

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee — Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—21 October 2019

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Cyber Security Hack – Access

Question:

Written: Senator PATRICK

#### Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 December 2019

**Senator PATRICK:** Understanding that line of response, you may want to take these on notice as well. Is there any evidence that the IT system was compromised with the assistance of a person or persons with authorised access to the system?

**The President:** I will take that on notice.

#### Answer

There is no evidence that that there was any insider involvement or assistance in the compromise.

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee — Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—21 October 2019

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Cyber Security Hack – contact with parliamentarians  
Question:  
Written: Senator PATRICK

#### Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 December 2019

**Senator PATRICK:** You mentioned in the Senate chamber that a small number of parliamentarians had been contacted because of the data breach. Can you advise how many have been contacted?

**The President:** I will take that on notice. I can't recall off the top of my head.

#### Answer

Two Senators were contacted. I will not address matters related to members of the House of Representatives; they should be addressed to the Speaker.

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee — Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—21 October 2019

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Cyber Security Hack - Data  
Question:  
Written: Senator PATRICK

#### Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 December 2019

**Senator PATRICK:** You indicated to the chamber that a small amount of data was taken and none of it was deemed sensitive. How do you define sensitive in a parliamentary context? Does that mean in-camera evidence?

**The President:** Again, I will take that on notice. Some of these matters are obviously subject to the report we received over the last eight days.

**The President:** For example, and unrelated to this, if for example the DPS annual report was taken, I think we would be comfortable in saying that that is not a sensitive document because it is public by nature. So I think, to be fair, it is possible to classify documents in the terms that that statement referred to without their necessarily having to be—it's obvious in some cases.

**Senator PATRICK:** So parliamentarians' emails might be the next level. In camera evidence would be—

**The President:** I will take that on notice.

#### Answer

The small amount of non-sensitive data refers to DPS corporate data and data related to a small number of parliamentarians. No identified risk applies to in-camera evidence. Parliamentarians' data belongs exclusively to parliamentarians. Any impact on parliamentarians' email will be discussed directly with those offices. Discussions either have or will occur with the affected offices.

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee — Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—21 October 2019

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Cyber Security Hack – Duration  
Question:  
Written: Senator PATRICK

#### Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 December 2019

**Senator PATRICK:** What was the duration of the hacking? When did it start? How long did it take to close off the incident?

**The President:** I will take all of those on notice.

#### Answer

DPS became aware of the incident on the 31 January 2019. DPS and the ASD acted immediately to monitor activity and plan effective remediation. Removal of the attacker occurred on the 8 February.

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee — Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—21 October 2019

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Cyber Security Hack – Intelligence agencies**  
Question:  
Written: **Senator PATRICK**

#### **Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 December 2019**

**Senator PATRICK:** During the investigation of the hacking, did any law enforcement or intelligence agencies have access to the parliamentary system? And if that was the case, was that access supervised?  
**The President:** I will take on notice the sort of arrangements. I take the point you are raising, Senator. I understand the point you are raising.

#### **Answer**

DPS and The Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) worked side by side in a collaborative manner in the investigation and remediation of the cyber incident. All ASD access was approved by and advised to DPS. ASD access related to investigating technical systems, logs, scanning network traffic, identifying malware and other vulnerabilities. Neither ASD nor DPS accessed data or information stores held by parliamentarians without their consent.

These technical investigations do not access the contents of parliamentarians' documents, emails or communications and are limited to information required to diagnose and remediate cyber incidents.

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee — Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—21 October 2019

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Cyber Security Hack - Method  
Question:  
Written: Senator PATRICK

#### Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 December 2019

**Senator PATRICK:** The question goes to whether or not we have the capability to identify who might be hacking. I think that is pretty important capability that we should have, without going into how that capability is exercised. So I am not asking you who it might have been. I am simply trying to get an understanding of whether we know who it might have been.

**The President:** I don't think discussion of our capabilities in a public forum is entirely appropriate either.

**Senator PATRICK:** How was the hack executed? Was it spear-phishing emails?

**The President:** Again, I will take this on notice and take advice on both what is appropriate to disclose, as well as when I have a final—I am awaiting what I will call a layperson's briefing on the report that I read last week. I think I understood about 80 to 90 per cent of it, but there were some technical aspects to it, and I want to make sure that what I think I understood was correct. But I will say at this point that there are obviously implications for our future security as a parliament, as well as our cooperation with various agencies. We made that clear at the start of the year when we outlined everything we had done on this. With that proviso I will take that question on notice.

#### Answer

A small number of users visited a website that was outside of parliamentary management and that website had been compromised causing malware to be injected into the parliamentary computing network.

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee — Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—21 October 2019

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Five Eyes Parliamentary Alliance**  
Question:  
Written: **Senator PATRICK**

#### **Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 December 2019**

**Mr Stinziani:** The partnership that we have with the Five Eyes is across a number of aspects. The first is around cybersecurity strategy and making sure that we have a consistent approach to strategy and learnings from each other. The second phase is around intelligence sharing. When incidents occur in our jurisdictions, we are very quick to work with our partner agencies as well to pass on that information and to understand it. Quite often when these incidents occur in one particular jurisdiction there is a risk that it may apply in other jurisdictions as well. So an early warning or a heads up on the nature of that incident and any remediation or prevention that can be taken is always important as well.

**Senator PATRICK:** When did it start? When did the exchanges start?

**Mr Stinziani:** I will have to take the exact date on notice, but we have had that partnership for a number of years.

#### **Answer**

The first FVEYS parliamentary cyber meeting occurred in June 2016.