

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES 2016-17

Finance Portfolio
18 October 2016

Department/Agency: Department of Finance
Outcome/Program: 2/2.3
Topic: Lift in The Lodge

Senator: McAllister

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Number of pages: 2

Question:

Senator McALLISTER: ... I am particularly interested in understanding when the expenditure on the luggage lift was approved.

Senator Cormann: We might have to take that on notice to get the specific date.

Senator McALLISTER: ... Are you certain you do not have the information with you today, **Ms Huxtable**?

Senator Cormann: I am certain that I am taking it on notice. ...

Senator McALLISTER: Can you tell me what brand the lift is?

Senator Cormann: No. That is not the sort of detail that we have with us, but I am happy to take that on notice as well.

Senator McALLISTER: Is it an Australian-made lift?

Senator Cormann: We will take that on notice.

Senator McALLISTER: Can you tell me the dimensions of the lift?

Senator Cormann: I will take that on notice.

...

Senator McALLISTER: I would also like to know what the weight capacity of the lift is.

Senator Cormann: Why don't you go through all your questions, and we will just take them on notice. I generally do not know what the weight capacity of the lift is?

Senator McALLISTER: I think those are some of the detailed questions that you have indicated you would like to take on notice. We were told yesterday that the insulation of the lift was to deal with OH&S questions. Can you elaborate on that, **Ms Huxtable**?

Senator Cormann: Obviously, the Prime Minister's department went through that yesterday. To the extent that I have fresh knowledge or fresh memory in relation to these matters, it is based on the evidence that I saw being given yesterday. Why don't we include your questions in relation to that with the questions that we have already taken on notice in relation to the lift?

Senator McALLISTER: I would like to know how many OH&S incidents have occurred as a result of lifting luggage.

Senator Cormann: We will take that on notice.

Ms Huxtable: I am not sure that we would know.

Senator Cormann: We will take it on notice. As always, we are keen to be helpful. It is not technically a matter for us, but I do not want to move you backwards and forwards, so I will seek to facilitate an answer.

Senator McALLISTER: Here is my last detailed question, and I feel certain you will take this on notice also. How many stairs are there at The Lodge?

Senator Cormann: We will take that on notice.

Senator McALLISTER: I will say that we did seek to pursue this with Prime Minister and Cabinet yesterday, and they were very explicit in referring a range of questions to the Department of Finance. Do they tell you when they refer us to you at estimates?

Ms Huxtable: Well, they have not told me, and I did not see their evidence yesterday. I am very happy to go back and review their evidence and, given the questions that you have asked, liaise with them to make sure that we are being as helpful as possible in getting back to you.

CHAIR: To be fair to them, I think they also undertook to take a lot of those questions on notice as well.

Senator McALLISTER: They did. It is simply that we had a very detailed discussion that probably went for over an hour the last time we were here at estimates about the same set of questions. I am surprised that neither department has come to this round of estimates in a position to discuss any of the detail at all.

Senator Cormann: You are going to a level of detail—it is not unusual for the government of the day to take questions of that sort of nature on notice.

Answer:

1. When was expenditure on the lift approved?
PM&C officials have noted in the recent Estimates period that their recollection of discussions on the lift occurred during the early stages of the Lodge refurbishment. Expenditure on the luggage lift was approved in the 2014-15 Budget.
2. Can you tell me what brand the lift is?
The brand of the luggage lift is AV Lifts (Australia), model DW4000-100.
3. Is it an Australian made lift?
Yes.
4. Can you tell me the dimensions of the lift?
The dimensions of the lift's internal car are 785mm wide x 600mm deep x 1000mm high.
5. What weight capacity is the lift?
100kg.
6. Was the installation of the lift to deal with OH&S questions?
The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has advised that installation of the lift was primarily to manage issues concerning work health and safety, whilst having regard to heritage issues.
7. How many OH&S incidents have occurred as a result of lifting luggage?
The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has advised that there have been no recent work health and safety incidents at The Lodge as a result of lifting luggage. However, installation of the luggage lift is part of a proactive approach to minimise the risk of such incidents as required by the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and related regulations.
8. How many stairs are there at The Lodge?
There are 21 stairs across two levels at the main entry at The Lodge.