



Additional Estimates 2024-25, 24 February 2025 - Department of Parliamentary Services

Opening Statement, A/Secretary

Chair and members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee and provide an opening statement relating to ongoing matters at the Department of the Parliamentary Services (DPS). I will provide copy of this statement for tabling and for the reference of the Committee.

My DPS colleagues and I welcome the opportunity to answer your questions today. Before taking questions, I would like to provide the Committee with the following information.

As the Committee was advised in the President's opening statement, Mr Stefanic's appointment as Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Service's concluded on 17 December 2024.

Paragraph 12 of the Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services Remuneration and Other Conditions for Appointment Determination provides for compensation for early loss of the office of DPS Secretary.

Mr Stefanic was eligible for compensation for early loss of office in accordance with that determination.

This amounted to a payment of \$141,220.29 (gross).

Mr Stefanic was also entitled to the payment of his accrued leave, which amounted to \$148,701.75 (gross).

The total net payment received was \$153,660.04.

This payment will be reported in department's 2024-25 Annual Report.

The Presiding Officers have asked that I continue as Acting Secretary while a merit-based selection process is undertaken to appoint a substantive Secretary. Recruitment for the position has been advertised and is being conducted by the Parliamentary Service Commissioner, Dr Gordon de Brouwer PSM. It is appropriate the committee direct to the Commissioner any questions in relation to the recruitment process.

At the November Estimates hearing, I advised that I had commissioned an independent fact-finding investigation by Dr Fiona Roughley SC, to review the department's actions into the

incentive to retire payment made to a previous DPS Deputy Secretary. Dr Roughley's fact-finding investigation has not yet concluded. I am unable to advise of next steps in relation to the report until Dr Roughley's findings have been provided to me and considered.

In my opening statement at the November Estimates hearing, I also confirmed that the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) had attended DPS offices. As I stated at the hearing in November, any questions about any investigation that the NACC may be undertaking should be referred to the NACC as I am conscious that discussing the matters may inadvertently identify persons of interest, prematurely damage reputations and /or compromise an individual's right to impartial adjudication.

I am pleased to announce the Magna Carta was returned to public display on 4 December 2024 on Level 1 of the Members Hall. The Magna Carta will remain on display in 2025 but will require periods of rest during future years to ensure its long-term preservation. Returning this piece to public display is testament to the efforts of DPS staff, across many areas of the department.

Finally, I would like to confirm to the Committee my commitment to serving as Acting Secretary. I am supported by dedicated staff who continue to demonstrate commitment to our purpose, display the Parliamentary Values in all aspects of our work and work diligently to maintain Australian Parliament House as the centre of Australian democracy.

My colleagues and I are happy to take questions from the Committee.

Jaala Hinchcliffe
Acting Secretary

24 February 2025