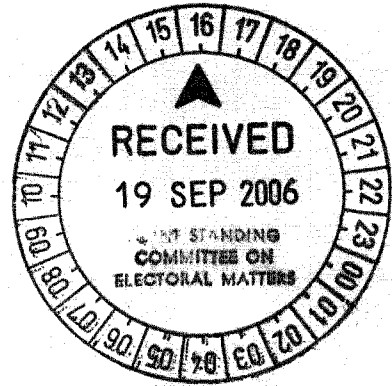




SERJEANT-AT-ARMS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

18 September 2006

Ms Sonia Palmieri
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee
on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Canberra



Dear Ms Palmieri

**Inquiry into civics and electoral education
public hearing—7 August 2006**

I refer to your letter of 1 September 2006 inviting corrections to the transcript of the public hearing of the committee's inquiry as referred above, and also seeking responses to questions raised during the hearing. Enclosed are

1. a corrected transcript of evidence for the four witnesses from the department—Mr Ian Harris, Ms Robyn Webber, Mr Andres Lomp and myself;
2. a presentation used by Mr Harris in overseas jurisdictions on the Parliament of Birds—Powerpoint on CD; and
3. **Attachment A**—providing details of
 - remote students using CVP;
 - Sky News parliamentary broadcasts;
 - webcasting of parliament; and
 - distribution of the department's magazine *About the House*.

Please contact me again if you require anything further in relation to these matters.

Yours sincerely

Claressa Surtees

Claressa Surtees
Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms

Citizenship visits program (CVP)

In relation to Senator Hogg's request for statistics about the extent to which students from remote areas in Australia accessed the CVP, following, at Table 1, is a summary by financial year, of all students who were paid the highest rate of subsidy for travelling further than 3000 kms to Canberra.

It is relevant to note that the CVP was established in 1989 for the express purpose of supporting those school students who would have to travel long distances to visit the Parliament in Canberra. For this reason, only those students who had to travel 1000 kms or further were eligible for a subsidy under the CVP. This distance qualification is a point of distinction between CVP and the current program, under which students travelling 150 kms or more are eligible for a subsidy.

Sky News and parliamentary broadcasts

Further to the discussion during the hearing about parliamentary broadcasting by Sky News, Sky News advised DPS that in relation to its Parliamentary Channel there are no separate ratings available and that:

Sky News receives very strong and positive viewer feedback for the parliamentary channel. We receive special requests from viewers for certain parliamentary committees to be aired on the channel.

Sky News has advised that the Sky News Parliamentary Channel is available in 91% of all Australian STV homes, and question time is also aired live into New Zealand. In relation to the About the House program which is produced by the department's Liaison and Projects Office, Sky News views this program as part of its commitment to the broadcast of the parliamentary services.

Webcasting of parliament

In response to the query about whether there might be a record of how many viewers access webcasts, DPS has advised that arrangements in relation to identifying hits on the Parliament's webcasts are being revised and that currently it is not possible to give a breakdown of viewer access to individual webcasts. However, when the parliamentary exhibition on 60 years of parliamentary broadcasting was being prepared by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office in July 2006, DPS estimated that webcasting services were accessed by 350-400,000 external viewers per annum.

About the House magazine

In relation to Mr Danby's request for information about how many university students have access to the magazine, of persons on the mailing list, a total of 240 are within universities, and 34 of these are in university libraries. Also on the mailing list, are 501 school libraries and 442 general libraries.

Citizenship visits program (CVP)			Table 1
Summary of students receiving highest rate of subsidy for travelling more than 3000 kms to Canberra by financial year with total students receiving subsidy and total students visiting Parliament House.			
Notes:			
All Western Australian schools are located more than 3000 kms from Canberra and therefore receive the highest subsidy rate.			
All Northern Territory schools are located more than 3000 kms from Canberra and therefore receive the highest subsidy rate.			
Most Queensland schools are located less than 3000 kms from Canberra and therefore only a small number of schools receive the highest subsidy rate.			
			% of total students
01/02 Financial year (rate \$200 per student)	schools	students	receiving subsidy
Western Australia	63	1598	10
Northern Territory	11	217	1
Queensland	4	80	
total students receiving highest rate of subsidy	78	1,895	11
total students receiving subsidy		15,470	
total students visiting Parliament House		106,511	
02/03 Financial year (rate \$200 per student)			
Western Australia	65	1447	9
Northern Territory	15	344	2
Queensland	2	36	
total students receiving highest rate of subsidy	82	1,827	11
total students receiving subsidy		16,090	
total students visiting Parliament House		106,352	

03/04 Financial year (Subsidy rate changed from \$200 to \$230 on 1/1/2004)			
Western Australia	76	1937	11
Northern Territory	13	279	2
total students receiving highest rate of subsidy	89	2,216	13
total students receiving subsidy		18,185	
total students visiting Parliament House		108,362	
04/05 Financial year (rate \$230 per student)			
Western Australia	86	2046	11
Northern Territory	13	259	1
Queensland	2	28	
total students receiving highest rate of subsidy	101	2,333	12
total students receiving subsidy		18,741	
total students visiting Parliament House		111,279	
05/06 Financial year (rate \$230 per student)			
Western Australia	100	2341	12
Northern Territory	14	321	2
Queensland	1	20	
total students receiving highest rate of subsidy	115	2,682	14
total students receiving subsidy		20,403	
total students visiting Parliament House		108,680	