SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Group: 2

Program: Other Agency

Question: BE14/078

Senator Singh asked the following question at the hearing on 26-29 May 2014:

1. National Archives – ref QON 117 regarding measures to reduce the backlog of dealing with requests. What progress has now been made in reducing the backlog? What is now the average time in dealing with a request?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

In the last quarter of 2013-14, the Archives released 84% of requests for access within the statutory 90 days regulatory period. Over 9,300 files were cleared within 30 days during this period. Files are managed according to a number of inherent characteristics such as the agency which created or currently controls the record, by topic or security classification. The Archives assesses what can be released quickly or requires more complex examination and referral to agencies, for advice on continuing sensitivities. On average non-complex files take between 5-6 days. Files requiring agency referral take longer to process and this varies, depending on the agency, its resources and examination commitments from other agencies, and the sensitive nature of the subject material.