

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
—Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—October 2014**

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Speaker's kitchen upgrade**

Question: **190**

Hansard Reference **p 93-94, 20 October 2014**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 31 December 2014

Senator SMITH: In keeping with Senator Wong's questions, Ms Mills, you mentioned that approval for this refurbishment, which had not been undertaken in the last 25 years, occurred some time ago. Could you be more specific in providing some information about when it was approved and by whom?

Ms Mills: Yes. I will get the details to you on notice, but I can certainly say that DPS had hoped to originally do this work in the period before the election, because that is the time that we can generally get into the main suites, because people are obviously less present in parliament, and we usually plan our major capital works around that program. Otherwise, we tend to have to do them in the Christmas recess. The winter and Christmas recesses are the best times for us to do this type of work. We were not able to do this for a combination of planning and financial reasons in the original time schedule, so the work had to be done with Madam Speaker's permission after she came on board.

Senator SMITH: So, in order to plan for it to be done during the election period when there is less activity around the building, it would have to be approved in advance of that election period?

Ms Mills: That is right. We often also have quite a long lead time for procuring some of the equipment because it is not readily available. We normally have to plan at least three months ahead for any works.

Senator SMITH: So the approval may have happened not just some time before the election but a long time before the election to allow for suitable procurement time frames?

Ms Mills: That is right. Again, I can confirm the dates, because it was a while ago, but we certainly began discussions on refurbishing the kitchens no later than the beginning of last year.

Answer

Initial planning for the upgrade of both the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives kitchen's commenced in September 2012.

Final funding approval for the upgrades was provided in October 2013 by the Secretary for DPS.