

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Budget Estimates Hearing—May 2015

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Functions in Parliament House**

Question: **38**

Hansard Reference **p 82-83; 25 May 2015**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 July 2015

Ms Greening: The Department of Parliamentary Services will provide assistance to senators and members who are holding functions in their suite. In respect to moving furniture in and out, if the function is determined to be a parliamentary event then the department will support that function financially. If it is determined that the function is not a parliamentary event, then the senator or the member is responsible for any costs associated with it.

Senator WONG: Who makes that determination?

Ms Greening: It is made using guidelines.

Senator WONG: Who makes it?

Ms Greening: I will have to take that on notice.

Senator WONG: Come on—you can tell me there are guidelines, but you cannot tell me who makes that decision as to whether it is parliamentary or not? Is it you, is it someone in the DPS or is it the member or senator?

Ms Greening: I need to take that on notice.

Senator WONG: Can you explain to me how you do not know that.

Ms Greening: Because I have not been in this current role for a long period of time.

Senator WONG: Fair enough. Does anyone else know?

Ms Croke: I am sorry, we will take it on notice. The person who is normally assistant secretary in that role is on three months leave, so Ms Greening has been in the role since early April and that division has been reporting to me for the same period.

Senator WONG: Is there no-one else in the relevant division, office, whatever— that can assist?

Ms Greening: Not in the room, Senator.

Senator WONG: You do not bring them?

Ms Greening: No.

Ms Croke: We would have to check the guidelines. I think that in a lot of cases it possibly is the office holder who makes that initial decision. I am not sure what guidelines are around to support that.

CHAIR: The question has been taken on notice.

Answer

Functions and events held at Parliament House are divided into two categories—funded and non-funded. *Operating Policies and Procedures No 24 – Use of the Parliament House facilities for functions and events* (OPP 24) (attached) provides procedures and guidance to all who manage and wish to book events and functions using Parliament House venues.

Funded functions are defined as functions that are approved and supported by the Parliament as a whole. In this respect, a whole-of-Parliament perspective is taken rather than an Executive Government perspective.

Non-funded functions are defined as functions that do not fall within any of the categories of funded functions. These functions include those sponsored or booked by Senators and Members. This also applies to Ministers and senior members of Executive Government.

The Presiding Officers are the final approving authority for the approval of functions in Parliament House. In approving OPP 24 the Presiding Officers delegated authority for approving functions to the Director, Facilities Management in DPS. However, this position no longer exists and the role, including the approving function under OPP 24, is undertaken by the Director of Programs and Visitor Experience.

OPP 24 is in the process of being revised to account for the above change to the title of the DPS approving position, and to clarify the use of some venues currently not specifically referred to in the existing policy, for example courtyards.



Operating Policies and Procedures No 24—Use of the Parliament House facilities for functions and events

Date:	17 February 2011	Review:	January 2013
Approved:	Secretary	File No:	10/1563
Contact:	Assistant Secretary, Building Services Branch	Extn:	4700

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Introduction

1 There are various venues in Parliament House that may be booked for functions and events by parliamentarians, building occupants, external organisations and members of the public.

2 This policy provides guidance to clients who wish to use the Parliament House facilities for their function and provides information on the following:

- (a) classification of functions;
- (b) approved Parliamentary and Formally Recognised Friendship Groups and their entitlements; and
- (c) a list of venues that are available for functions.

3 This policy also gives effect to the Parliament House Facilities Policy and Procedures Manual (the **Manual**), which provides guidance to Parliament House building occupants, catering contractors and external clients on the use of the building for functions and events.

4 **Attachment A** provides a list of venues that are available for functions in Parliament House.

5 **Attachment B** outlines the way in which functions are classified. It provides information on the distinction between a funded and a non-funded function.

6 **Attachment C** provides a list of Approved Parliamentary Groups.

7 **Attachment D** provides a definition of and the process to formally recognise Parliamentary Friendship Groups.

Criteria for the approval of functions in Parliament House

8 All functions and events held in Parliament House must be approved. The criteria used for approving any proposed function in Parliament House are:

- (a) that the function/event would be considered to be acceptable to the majority of Senators and Members in the Parliament;
- (b) that the function/event is consistent with the dignity of the Parliament;
- (c) that the function/event is not likely to cause offence to any significant part of the Australian community;
- (d) that the function/event will not adversely impact on any other activities in Parliament House, particularly the operations of parliamentary business, the Chambers or Committees /Hearings, also providing a clear thoroughfare for Senators and Members; and
- (e) that the function/event does not disproportionately affect public access to areas that are usually open to the public.

9 The Presiding Officers are the final approving authority for the approval of functions in Parliament House. The authority for approving functions is delegated to the Director, Facilities Management, DPS Building Services Branch, who approves functions after consulting with the Usher of the Black Rod and the Serjeant-at-Arms.

10 The Presiding Officers retain the discretion to overturn any approval decision at any time.

Priority of use

11 Priority for use of Parliament House facilities will always be given to approved parliamentary functions.

Presiding Officers' Approval

12 The policy was approved by the Presiding Officers on 7 February 2011.

Alan Thompson
Secretary

Attachment A—Venues that are available for functions within Parliament House, and charging arrangements

Background

1 Any function held in Parliament House may attract fees and charges, particularly where the function has been classified as non-funded.

The types of charges that may apply include the following:

- (a) venue set up;
- (b) food and beverage;
- (c) audio visual services;
- (d) security; and
- (e) cleaning.

Venues

The following venues are available for functions:

- (a) Great Hall;
- (b) Marble Foyer (may only be used in conjunction with an approved function in the Great Hall);
- (c) Theatre;
- (d) Theatre Foyer (may only be used in conjunction with an approved event in the Theatre);
- (e) Mural Hall;
- (f) Senate and House of Representative Alcoves;
- (g) Private Dining Rooms (1 to 5);
- (h) Queen's Terrace Café and Queen's Terrace;
- (i) Queen's Terrace Gallery (schools hospitality).

Venue set up charges for functions

2 The venue set up charges for functions may be obtained from the Parliament House catering contractor.

Other charges that may apply

Security for functions

3 Any function that is held in Parliament House may require a security presence. Security is provided on a case-by-case basis, with the decision as to whether security is required for a particular function made by the Assistant Director Security Operations.

4 All security that is provided to non-funded functions is provided on a full cost recovery basis.

Audio visual services

5 Any audio visual services that are required for non-funded functions are provided by the Parliament House catering contractor.

6 DPS has established an approved list of audio visual service providers that clients are able to select from for their functions. If the client wishes to use a supplier that is not on the list, they must use one of the approved providers to supervise their preferred audio visual supplier.

Cleaning

7 A very basic cleaning service is included as part of the venue hire charge; although, if the venue requires a more thorough clean, this charge may be fully cost recovered from the client.

Function Bookings

8 All catered and non catered function bookings are to be directed to Parliament House Catering by IHG on 02 62775146 in the first instance.

Attachment B—Classification of functions held in Parliament House

Background

1 Functions and events that are held in Parliament House are divided into two categories—funded and non-funded functions.

Funded events

2 Funded functions are defined as a function that is approved and supported by the Parliament as a whole. In this respect, a whole-of-Parliament perspective is taken rather than an Executive Government perspective.

3 The categories of funded functions include:

- (a) a function for any parliamentary purpose, including the Parliament's education and public relations activities under the auspices of the International Community Relations Office (**ICRO**) and the Parliamentary Education Office (**PEO**)—this category also includes special ceremonial events, such as the Opening of Parliament;
- (b) a function arranged by the Executive Government, which is supported by the Parliament as a whole—primarily national events arranged by the Ceremonial and Hospitality Unit (**CERHOS**) of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet;
- (c) free public performances;
- (d) functions that are supported by the Presiding Officers in their capacity as Presiding Officers;
- (e) official functions that are held by one of the three parliamentary departments (note that this does not include social functions);
- (f) certain meetings or functions held by Approved Parliamentary Groups. (**Attachment C**);
- (g) functions that relate to the activities of the Parliament as a whole, or of one House, such as swearing in of the Governor-General;
- (h) functions held by Parliamentary Joint Committees, or Committees of either House;

4 Where a function is classified as non-funded, these services are charged on a full cost recovery basis.

5 For Approved Parliamentary Group functions, DPS will meet ancillary costs such as security, audio visual services, venue hire and set up. Note that food and beverage charges are not considered an ancillary cost.

6 It is important to note functions that are sponsored or booked by Senators or Members are not automatically classified as funded functions.

Non-funded Functions

7 Non-funded functions include functions that are sponsored or booked by Senators and Members, but do not fall within any of the categories of funded

functions. This will apply, even if the parliamentarian who booked the function is a Minister or holds a senior Executive Government position. They include:

- (a) any function organised by a political party, regardless of whether that party is in Government or whether the function involves parliamentarians;
- (b) functions that are organised or booked by government agencies or departments, even where it involves a Minister or other parliamentarians;
- (c) functions that are booked by a parliamentarian on behalf of an organisation external to the Parliament, even if the Member or Senator who makes the booking will be in attendance. This includes:
 - (i) a Press Club address, media launch or any conference at which a parliamentarian speaks;
 - (ii) a function for an industry, community or business group booked or supported by the local member or another parliamentarian; and
 - (iii) a function aimed at showcasing an activity, product or industry to parliamentarians.

Decisions relating to the classification of functions

8 DPS Facilities Management will classify all functions held in Parliament House in accordance with this policy.

9 Where a function organiser is not satisfied with the classification of their function, then the decision may be referred to the Presiding Officers, who will make a final decision about the classification of the function.

Attachment C - List of Approved Parliamentary Groups

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Groups

Afghanistan	Malaysia
Albania	Maldives
Algeria	Malta
Argentina	Mauritius
Armenia	Mexico
Austria	Mongolia
Baltic States	Montenegro
Bangladesh	Morocco
Belgium	Nepal
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Netherlands
Brazil	New Zealand
Bulgaria	Nigeria
Cambodia	Pacific
Canada	Pakistan
Chile	Papua New Guinea
China	Peru
Colombia	Philippines
Croatia	Poland
Cuba	Portugal
Cyprus	Romania
Czech Republic	Russia
Denmark	Saudi Arabia
Egypt	Serbia
Eritrea	Singapore
European Parliament	Slovakia
Finland	Slovenia
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	South Africa
France	Spain
Germany	Sri Lanka
Greece	Sweden
Hungary	Switzerland
Iceland	Syria
India	Thailand
Indonesia	Timor Leste
Iran	Turkey
Iraq	Uganda
Ireland	Ukraine
Israel	United Arab Emirates
Italy	United Kingdom
Japan	United Nations
Jordan	Uruguay
Republic of Korea	United States of America
Kuwait	Venezuela
Laos	Vietnam
Lebanon	Zimbabwe

Other Approved Parliamentary Groups

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (**CPA**) member countries
The Parliamentary Christian Fellowship

Attachment D – Parliamentary Friendship Groups

Background

1 To deal with a growing number of Parliamentary Friendship Groups requesting to be formally recognised, the Presiding Officers have set out the criteria defining a formally recognised Parliamentary Friendship Group.

2 Recognition of friendship groups by the Parliament terminates at the end of each Parliament. Friendship groups will need to reapply for formal Parliamentary recognition at the commencement each Parliament.

Definition of a formally recognised Parliamentary Friendship Group

3 To qualify as a formally recognised Parliamentary Friendship Group, the group must:

- (a) be open to all Senators and Members;
- (b) be apolitical;
- (c) be clearly defined;
- (d) have no external sponsorship from external organisations; and
- (e) be formally endorsed by the Presiding Officers as a Formally Recognised Friendship Group.

4 Where parliamentarians wish to have their specific group recognised as a Formally Recognised Friendship Group, formal written approval from the Presiding Officers will be required.

5 To be formally recognised as a Friendship Group, evidence of the following will need to be provided:

- (a) the Group must have a Chairperson and a Deputy Chair; and
- (b) the Group must have membership of at least 10 current sitting Senators and Members.

6 All applications must be made in writing to the Presiding Officers, who will assess the request and advise the group of their decision.

7 The Presiding Officers will recognise a specific group as a Formally Recognised Friendship Group based on the above criteria.

Financial Arrangements

9 Functions held for Parliamentary Friendship Groups are non funded and are required to meet any costs associated with the event as outlined in **(Attachment A)**.