

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

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Hansard Review**

Question: **57**

Written **Senator Bernardi**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 4 December 2015

Please advise the current status of the Hansard Review.

Answer

A Hansard review was announced by the then Secretary during the February 2013 Senate Additional Estimates hearing. The tender process for the Hansard review was completed late in 2013. The tender's statement of work requested a review of legislative and policy requirements, stakeholder requirements, workplace health and safety and staff and ICT capabilities.

Submissions received did not fully meet the statement of requirements, subsequently the value for money requirement of the Commonwealth Procurement rules was not met and the procurement process did not progress any further.

As a result, instead of one large review, a number of priority activities were identified including:

- engaging an external consultant to undertake a work health and safety (WHS) hazard identification and risk assessment of the Hansard work environment; and
- DPS undertaking work 'in-house' to identify any future production needs for Hansard in terms of its workforce and tools, processes to ensure quality and accuracy; and the Hansard product of the future, including IT and accessibility.

The WHS hazard identification and risk assessment of Hansard was finalised in February 2015. It was found that under the current systems of work that there is a low to medium WHS risk in Hansard, in particular that:

- the basic system of work has a low risk during a 7.5 hour day on the understanding that transcribing and editing is undertaken with the staff self-initiating frequent changes in posture and cognitive breaks; and
- the medium level of risk is associated with a 9.5 hour day or longer as a result of accumulated physical and cognitive fatigue.

A total of 67 recommendations (that translated into 47 actions) was provided to address physical, cognitive and psychosocial risk factors associated with the systems of work undertaken by Hansard. An action plan was developed to capture the 47 activities and implementation has been prioritised across the 2015 calendar year.

Some of the investigative and service improvement activities undertaken 'in-house' through 2014 and 2015 have included:

- the establishment of a Hansard forum where representatives from across Hansard investigate a range of solutions and ideas for continual improvement of Hansard's production processes;

- a consultation process with senators and members regarding Hansard products and services has been undertaken and these views will be used to inform future improvements;
- a request for tender process to develop a roadmap for ICT infrastructure specific to the support of parliamentary recording and reporting was released in October 2015; and
- to meet the Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy (NTS) mandate for the captioning of audio-visual content that is webcast, researched the Australian captioning market and released a request tender in November 2015 for the implementation, across the next two years, of live captioning of parliamentary proceedings.