



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

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25 May 2017

Ms Lyn Beverley
Secretary
Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
The Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Beverley

**Budget Estimates Hearing – 22 May 2017
Further Answers to Questions on Notice**

Further to my letter of 24 May, I provide responses to two questions asked by Senator Smith at Monday's hearing. This completes responses to outstanding questions taken by the Senate Department at Monday's hearing.

Yours sincerely

(Richard Pye)

Question: 2

Topic: Telepresence access in committee rooms

Asked: 22 May 2017

Senator SMITH: ...Just referring to the two committee rooms that have telepresence access, how is priority determined in terms of which members or senators, or which committees, will have access to them?

Mr Pye: I would have to take that on notice. It is maybe not something that is in my—in relation to Senate committees it would be, but I am not aware of the detail of that and I would have to take that on notice, which I am happy to do.

Senator SMITH: Perhaps you could also take on notice and let me know how frequently Senate committees have accessed telepresence opportunity in those two committee rooms.

Mr Pye: I am happy to do so.

Answer:

The Department of Parliamentary Services has installed video-conferencing in Committee rooms 1R3 and 2S1. Facilities in 1R3 are completely installed and functional while the cabling has been installed in 2S1 and can be used with temporary screens. Final implementation is pending Design Integrity approvals for redesigned furniture.

Access for Senate committee rooms are reserved primarily for the use of Senate committees and senators. Should the rooms not be required by Senate committees, they may be made available to other groups for parliamentary or government purposes. The order of priority for the use of Senate committee rooms is as follows:

1. Senate committees
2. Joint committees
3. Senators
4. House of Representatives committees
5. Party committees of parliamentarians
6. Others.

The Department of the House of Representatives advises that in relation to 1R3 their order of priority for committee room bookings is along similar lines with priority given to House committees, joint committees, and MPs.

For both departments, there is no separate policy for prioritising those seeking a video conferencing room, although efforts are made to arrange bookings to suit all parties.

DPS advises that ParLAV have placed 31 Video Conferencing bookings since October 2016 with six of those booked for Senate Committees. The Senate Department also used 1R3 on 6 October 2016 to conduct training with senators. As this was a non-sitting day, senators were able to participate via video-conference from their electorate offices.