



DPS ref: 2008/0508

15 October 2008

Mr Stephen Palethorpe
Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Correction to an answer to question P3 from Budget Estimates May 2008

1 In the answers to question on notice P3 regarding the failure of the lighting controls during earth hour, a list of affected suites was provided. Suite MG-60 was included in the list but identified incorrectly the occupant as the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The occupant of Suite MG-60 should have been identified as the Minister for Climate Change and Water.

2 In preparing the answer I obtained a list of suites controlled by the faulty circuit from engineering plans. The identified suites were then linked to the portfolio ministers by conducting a suite search function in the Occupants Directory. There was an error in the Occupants Directory database that identified the previous occupant as the result when MG-60 was searched.

3 The database is constructed in such a way that a search by either occupant name or portfolio title would have returned the correct result. Searches by suite number are probably rare and this problem is likely to have existed since the change of government. The error has since been corrected and the database examined for similar problems.

4 I apologise for any confusion this error may have caused the committee. A correct response is attached.

Yours sincerely

John Nakkan
Assistant Secretary
Infrastructure Services Branch



Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee—Budget Estimates May 2008

Parliament Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Answers to Questions on Notice

Topic: Earth Hour - Lighting system malfunction in Ministerial Wing

Question P3, F&PA 28

Senator FIFIELD—Sure. Mr Nakkan, if you could take on notice which office suites were affected by the malfunction.

Mr Nakkan—Yes.

Senator FIFIELD—And also the exact nature of what the malfunction was. I do not want, in any way, shape or form to be cynical, but it would seem to be extremely convenient for the ministers concerned that there was a malfunction affecting their suites on the night of Earth Hour. But, as I say, I am not being cynical—I am sure that you will provide us with the answer as to what the malfunction was and which ministerial suites were affected.

Answer

1 A Building Management System (**BMS**) signal control card that controls the western Ministerial pelmet lighting zone failed due to a burnt out resistor. This meant that the control signals sent out from the BMS for this zone would not have switched the lighting control relays (R7 latching type).

The R7 type relay stay in their previous (on or off) state unless they receive a signal to change. When the BMS switched for Earth Hour, the signal to turn off would not have been received by the relays, this meant that they would have remained in their previous powered on state.

The offices that are controlled by the affected BMS signal control card are:

Suite	Occupant	Suite	Occupant
MG-08	Prime Minister-support staff	M1-40	Minister-Environment, Heritage and the Arts
MG-60	Minister-Climate Change and Water	M1-41	Minister-Defence
MG-61	Special Minister of State	M1-44	Minister-Youth, Sports
MG-62	Lunch room	M1-45	Minister-Housing, Status of Women
MG-64	Minister-Human Services	M1-46	Minister-Superannuation and Corporate Governance
MG-68	Minister-Immigration and Citizenship	M1-48	Minister-Innovation, Industry, Science and

			Research
MG-70	Minister-Broadband, Communications and Digital Economy	M1-49	Minister-Defence Science and Personnel
		M1-51	Minister-Employment Participation

Some of these suites have a local manual override switch on some pelmet light circuits. Many of these were in the off position, thus causing the uneven look to the Ministerial façade.