

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee — Budget Estimates Hearing—May 2017

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Parliament House beehives**

Question: **135**

Written: **Senator Wong**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 7 July 2017

With reference to the Department of Parliamentary Services Information Circular, The Parliament House beehive initiative – Information sessions, 15 March 2017:

Can an update on the beekeeping initiative be provided?

How many people attended the information sessions?

Did the audience represent a mix of building occupants, including senators and members, or mostly departmental staff?

Does the Department of Parliamentary Services have a sense of the number of people who have accessed the online footage?

What are the establishment and ongoing cost of the beehives?

If it is a success is it likely to be expanded?

Answer

1. In March 2017 in conjunction with Aurecon, an engineering firm with urban beekeeping experience supported by members of the ANU Apiculture Society, three beehives were installed in the landscape of Australian Parliament House (APH). Aurecon and the ANU Apiculture Society have been checking the hives since installation and reported that the bees are in good condition. On Friday 23rd May Aurecon will install 'sensor packs' in to the hives which will provide temperature, humidity and audio data to Aurecon in order for the health of hive to be monitored remotely reducing the need to disrupt the hives. It is anticipated that the hives will produce sufficient honey to harvest in the spring.
2. Two information sessions were run. One in a non-sitting week (16 March 2017) where nine people attended. The other session was held in a sitting week (20 March 2017). Seven people attended.
3. We did not keep a record of where the attendees worked.
4. No.
5. This initiative is at no cost to DPS. The Licensee (Aurecon) is responsible for all costs associated with installation and ongoing management of the beehives.
6. There are no plans at this stage to expand the initiative.