

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee  
— Supplementary Additional Budget Estimates Hearing— 8 February  
2016**

**Answers to Questions on Notice**

**President of the Senate**

Topic: **Ministerial Wing extension**

Hansard Reference **p 68; 8 February 2016**

**Senator WONG:** Was that referred to the department at all?

**The President:** I do not believe so because of the events that preceded it.

**Senator WONG:** Can we just take on notice: was the letter from the PM requesting this referred to the department and, if so, what work did the department undertake as a result of that? Was advice provided to you?

**The President:** I am happy to take it on notice.

**Senator WONG:** Can you provide a copy of the letter, please?

**The President:** I will consider that, Senator Wong.

**Answer**

The correspondence from the Prime Minister was not referred to DPS.

A decision to examine options to extend the Ministerial Wing was taken by Government in December 2014. DPS was asked directly by Government to develop options for consideration. DPS submitted the options for consideration by the Presiding Officers in March 2015.

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**President of the Senate**

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Hansard Reference **p 71; 8 February 2016**

**The President:** Could I just enhance the record in relation to Senator Wong. It has been brought to my attention that, in relation to the ministerial wing that we were discussing, I need to give some additional information. I am correct in saying that we have only had communication from the Prime Minister. The Department of Parliamentary Services did develop a number of options, one of which included ministerial extension options in relation to the security enhancement, and a variety of other options. This was presented to us, not at our request. Madam Speaker—at the time—and I did not request this, but it was presented to us. We wrote to the Prime Minister saying we were not of the view to extend the ministerial wing. We had other priorities within the building. That happened earlier, and then the Prime Minister wrote back to us, and then we did not communicate back because of the events I have outlined.

**Senator WONG:** I seek that the correspondence to which you have referred in that answer be tabled, and that the plans to which you referred also be provided to this committee.

**The President:** Again I will consider that.

**Answer**

Correspondence and plans related to the proposed ministerial wing extension contain security related information that should not be made public. Accordingly, the President offers the opportunity to the Committee for a private briefing.

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Hansard Reference **p 72; 8 February 2016**

**Senator WONG:** Someone can remind me what point one cost. Anyway, about your answer, Mr President and DPS developing these plans. I do want to know how they came to develop them. You say they were not at your request or at the Speaker's request—is that correct?

**The President:** Correct.

**Senator WONG:** I want to know how that happened. Can you take that on notice.

**The President:** I will. I anticipate this may have been a decision of the former secretary

**Answer**

A decision to examine options to extend the Ministerial Wing was taken by Government in December 2014. At the direction of the Government an inter-agency working group including DPS was established and developed options for consideration. DPS was asked directly by Government to develop options for consideration. The President was not involved in these decisions.

DPS submitted options for consideration by the Presiding Officers in March 2015. The Presiding Officers wrote to the Prime Minister in March 2015 to advise that the urgent building works identified by the Building Condition Assessment Report should be accorded a priority over any proposed extension of the Ministerial Wing.