

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—October 2016

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Inconsistency of answers**

Question: **25**

Written: **Senator Wong**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 December 2016

With reference to Budget Estimates on 5 May 2016, at which Senator Bernardi spent some time detailing difference between answers provided by the Department of Parliamentary Services to questions on notice and evidence that had been provided to him which appeared to contradict these answers, and the response given by Mr Stefanic to Senator Bernardi that “I undertake that there will be strong action following this”: Please explain what “strong action” was taken.

Answer

Following the hearing the Secretary instructed the Assistant Secretary, Security Branch, to seek immediate unequivocal advice regarding what constitutes training in the “use of batons and plastic slip-tie handcuffs”. Further action would follow if information provided was found to be misleading or inaccurate.

To the matter of batons, during the defensive tactics training element of the Competency Management Training (CMT) course for security officers, a padded plastic training aid is used as a prop to simulate a hand held metal detector. This prop could be referred to as a ‘baton’. The use of this training aid could be confused with offensive baton training, however offensive baton training is not taught in CMT. From that information, while baton training is not a feature of the CMT it is conceivable that some may choose to represent this activity in such a way.

To the matter of handcuffing, all parliamentary security officers are trained in the use of flexi cuffs for the restraint of offenders specifically in the House of Representative and Senate galleries. The use of restraints would only occur where the offender’s behaviour requires restraining, and it is authorised by the Usher of the Black Rod or the Serjeant-at-Arms.

Following discussions with senior AFP personnel, it was established that a handcuffing change-over technique has been developed to facilitate situations where the transfer of custody of a person under restraint is required from parliamentary security officers to AFP officers and where the AFP require the subject to be handcuffed. This technique is now incorporated into a number of different scenarios where the transfer of custody to AFP may arise. However, this technique does not include the use of flexi cuffs.

On consideration of the information provided to the Secretary, advice was provided to the Committee Secretary on 16 June 2016, along with an amended response to Question on Notice No. 182; no further investigative or disciplinary action was deemed necessary.