



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Senator James Paterson
Chair
Finance & Public Administration
Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Paterson

Thank you for inviting the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration to provide a submission to your committee's inquiry into the operation and management of the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS).

At a meeting on 7 October 2020, the Appropriations and Administration Committee resolved unanimously to provide a submission to your inquiry.

Senior officials from DPS have frequently appeared before the Appropriations and Administration Committee to brief the Members and answer questions on a range of issues within the Committee's ambit of responsibilities.

In the current parliament, DPS officials have briefed the Committee on:

- the Electronic Access Control System (EACS)
- the Private Area Access Policy
- Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) quarterly reports and the CCTV Compliance review
- ICT security, with reference to the security of the Parliamentary Computing Network and the roll out of Microsoft 365 and
- the capital works program at Parliament House, including the security works, kitchens' upgrades, auxiliary power upgrade and the mobile antenna upgrade.

The Committee has engaged with DPS regularly on the CCTV and EACS codes of practice as these have been topics of particular interest to Members. At its most recent meeting, the Committee received the report of the independent external review of the administration of the Australian Parliament House CCTV Code of Practice. DPS engaged Synergy Group Australia P/L to conduct the review which, at the suggestion of the Committee, engaged former Clerk of the House of Representatives, David Elder, to provide an oversight role for the review and expert input, specifically on parliamentary privilege. The Committee noted the recommendations that were made by the review and that DPS has accepted the majority of the recommendations and is in the process of implementing them. The Committee accepted that the fundamental protections built into the Code provide a robust protective framework.

The Committee has also had a long term interest in the security of the Parliamentary Computing Network (PCN) and has received regular briefings on how DPS is meeting the

challenges of the rapidly evolving cyber threat landscape, the security of the PCN and the activities of the DPS Cyber Security Operations Centre. The Committee has found these briefings informative and a reassurance that the security of the PCN is a very high priority for DPS.

As a general observation, the Committee has found DPS officials willing to appear before the Committee and to be cooperative and forthcoming when asked questions. Members believe they have a constructive relationship with senior DPS officials, including the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, and look forward to this relationship continuing into the future.

Please contact me if you have any questions about this submission. Alternatively your committee secretariat may wish to contact the secretary of the Appropriations and Administration Committee, James Catchpole, if they have any questions.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Tony Smith MP
Chair

15 October 2020
