Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee—Budget Estimates May 2008

Parliament Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Answers to Questions on Notice

Topic: Internet Filter -How long should it take to unblock an account.

Question P5, F&PA 19

Senator NETTLE—Yes. Do you have an idea of what is an appropriate period of time? How long should it take?

Mr Kenny—I can undertake to look the processes and the time frames, given that I cannot answer your question now about how long it takes and how long it should take.

(This question was partially answered on p.37, see below)

Mr Kenny—Yes. Thank you. With respect to the questions about internet filtering before lunch, we have already taken steps to change the process for unblocking sites, so that will be much faster than it was. Senator Nettle related a couple of incidents. We have checked the logs and on both of those occasions there was a breakdown with our processes. It was a different breakdown—that is why it took so long. As I said, we have already taken steps to simplify our processes so that will not happen in the future. I should also remind the committee that we are already taking steps to replace that internet-filtering system with a more modern one. The system is several years old, so we are going out to the market for a replacement system.

Answer

1   The process to provide access to internet sites that were being blocked by content filtering software, at the time of the estimates hearing, involved a number of work areas in both the Senate and DPS. The time to unblock a site was usually within 24 hours, however there were some occasions where it took up to four days.

2   As noted by Mr Kenny at the hearing, the procedure has been changed and DPS expects access to blocked sites to be provided within a few business hours on the day of the request.