

hc/let/13889

24 July 2003

Mr Alistair Sands  
Secretary  
Finance and Public Administration  
Legislation Committee  
The Senate  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Sands

**ESTIMATES HEARING, 10 FEBRUARY 2003  
FURTHER INFORMATION**

The following further information is provided to the committee in relation to matters raised at the committee's hearing on 10 February 2003.

**Committee photographs in committee rooms (transcript p. 3)**

Attached is a background note by the Usher of the Black Rod on the decision that no more committee photographs would be hung in committee rooms. The note also contains a suggestion for future treatment of committee photographs, subject to the approval of the President.

**Overseas travel by committees (transcript p. 4)**

Attached is a paper by the Clerk Assistant (Committees) setting out relevant factors relating to this matter, including the current system for determining outgoing delegations, and a list of options which might be considered to allow committees to pursue inquiries overseas.

**Allowing other persons to be security screened with senators (transcript p. 5)**

Attached is a paper by the Usher of the Black Rod on this matter, drawing attention to difficulties with the original suggestion but suggesting an alternative course to even the flow at the security screening points.

**Questions on notice (transcript p. 6)**

During the hearing it was stated that the document referred to by Senator Murray was probably the annual collection of statistics. In fact, it was a six-monthly collection.

Attached are further statistics on questions on notice, showing time taken to answer questions by departments, departments ranked by time taken to answer questions, and departments ranked by numbers of questions remaining unanswered over 30 days.

As suggested during the hearing, the existing remedy contained in standing order 74 is likely to be the most effective in encouraging ministers and departments to answer questions on time. Other steps which may be taken could include:

- the President writing to ministers, or to selected ministers at the top of the lists of time taken, drawing their attention to the problem and reminding them of standing order 74
- the Clerk of the Senate writing to secretaries of departments in similar terms
- requiring departments to table in the Senate explanations of their failure to answer questions within the 30 day period, or within some extended period, say 90 days.

#### **Estimates questions on notice (transcript p. 8)**

Possible remedies for unreasonable delays in answering questions on notice in estimates hearings could include:

- adding estimates questions to the terms of standing order 74
- requiring departments to present reports explaining any failure to answer any questions on time.

#### **Leave not taken (transcript p. 9)**

Attached is a note by the Director (Human Resource Management) indicating the department's method of attempting to manage unused leave.

Yours sincerely

(Harry Evans)

## **Committee Photographs in committee rooms**

At its hearings on the Additional Estimates on Monday 10 February 2003, the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee sought information on the decision not to hang photographs of committees in Senate committee rooms. The committee was advised that the previous President of the Senate, after consultation with the Usher of the Black Rod and the Joint House Department, had agreed with the proposal not to hang additional photographs. It appears that senators were neither consulted nor notified of the decision. Senator Ray suggested that the President list the matter for 'a bit of consultation'.

The first record of a decision relating to hanging photos in committee rooms is in correspondence to the then President of the Senate from the Usher of the Black Rod dated 14 December 2000. It records agreement between the Secretary of the Joint House Department, Mr Bolton, the Art Section Director, Ms Dauth and the Usher of the Black Rod, Mr Alison, that the hanging of photographs in committee rooms would detract from the design standard of the room. President Reid endorsed this view. The President also accepted Ms Dauth's suggestion that photographs in suitable frames be hung in the corridor adjacent to the committee rooms on the second floor.

Following the committee's questions on 10 February, an inspection of the committee rooms was conducted by Senators' Services staff. This revealed that because the majority of committee rooms have a fabric or wooden (or both) wall finish they are unsuitable for the mounting and display of photographs or for almost any further adornment. This applies to all committee rooms except rooms 1S5 and 1S6.

While the internal corridors are suitable, the existing space houses art work from the Parliament House collection. The Design Integrity team has not been consulted, but the use of these spaces for the display of committee photographs should not detract from the design integrity and ambience of the building provided they are appropriately framed and positioned. It would be possible to hang photographs in the north/south internal corridors adjacent to the Senate committee rooms. The corridor on the first floor has 42100 linear metres of hanging space whilst the second floor corridor has a capacity of 26300 linear metres. The amount of hanging space on the second floor is restricted by the windows overlooking the main committee room. Preliminary estimates are that the use of 1S5, 1S6 and the corridors would provide sufficient space to hang approximately 160 photographs or 320 should they be arranged in two rows.

It is recommended that:

- The above preliminary projections for the number of photos that may be hung in the first and second floor corridors and committee rooms 1S5 and 1S6 be confirmed in consultation with Design Integrity staff;
- The number of photo spaces to be allocated to each standing committee, select committee and joint committee be approved by the President and future variations (such as when those allocated to be shared among select committees are used) be referred to the President for review;

- Each committee be advised of its allocation and all related decisions be made by the committees, eg whether current or historical photos should be hung; and
- An appropriate frame for this purpose be investigated by Office Services staff.

14 February 2003

Mr Harry Evans  
Clerk of the Senate  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

### **OVERSEAS TRAVEL BY SENATE AND JOINT COMMITTEES**

1. The issue of overseas travel by Senate and certain joint committees was raised at the hearing of the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee on the estimates of expenditure of the Department of the Senate on Monday, 10 February 2003. This memorandum canvasses issues relevant to the discussion that ensued.

#### **Background**

2. Senate committees as such have not travelled overseas to conduct formal inquiries. In some instances members of committees have travelled overseas as a group to pursue committee-related business after being included as an additional delegation in the outgoing parliamentary delegation travel program. In other instances senators have utilised individual study entitlements to travel overseas for the same purpose.

3. A list of members of committees travelling overseas as additional delegations under the outgoing parliamentary delegations program or utilising their individual study entitlements since 1988 is appended.

4. Since 1990 there has been an annual committee exchange between the Australian and New Zealand parliaments. The exchange enables one committee a year from the Commonwealth Parliament (in a three-year cycle of Senate, joint and House of Representatives committees) to travel to New Zealand for the purpose of discussions with their counterpart committee and to undertake inspections and briefings relevant to their terms of reference or a current inquiry. The committees do not take formal evidence. Airfares and incidental expenditure are met out of an appropriation under the *Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990*, administered by the Department of Finance and Administration, while local costs within New Zealand (accommodation, ground transport, and meals) are met by the New Zealand Parliament. The Commonwealth Parliament reciprocates each year in respect of a New Zealand committee.

5. If members of a committee travel as an additional delegation in the outgoing parliamentary delegation program, their travel must be approved by the Prime Minister. This usually requires a recommendation supporting the travel from the relevant portfolio minister and/or the Minister for Foreign Affairs. If the travel is

approved by the Prime Minister then funding is provided out of an appropriation under the Parliamentary Entitlements Act, administered by the Department of Finance and Administration. If a delegation secretary is provided, the costs of the secretary are borne by the Department of the Senate (or the Department of the House of Representatives, as the case may be).

6. Occasionally, where a sufficient case has been made, the President (or both the President and Speaker in the case of joint committees), has given approval for a departmental officer, usually the relevant committee secretary, to accompany, at Senate departmental expense, a group of senators utilising individual study entitlements to travel overseas on committee-related business, to perform secretariat-type functions. However, in April 2000 the President and Speaker advised chairs of committees that they would not approve such requests in future in respect of joint committees and would adopt the same position with respect to Senate and House committees.

7. Senators and members travelling on IPU or CPA delegations have their travel and accommodation costs met out of the budgets of the Department of the Senate (IPU) and the Department of the House of Representatives (CPA), with the costs of any bilateral visits being met by the Department of Finance and Administration. In respect of bilateral visits, internal costs are usually met by the host country. Costs of the delegation secretary are met by the Department of the Senate (IPU) and Department of the House of Representatives (CPA).

8. The outgoing parliamentary delegations program is based on a three-year quota of 150 positions (approximately 50 a year). Travel costs other than those covered by host countries are funded out of an appropriation under the Parliamentary Entitlements Act, administered by the Department of Finance and Administration. Each year the Parliamentary Relations Office prepares a draft program of destination countries for delegation visits based on a range of criteria. From this the presiding officers approve a draft delegation program to go to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for input, and then endorsement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs before being forwarded to the Prime Minister for approval: item 9 of schedule 1 of the Parliamentary Entitlements Act requires that the Prime Minister must approve the program of travel overseas by parliamentary delegations each calendar year. The composition of each delegation is determined by the parties.

9. Except for one instance in 1988 involving the postponement of an outgoing delegation to the following year to enable members of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to travel to South Pacific countries, no committee or group of committee members has travelled as an official delegation in the outgoing parliamentary delegation program, although there are several examples of travel as an *additional* parliamentary delegation.

10. A number of parliamentary committees have travelled to Australia from other countries. A few have come under the bilateral arrangements of the parliamentary delegation program, but most have come on an ad hoc basis, paying their own costs and with no expectations of, or invitations for, reciprocal visits.

## **Issues**

11. Difficulties in two broad areas would need to be resolved before a regular program of overseas travel could be commenced. The areas are procedural and budgetary.

### ***Procedural issues***

12. The Senate has never authorised a Senate or joint committee to operate overseas as a committee and has not provided in its standing or other orders for such an eventuality. This is because the Senate has no authority or jurisdiction in other countries: it has no power to compel evidence or require the production of documents, it cannot provide the protection of parliamentary privilege to either the senators involved or witnesses in respect of what they say or do in other countries, and it has no ability to enforce its orders. As committees exercise powers delegated by the Senate, they are subject to the same constraints. In the only instances where committees travel overseas (the Australian-New Zealand committee exchange), the committees, when overseas, do not formally hear evidence, but limit themselves to fact-finding through discussions, briefings and inspections.

13. A Senate committee probably could sit overseas as a committee under current arrangements provided it did not attempt to exercise any of its powers, and all witnesses gave evidence voluntarily and in full knowledge that they were not protected by privilege in respect of the giving of that evidence nor in respect of its publication. The publication in Australia of evidence taken overseas would be protected in Australia but not elsewhere, which would be of limited benefit to witnesses. That these matters are not remote is indicated by instances where evidence given by overseas nationals in Australia has resulted in adverse treatment of, or threats of adverse treatment against, those witnesses in their home countries.

14. Were a systematic program of overseas visits by committees to be established, then the Procedure Committee might need to be tasked with an examination of standing and other orders to clarify what the committees and their members could and should do in a variety of circumstances overseas.

### ***Budgetary issues and options***

15. There is no specific appropriation in the estimates of the Department of the Senate to fund overseas travel by senators, with the single exception of senators and members on IPU delegations. All other senators' travel is funded out of appropriations administered by the Department of Finance and Administration.

16. There is probably no technical reason why Department of the Senate appropriations could not be used to fund overseas travel by committees. In the short term, and providing there are no requirements for funding with a higher priority (e.g., security upgrades), some limited travel could be funded out of the current departmental surplus. However, the surplus is temporary: it fluctuates from year to year, is subject to other demands (some efficiencies which have contributed to the surplus are to facilitate payment of salary increases to departmental staff under the department's certified agreement) and could disappear. Payment of committee travel

out of a temporary surplus could raise continuing expectations of an ongoing program which might not be able to be met without later having to cut other services to senators as a trade-off. At best, payment for some limited travel out of the surplus would be a temporary solution for something which should demand a permanent solution.

17. Assuming that 10 senators a year travelled (two committees of five senators), plus a secretary for each committee, the total cost per year (at a rough average of \$20,000 to \$25,000 per person per trip), would be in the vicinity of \$240,000 to \$300,000.

18. An issue which will need to be addressed in respect of paying for committee travel out of departmental funds is that this would reverse the approach of recent years under which the Department of the Senate (and other parliamentary departments) and the Department of Finance and Administration have separated virtually all expenditure incurred by senators and that incurred by the department(s) in supporting the Senate and senators into administered and departmental appropriations, thus establishing a clear delineation between the two in the appropriation bills (the principal remaining anomaly is that senators' and members' attendance at the IPU is still paid from departmental funds). Additionally, the creation of a new category of overseas travel by senators, funded by departmental appropriations, might not be well received by the government of the day, as it could be seen as an attempt to get around the currently-agreed limit of 150 places over three years.

19. The suggestion has been made that individual senators could utilise frequent flyer points accumulated from their official travel to fund airfares and possibly accommodation in respect of committee travel overseas. While this approach would involve considerably less expenditure for the Department of the Senate or the Department of Finance and Administration, it has several drawbacks: senators would have accumulated varying amounts of frequent flyer points and some might not have sufficient points for the intended travel; it would be most unlikely that Qantas would be able to provide the number of first or business class seats required for the senators involved to travel as a group; there would be travel costs within the destination country which would not be met by frequent flyer points; and, in any event, the use of frequent flyer points would provide only a temporary solution, as the accumulation of frequent flyer points for official travel is soon to be replaced by a discount on airfares.

20. The suggestion has also been made that more senators and members should consider utilising their individual study entitlement for committee-related work overseas. While this is a useful 'last resort' option, it can lead to unfairness in that senators who give priority to their committee work will not have the flexibility necessarily to pursue personal initiatives overseas to the same extent as those who don't give committee work as high a priority. Also, some committees will benefit more from first-hand overseas experience than others, again creating disparities in the use of study entitlements.

21. It would be better, rather than looking at temporary arrangements to facilitate overseas travel by committees, to endeavour to arrive at a permanent arrangement. Here there would appear to be three options.



22. The *first* would be to continue the present system of recommending additional delegations for Prime Ministerial approval on an ad hoc basis, provided, in each case, that there is sufficient justification to put a proposal forward. The system could be fine-tuned to ensure that there is an agreed mechanism for the preparation and consideration of such proposals (e.g., initial consideration by the relevant presiding officer or both presiding officers, the seeking of input from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to ensure there are no diplomatic or other impediments to a visit, support from the relevant minister and/or the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and so on). The main disadvantage of this proposal is that there is no holistic examination of all committee bids, and the number of visits approved each year, if any, will vary. If a more deserving case arises late in the year, it may not be approved simply because another committee has already travelled. Equally, no proposals may be approved, however deserving.

23. The *second* would be to quarantine a number of positions, say 20, out of the outgoing parliamentary delegations program each year, so that 30 general positions were available and 20 committee positions. Under this proposal the emphasis of overseas visits would move, to an extent, from bilateral or general international relations to a more specific focus on parliamentary committee work. With fewer general delegations, fewer invitations for reciprocal visits would be issued, resulting eventually in a saving in that committees generally would not issue invitations for reciprocal visits (however, committee visits to other countries could involve an offsetting cost in that there would be few or no host country contributions). In the short to medium term the current list of outstanding invitations would need to be worked through before any savings could be realised. This proposal may well be opposed by the parties, who would probably prefer to see the emphasis remain on general outgoing parliamentary delegations.

24. A variation of this option would be to revisit the grounds on which parliamentary delegations are formed and their destinations selected, so that the committee interests and work of senators and members becomes an important factor in setting up a number of delegations, which would then spend some time at their destinations in pursuing committee-related inquiries or receiving briefings from and in the host country on committee-specific matters. These delegations would remain part of the general program and would not be quarantined.

25. The *third* would be to increase the number of positions available each year in the outgoing parliamentary delegations program by, say, 20 (10 senators and 10 members), from 50 to 70 a year, or from 150 to 210 over a three year period. Under this proposal the additional 20 positions each year would be quarantined so that they were solely for committees. If some were not utilised in a year they could be carried over in the same way that positions in the existing outward delegations program can be carried over. This would not affect the current arrangements for general outgoing parliamentary delegations, but could attract criticism on the basis of additional cost.

26. A regular program of outgoing committee delegations could be achieved at a least cost if senators and members participating in the current outgoing parliamentary delegation program were subject to a reduction in certain current entitlements, e.g, travel to be limited to business class or less, airfare to be limited to the most cost-effective way of reaching the destination(s), and with no taxpayer support for

accompanying partners/spouses. The savings could then be utilised to support committee travel. This would require amendments to the Parliamentary Entitlements Act (and political will!).

27. A matter that would need to be addressed by the presiding officers under both the second and third options would be how to divide the committee positions available between Senate and House committees on the one hand and joint committees on the other: this could be determined according to an agreed formula, or on an ad hoc basis.

28. The benefits of some overseas fact-gathering by committees were demonstrated in the reports of two Senate committees in 2001 – one on child migration and the other on the importation of apples from New Zealand. Three members of the Community Affairs References Committee, who travelled to the United Kingdom and Canada in April 2001 as an additional parliamentary delegation to pursue matters related to the committee's inquiry into child migration, made the following observation in their report tabled in the Senate in August 2001:

‘The Delegation members think that in situations where Committee inquiries have a demonstrably international focus and information cannot be readily obtained through alternative electronic or other sources, the Government of the day should give consideration to utilising parliamentary delegations as an aspect of the information gathering process for that particular inquiry.’

### *Other issues*

29. Any proposal to expand the number of visits overseas by senators and members will probably generate adverse publicity. Another difficulty, which a number of state parliaments regularly face, is how the President (or the President and Speaker in the case of joint committees) would choose between competing proposals over the course of a year – the process has proved difficult enough in respect of the Australia-New Zealand program. Given that there are 16 legislative and general purpose committees, plus select and joint committees, all with references at one time or another which might benefit from input of overseas experience, choosing, say, two each year is likely not to be easy. The process of choice is complicated particularly because proposals which would benefit most from an overseas visit might not arise until well after another (in the light of hindsight) less deserving visit has been undertaken – i.e., there is no opportunity to look at all the potential proposals at the one time and rank them, as there is for the general outgoing delegations program.

30. More generally, it may be timely to consider whether the provisions governing overseas travel by parliamentarians in the Parliamentary Entitlements Act, including the requirement for Prime Ministerial approval, need amendment.

31. It has been suggested that if a regular program of committee travel were implemented, there could be a tendency for references to committees with potential for an overseas visit to increase. However, the safeguard here is that it is the Senate which determines the matters to be referred to committees and it, presumably, would be aware of this possibility.

32. It has also been suggested that committee travel within the region should be more readily available through a program separate from any travel further afield, on the basis that Australia's immediate region is, overall, of greater importance. It is argued that under current arrangements committees can initiate travel to Perth or Darwin whenever the terms of an appropriate reference warrant such travel. The costs of travel to a number of regional countries are on a par with such costs and if, say, the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee can readily travel to Perth, why should it not as readily be able to travel to a neighbouring country (with safeguards built in to require, for example, prior consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade on diplomatic issues) when a reference directly relates to that country? A change in this area would require a change to current arrangements concerning overseas travel.

### **Pronouncements on overseas travel by parliamentary committees**

33. By way of background, it should be noted that successive governments have held to the general policy enunciated by then Prime Minister Hawke in 1988 that:

‘...with the exception of travel approved as part of the parliamentary delegation program, parliamentary committees and sub-committees do not travel overseas at official expense. Members of committees who wish to travel overseas should draw on their overseas travel entitlements determined by the Remuneration Tribunal, intended specially to assist them with travel for the purposes of undertaking studies etc. ... Alternatively, it is open to the Presiding Officers to include the visit in the program for overseas visits by parliamentary delegations which...[are submitted] each year for...[Prime Ministerial] approval. (*Prime Minister Hawke to Hon. K. Sibraa, 26 July 1989*).’

34. The presiding officers have noted:

‘The planning process for each year's outgoing program takes place in the middle of the preceding year, when the forthcoming commitments are considered and positions allocated accordingly...Once the planning process is complete, there is not discretionary funding available to allow us to accede to requests for subsequent ad hoc parliamentary delegations.’ (*Presiding Officers to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 8 June 1994*)’

35. And, more recently, the Prime Minister has stated:

‘While I am aware members of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade have travelled overseas as additional parliamentary delegations, such travel must be for exceptional circumstances as established practice has been that parliamentary committees do not routinely travel overseas. (*Prime Minister Howard to Senator Alan Ferguson, Chair, JSCFADT, 8 February 2001*)’

## **Conclusion**

36. Of the options canvassed in this paper, the most viable would appear to be either:

- a continuation of the current system of seeking approval for additional outgoing parliamentary delegations, with some fine-tuning to produce an on-going framework for dealing with proposals for additional delegations; or
- an increase in the number of delegation places approved each year by the Prime Minister, but quarantined specifically for committees.

John Vander Wyk  
Clerk Assistant (Committees)

## OVERSEAS TRAVEL BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### Additional delegations

#### *Senate*

Community Affairs References Committee – members visited the United Kingdom and Canada in April 2001 in respect of the committee's inquiry into child migration, secretary provided and funded by Department of the Senate.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee – members visited New Zealand in May 2001 in respect of the committee's inquiry into the importation of New Zealand apples; secretary provided and funded by the Department of the Senate.

#### *Joint*

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, including visits funded by the government other than by being classified as an additional parliamentary delegation, as follows:

- South Pacific (8 countries), June-July 1988 (9 plus secretary), funded as an official delegation within the outgoing visits program by postponing an official delegation to the region until the next year, RAAF aircraft used for travel;
- New Caledonia, April 1989 (4 plus secretary), funded by the then Department of Administrative Services, visit followed immediately on the committee's visit to New Zealand as part of the Australia-New Zealand exchange program;
- Papua New Guinea, February-March 2001 (10 plus secretary), funded by DAS after Prime Ministerial approval because of the 'special nature of the relationship', RAAF aircraft used for all travel, group travelled as a 'working party' from the committee;
- Indonesia, October 1992 (10 plus secretary), funded as an additional parliamentary delegation, RAAF aircraft used for travel;
- Thailand, November-December 1994 (6 plus secretary), funded as an additional parliamentary delegation;
- Bougainville, March 1999 (9 plus secretary), funded as an additional parliamentary delegation, RAAF aircraft used for travel;
- East Timor, December 1999 (10 plus secretary), funded as an additional parliamentary delegation, RAAF aircraft used for travel;
- East Timor, February 2001 (7 plus secretary), funded as an additional parliamentary delegation, RAAF aircraft used for travel.

Joint Parliamentary Committee on ASIS, ASIO and DSD – chair and deputy chair visited UK in May 2002 to participate in an intelligence committees seminar hosted by the equivalent House of Commons committee, funded as an additional parliamentary delegation.

In respect of all of the above joint committee visits, the secretary was provided and funded by the Department of the House of Representatives.

## **Use of individual study entitlements**

### *Senate*

Standing Committee on Regulations and Ordinances – members have attended international conferences of delegated legislation committees (e.g., Canada 1983, United Kingdom 1989, Wellington 1997); secretary provided and funded by the Department of the Senate.

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade – members visited China in 1994; secretary provided and funded by the Department of the Senate.

### *Joint*

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade:

- Hong Kong, January 1997 (6 plus secretary);
- South America, March 2000 (5 plus secretary),
- United Nations, October 2000 (6 plus secretary), chair and deputy chair were parliamentary observers, other 4 members covered their own costs.

In respect of the above joint committee visits, the secretary was provided and funded by the Department of the House of Representatives.

Groups of members of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade have also travelled to China and Russia, utilising their individual study entitlements for airfares, with internal costs being met by the host country; and Taiwan, where all costs, including airfares, were met by the Taiwanese government.

House of Representatives committees have not travelled overseas except under the Australia-New Zealand committee exchange program.

## **Security screening arrangements at the Senate entrance**

At its hearings on Monday 10 February 2003, the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee noted the imbalance of security resources across the two screening points at the Senate entrance. The President of the Senate agreed with the committee that this should be addressed by allowing people other than senators to use the senators' entrance. He advised that one of the reasons for the new security area was to reduce congestion at the Senate entrance.

The solution suggested at the hearings was for categories of people to be nominated to be authorised to come through the senators' door without creating 'two classes of citizens'. The committee went on to suggest senior officers as one category. Assuming this meant departmental heads and SES, across the four parliamentary departments this group totals 16 and their use of the senators' entrance is not likely to impact on the identified problems at all. A subsequent suggestion has been that senators' staff be authorised to use the senators' entrance along with senators.

One question that arises with both suggestions is how security staff are to identify whether a person should be using the senators' entrance or the staff entrance. It is not realistic to expect them to identify whether an individual is a senior officer, a senator's staffer or a departmental officer, therefore categories of parliamentary passes have been considered as a possible determining factor.

The colour coding of the Parliament House pass system allocates white passes to all parliamentary staff – departmental heads, SES, senior officers, staff of the parliamentary departments and the personal staff of senators; mauve passes for family members of senators; yellow passes for members of the Press Gallery; and other colours apply to other groups not relevant to this issue. If senators' personal staff were authorised to use the senators' entrance and departmental staff were restricted to the other there would be little chance that security would be able to administer the delineation.

A more practical solution that would achieve the stated goal would be for the security staff at the senators' entrance to direct holders of a parliamentary photographic pass (regardless of colour) to the senators' door if there is congestion at the staff door. Non-photographic pass holders and other visitors would continue to be required to use the staff entrance.

This would not require any advice to staff as all occupants other than senators would continue to use the 'staff entrance'. The change would be in an instruction to security staff that the objective is to screen people effectively and to get them through the doors as quickly as possible so as not to delay any business they may have with the Senate. Therefore they would be expected to re-direct groups of pass holders when congestion occurs and as the capacity of the senators' entrance allows. They would need to ensure that any senators arriving at the time this occurred were not delayed by limiting the number of pass holders at any one time to small groups.

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS TAKEN TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON NOTICE, ANSWERED/UNANSWERED FOR 30 OR MORE DAYS (v1)**

**39<sup>th</sup> Parliament—10 November 1998 to 8 October 2002**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Minister</b>	<b>Total number of questions over 30 days answered/unanswered</b>	<b>Average number of days</b>
8	Aged Care	81	110
19	Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	181	79
4	Arts and the Centenary of Federation	13	134
6	Assistant Treasurer	48	127
11	Attorney-General	115	97
14	Communications, Information Technology and the Arts	147	89
25	Community Services	6	62
15	Defence	132	87
24	Education, Training and Youth Affairs	151	65
1	Employment Services	14	173
19	Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business	136	79
23	Environment and Heritage	224	66
24	Family and Community Services	171	65
13	Finance and Administration	133	92
2	Financial Services and Regulation	13	157
22	Foreign Affairs	128	72
26	Forestry and Conservation	24	58
3	Health and Aged Care	167	138
21	Immigration and Multicultural Affairs	95	75
21	Industry, Science and Resources	116	75
9	Justice and Customs	46	105
23	Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence	8	70
27	Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service	1	54
28	Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women	2	50
7	Prime Minister	143	114
17	Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (formerly: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs)	78	83
5	Regional Services, Territories and Local Government	26	132
21	Special Minister of State	171	75
10	Sport and Tourism	25	98
18	Trade	94	81
16	Transport and Regional Services	400	84
12	Treasurer	214	95
20	Veterans' Affairs	84	78



**40<sup>th</sup> Parliament to end of 2002—12 February 2002 to 31 December 2002**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Minister</b>	<b>Total number of questions over 30 days answered/unanswered</b>	<b>Average number of days</b>
14	Ageing	10	61
16	Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	110	58
1	Arts and Sport	2	197
15	Attorney-General	23	60
20	Children and Youth Affairs	3	52
21	Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs	1	50
14	Communications, Information Technology and the Arts	22	61
18	Defence	106	55
13	Education, Science and Training	6	62
11	Employment and Workplace Relations	5	70
24	Employment Services	4	37
4	Environment and Heritage	67	102
17	Family and Community Services	17	57
10	Finance and Administration	14	75
20	Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation	12	52
7	Foreign Affairs	45	82
16	Forestry and Conservation	23	58
18	Health and Ageing	34	55
5	Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs	12	88
12	Industry, Tourism and Resources	5	67
23	Justice and Customs	10	46
22	Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence	4	47
9	Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women	1	76
25	President of the Senate	1	35
7	Prime Minister	10	82
16	Regional Services, Territories and Local Government	3	58
2	Revenue and Assistant Treasurer	27	108
22	Science	3	47
21	Small Business and Tourism	5	50
6	Special Minister of State	11	85
11	Trade	29	68
8	Transport and Regional Services	111	78
3	Treasurer	24	105
19	Veterans' Affairs	37	54

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS TAKEN TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ON NOTICE, ANSWERED/UNANSWERED FOR 30 OR MORE DAYS (v3)**

**39<sup>th</sup> Parliament—10 November 1998 to 8 October 2002**

<b>Ranking*</b>	<b>Minister</b>	<b>Total number of questions over 30 days answered/unanswered</b>	<b>Average number of days</b>
1	Transport and Regional Services	400	84
2	Environment and Heritage	224	66
3	Treasurer	214	95
4	Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	181	79
5	Special Minister of State	171	75
	Family and Community Services	171	65
6	Health and Aged Care	167	138
7	Education, Training and Youth Affairs	151	65
8	Communications, Information Technology and the Arts	147	89
9	Prime Minister	143	114
10	Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business	136	79
11	Finance and Administration	133	92
12	Defence	132	87
13	Foreign Affairs	128	72
14	Industry, Science and Resources	116	75
15	Attorney-General	115	97
16	Immigration and Multicultural Affairs	95	75
17	Trade	94	81
18	Veterans' Affairs	84	78
19	Aged Care	81	110
20	Reconciliation and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (formerly: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs)	78	83
21	Assistant Treasurer	48	127
22	Justice and Customs	46	105
23	Regional Services, Territories and Local Government	26	132
24	Sport and Tourism	25	98
25	Forestry and Conservation	24	58
26	Employment Services	14	173
27	Financial Services and Regulation	13	157
	Arts and the Centenary of Federation	13	134
28	Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence	8	70
29	Community Services	6	62
30	Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women	2	50
31	Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service	1	54

\* Ranking in order from most number to least number of total number of questions

**40<sup>th</sup> Parliament to end of 2002—12 February 2002 to 31 December 2002**

<b>Ranking*</b>	<b>Minister</b>	<b>Total number of questions over 30 days answered/unanswered</b>	<b>Average number of days</b>
1	Transport and Regional Services	111	78
2	Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	110	58
3	Defence	106	55
4	Environment and Heritage	67	102
5	Foreign Affairs	45	82
6	Veterans' Affairs	37	54
7	Health and Ageing	34	55
8	Trade	29	68
9	Revenue and Assistant Treasurer	27	108
10	Treasurer	24	105
11	Attorney-General	23	60
12	Forestry and Conservation	23	58
13	Communications, Information Technology and the Arts	22	61
14	Family and Community Services	17	57
15	Finance and Administration	14	75
16	Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs	12	88
	Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation	12	52
17	Special Minister of State	11	85
18	Prime Minister	10	82
	Ageing	10	61
	Justice and Customs	10	46
19	Education, Science and Training	6	62
20	Employment and Workplace Relations	5	70
	Industry, Tourism and Resources	5	67
	Small Business and Tourism	5	50
21	Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence	4	47
	Employment Services	4	37
22	Regional Services, Territories and Local Government	3	58
	Children and Youth Affairs	3	52
	Science	3	47
23	Arts and Sport	2	197
24	Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women	1	76
	Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs	1	50
	President of the Senate	1	35

\* Ranking in order from most number to least number of total number of questions