG:</b> Sure.</p> <p><b>The President:</b> Otherwise, if we cannot get a definitive answer, it will certainly be a question—as the secretary has indicated—on notice.</p> <p><b>Senator WONG:</b> I am happy to come back later today. We all know we are going to have an election and we will have an argument in the chamber about</p>	p 4	5 May	

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				<p>whether or not we have questions on notice, and then we will just have to come back if we are in opposition still and ask the questions. If we are in government, I suppose you will actually tell me. But these are pretty simple questions about spend that has already been answered. I do not want to compromise any security issues, but you have told me we spent \$16 million in this time period—18 months—and over two-thirds of it, 70 per cent of it, was spent in the ministerial wing. No-one seems to be able to tell me why. All I am asking is: who made the decision? Surely someone can tell me that.</p> <p><b>The President:</b> Ultimately, the decision has been made by the Presiding Officers, upon advice. I just want to get the actual figures in front of me before we start answering the question.</p> <p><b>Senator WONG:</b> So you propose to come back later in the day?</p> <p><b>The President:</b> Maybe in 10 minutes. I do not know.</p> <p><b>Senator WONG:</b> All right. It is questions 3407 and 3408.</p>			
2	DPS	Xenophon	Procurement rules – local jobs and local supply	<p><b>Senator XENOPHON:</b> I understand that. I will not take much longer, but what I am trying to understand is this: do our procurement rules take into account the benefits of local jobs and local supply in terms of Australian content, Australian innovation and the like? Is that clear, or how do you weigh that up?</p> <p><b>Mr Stefanic:</b> I am not entirely across the detail of the tender evaluation process and what factors are taken into account with that process itself. That I can take on notice and provide.</p>	p 9	5 May	
3	DPS	Bernardi	Conflict of interest declarations for the SES	<p><b>CHAIR:</b> How many of your staff have updated their information in respect of the requirements?</p> <p><b>Ms Croke:</b> There is a requirement for all SES to update their information on an annual basis. I understand that a reminder went out at the end of last year, I think it was, or early this year, for all SES to put in written declarations. I would have to check how many have provided that. I do not have that information, but for other staff we do not actually keep a record, because the declarations might be something that comes up in the course of their duties. It might come up when they are chairing a panel. They may know, have worked closely with or be closely related to one of the people or something like that. They should declare all that in writing at the time. It may be in relation to procurement. Where there</p>	p 11	5 May	

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				is a perceived conflict, they should declare that. I do not think we have a central register of that.			
4	DPS	Bernardi	PSS recruitment requirements	<p><b>CHAIR:</b> In respect of—this is a slightly different thing but it still relates to staff, and in particular staff at PSL1 to security officer positions within the parliament. Has the process for recruitment changed at all in recent times with respect to those types of positions?</p> <p><b>Mr Stefanic:</b> In terms of the requirements for applying for the role?</p> <p><b>CHAIR:</b> Yes. I will tell you why—Mr Barnes, you are involved in this, so I will come back to you. I am advised, or it has been suggested to me, that current employees within the PSS were not required to go through the full recruitment process, because they had passed it previously. Subsequent to that advice, they have been told that they all have to then go through the same comprehensive examination as new employees.</p> <p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> Chair, I am aware that we have been trying to enhance our selection processes, so there has been modification of that process over time to meet the needs as they change. It has been necessary for all applicants for positions to fulfil the requirements of the selection process; however, applicants who are already ongoing members of the service are not required to fulfil the physical aspects of those requirements, unless they are applying for a higher position.</p> <p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> The assessment day is part of that process, yes.</p> <p><b>CHAIR:</b> Any advice that you may have provided that said something to the effect that all applicants will be assessed the same way regardless of any prior assessment they may have participated in would not overrule the requirement not to be involved in the assessment?</p> <p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> Can I take that on notice? I want to make sure that we have that exactly right.</p>	p 12	5 May	
5	DPS	Bernardi	PSS competency management training	<p><b>CHAIR:</b> I will go to one more issue. I want to talk about competency management training. Part 17 of question on notice 182 states that 'the use of batons is not taught in CMT'. Is that statement accurate?</p> <p><b>Ms Croke:</b> That is exactly what it says. 'The use of batons is not taught.'</p> <p><b>CHAIR:</b> Are you standing by that evidence?</p>	p 12-13	5 May	

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				<p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> To my knowledge, there is no training in the use of batons for PSS officers at this time.</p> <p><b>CHAIR:</b> This is part of the problem. There are a lot of people who read these answers to questions on notice, and some of them decide they want to contact me. Then they say things like: 'In December of 2015, we were shown and trained in the use of batons and plastic slip-tie handcuffs. This is not the first time it's been used. It's been done for a number of years.' These are very interested people. Another person said, 'Defence tactics module included rudimentary introduction to the use of batons and handcuffs.' It is all remarkably consistent; they are saying the evidence provided in that answer to a question on notice is not accurate. I can keep going, I have more. Do you want me to keep quoting the same sorts of things? I think you get the drift.</p> <p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> I get the drift.</p> <p><b>CHAIR:</b> So who do I believe?</p> <p><b>Senator WONG:</b> Maybe the department might need to go away and make further investigations. I am not trying to be obstructive.</p> <p><b>CHAIR:</b> I know you are not trying to be obstructive.</p> <p><b>Senator WONG:</b> I think the problem appears to be that people at one level have a different understanding than people of a different level. Maybe investigations ought to be undertaken.</p> <p><b>CHAIR:</b> I anticipated these sorts of issues, which is why I indicated prior to this that I had some concerns about elements of the responses to questions on notice. I have tried to be as straight up as I possibly can. I am not interested in causing traps. I just want to make sure, because of the repeated difficulties we have had in this committee with elements of DPS and the evidence, that we can rely on what is put to us. Who do I believe?</p> <p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> I am not in a position to respond to that question. I would like to make sure that we can get an accurate response.</p> <p><b>Senator McKENZIE:</b> In the army of people behind you would there be someone who might actually be able to answer Senator Bernardi's questions?</p> <p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> I think that at this point in time it would be appropriate to take the question on notice and make sure we get an accurate response for the</p>			

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6	DPS	McKenzie	PSS training and professional development	<p><b>Senator McKENZIE:</b> I have not been following Senator Bernardi's particular interest in baton training until now, but I would be interested in the broader question of what training the security staff do receive around Parliament House in terms of apprehending safely any potential threats within Parliament House. I am not asking for that to be taken on notice; I am assuming someone knows the answer to that.</p> <p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> I do not have the specific information—</p> <p><b>Senator McKENZIE:</b> Do they do firearm training?</p> <p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> No, to my knowledge they—</p> <p><b>Senator McKENZIE:</b> And they do not do baton training. Do they do taekwondo? What do they do?</p> <p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> They are trained in various aspects of their roles, but I am not in a position to detail that level of training. I do not have it available to me at the present time. As you are aware, we have had a bit of turnover of staff in the security area, and so I would prefer to take that question and give you a fulsome response.</p> <p><b>Senator McKENZIE:</b> I would appreciate a fulsome response on the type of training that our security officers do to apprehend safely potential threats within Parliament House. Thanks.</p> <p><b>Senator LINDGREN:</b> I have one question as well. I would assume that, when a security officer is accepted to work in Parliament House, they would have some sort of formal training to apply for the job. There might be some criteria there that they need to have certain training or a certificate level. I would like to know what professional development occurs once they arrive in Parliament House to maintain whatever levels of expertise or skills they have.</p> <p><b>Senator McKENZIE:</b> Fitness.</p> <p><b>Senator LINDGREN:</b> Yes. If they come with baton experience, if they do do it, what type of training do they have? If they have plastic handcuff training and so on.</p> <p><b>CHAIR:</b> Which they do.</p> <p><b>Senator LINDGREN:</b> Yes, those sorts of things. Is there a criteria when they</p>	p 14	5 May	

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				<p>apply for the job that says they must have those things?</p> <p><b>Mr Barnes:</b> No, I do not believe there is. The officers are trained once they are recruited. Obviously, many people come to us with prior experience in other law enforcement organisations and bring with them whatever training they had in those, but I think that, again, would be best included in the response to Senator McKenzie.</p>			