

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Additional Budget Estimates Hearing—February 2011

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Video-conferencing**

Question: **21**

Hansard reference **F&PA p.48, 21 February 2011**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 15 April 2011

Senator LUDLAM—Do you have any idea when that might be available for use by committees?

Mr Oglethorpe—...I do not know if we have a date when we will start trialling it and start using it at a real committee, but I can certainly look into that for you.

Senator LUDLAM—I have an example that is very close to home. If there is a committee hearing that is occurring in Sydney in a couple of weeks that I cannot physically attend, what are my options for participating by video link from Perth?

Answer

1 DPS has developed a facility to integrate Skype video calls into a committee hearing, much in the same way as the video-conferencing facility can present a remote witness to the committee. This service is available now for committee use and provides an alternative to traditional video-conferencing, offering greater flexibility for incorporating witnesses into the committee work flow.

2 DPS is not able to provide video-conferencing services for Parliamentary Committee hearings held away from Parliament House. Committee secretariats can choose to arrange external facilities and/or venues with the capacity for video-conferencing services for the committee and its members or witnesses.

3 Participating from Perth in a committee hearing being held in Sydney would only be possible if the Sydney hearing was in a venue that provided video-conferencing and a video-conferencing facility was available at the other end in Perth.

4 DPS does provide some video-conferencing facilities in Parliament House. There are four committee rooms—2S 1, 2S 3, 2R 1 and the Main Committee Room—from which video-conferencing services can be provided for committee use. These facilities allow remotely based witnesses to appear before Parliamentary Committees that are held in Parliament House, as well as allowing for multiple witness appearances with a bridging facility that is provided by an external provider.