



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE
SENATOR THE HONOURABLE SCOTT RYAN

REF: PC20-0060

Senator James Paterson
Chair
Senate Finance & Public Administration Legislation Committee
By email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Paterson,

I write in relation to the Additional Estimates hearings of 2 March 2020. In response to questioning, I undertook to take on notice the provision of material provided to the Speaker and I regarding the capital works program in Parliament House, described as a 'weekly digest'.

In considering this matter and the materials in question, I do not believe this material is appropriate for public release.

First, the matters contained in these digests are primarily security-related. Even redacting this information would inadvertently convey the scale of the works undertaken. Redacting the material would involve around three quarters of the digests being removed.

Second, the other works that are not specifically referring to security matters nonetheless betray sensitive information about works at Parliament House including dates of movement of people and materials and even maps.

Finally, these materials are provided to the Speaker and myself as Presiding Officers, with our responsibilities exercised jointly. I do not believe it is appropriate for me to publicly release materials which are jointly provided to the Speaker and I without his consent.

However, I appreciate the matters are of legitimate interest to Senators and it is entirely appropriate to consider matters related to the security and works of Parliament House through the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations, Staffing and Security. As I have indicated regarding other related matters, not only are these issues more appropriately dealt with in that forum, it is one that all Senators are entitled to attend and participate in. I have also committed to convening meetings of this committee more regularly to address matters such as this and others also more appropriate to that forum, such as information technology security.

I thank the committee for its understanding of these longstanding matters regarding the security and capital works programs.

Yours sincerely,


SCOTT RYAN

8 May 2020