



DPS ref: 11/618

6 July 2011

Ms Christine McDonald
Committee Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee
Parliament House
PO Box 6000
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms McDonald

**Senate Budget Estimates Committee Hearing of 23 May 2011—
Clarification**

I am writing to clarify/correct responses that the Department of Parliamentary Services (**DPS**) provided at the Senate Budget Estimates hearing on Monday 23 May 2011.

The DPS Estimates responses (with the identifying Hansard page number) are listed over the page, with the clarification/correction in the adjacent column and, where applicable, an explanation as to how the error occurred.

Yours sincerely

Alan Thompson
Secretary

Senate Budget Estimates—23 May 2011

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Senator FAULKNER: Mr President, do you receive supporting documentation for the draft answers to questions on notice that you receive, or do you just receive a question and answer?

Senator Hogg: I believe I receive the question on notice.

Senator FAULKNER: And the supporting brief?

Senator Hogg: Yes, I think there is a brief and we look at the brief. Obviously they are prepared by senior people, and we accept on face value the information or the advice that is given to us.

clarification / correction

The President receives the draft responses—prepared by DPS—to the Estimates Questions on Notice. The draft responses that DPS provides to the President may contain some supporting documentation, if that is part of one or more responses.

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Mr Thompson: There was a version of a plan, which was in existence in 2007-08 and a version of that was sent to the environment department. When I arrived I sought some further legal advice as to whether Parliament House is subject to the heritage requirement under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act or not and, in the end, that advice, which came from Blake Dawson and the Government Solicitor was: no, it is not subject to those heritage provisions.

Mr Thompson sought legal advice from Blake Dawson. Blake Dawson advised that neither DPS nor the Presiding Officers have an obligation under the EPBC Act to prepare a heritage strategy for Parliament House to protect and conserve its heritage values.

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Senator HUMPHRIES: What is the present staffing establishment for parliamentary security officers?

Ms Graham: From memory—and I would like to confirm these figures with my staff—we have about 100 basic level security staff who work full time. They are supported during sitting weeks by a part-time workforce of about 42. On top of that we have about another 12 people working in our security control rooms. It may be a little fewer than that—these are estimates. I will provide you with the specifics separately. We also have a number of team leaders who look after individual teams of security officers—about 12.

Following the Estimates hearing, Ms Graham provided the Committee Secretary (via an email on 25 May 2011) with more accurate figures.

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Senator HUMPHRIES: I was aware a couple of years ago of some downsizing of that workforce in line with what was assessed to be a better way of handling security in the building. What did that end up producing by way of redundancies or reduced establishment of full- or part-time security officers?

Ms Graham: I will take on notice the specific breakdown between full time and part time. My recollection is that we reduced by around 20 positions.

Senator HUMPHRIES: We have 142 staff now, full and part time. So was that roughly 160 down to 140?

Ms Graham: If indeed the number of where we are now is 140, that would be correct. I think we were around 174 and we reduced about 20 positions from that.

Following Estimates hearing, Ms Graham provided the Committee Secretary (via an email on 25 May 2011) with more accurate figures.

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DPS Estimates response

Senator FAULKNER: You are aware of the evidence that was provided in the last estimates round on Monday, 21 February, aren't you? I said to Ms König—she is not here today?

Mr Thompson: Ms König has retired.

Senator FAULKNER: Oh, really? Okay

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Mr Kenny: The officer who was in charge of this—let's call it—issue was Judy König who was the CFO, and she is no longer here. ...

...

Senator FAULKNER: Okay. She has retired, has she?

Mr Kenny: She has retired.

Senator FAULKNER: Well, it would be easier if she had not retired but she has,

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Senator FAULKNER: Perhaps it was of no interest whether my lights were on or off, but the point of the question is: has that been able to be addressed or is that really just a building characteristic that we are going to have to live with forever?

Ms Missingham: That is still an issue. We have to have those lights on for security purposes. We do not have specific lights outside those areas of where those officers are, so those lights would have again been on this year.

Senator FAULKNER: So, for the record, regardless of who is occupying the offices of the executive wing—it does not matter who forms the government or who forms the ministry—ministers in or occupants of those offices are simply unable to turn off the lights in that part of the building. That is correct?

Ms Missingham: That is correct.

clarification / correction

Ms König is on extended leave prior to retirement. Like many other officers, she is using long service leave and other leave entitlements prior to her formal retirement date. She has left the workplace and will not be returning. DPS has appointed a new CFO who commenced on 4 July 2011.

The pelmet lights were initially installed to provide a uniformed external appearance of artificial lights which would give the perception of the building as a 'lantern on the hill' and not for security purposes as advised to the Estimates Committee on 23 May 2011.

The pelmet lights are managed by the Building Management System and not the suite occupants.