

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation
Committee, Additional Budget Estimates, February 2006**

Answers to Questions on Notice

**Parliamentary Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary
Services**

**Topic: Opening hours of Senate and House of Representatives entrances
on Saturdays between sitting weeks**

Question P3

Ms Penfold—As far as I understand it, on a normal weekend, the entrances are closed from midnight Friday until 6 am Saturday. On Saturdays—and this may be where you have had a problem—they are closed from 8 pm until 6 am Sunday.

CHAIR—And does that rule apply on the weekends between sitting weeks as well?

Ms Penfold—Yes, I believe so.

CHAIR—Was any thought given to not applying that rule on weekends between sitting weeks? I understand why it might apply otherwise.

Ms Penfold—I am not aware that there was.

CHAIR—Could you have a look at that?

Ms Penfold—We could certainly look at it.

CHAIR—Ms Penfold, could you please look into out-of-hours access on the weekends between sitting weeks?

Ms Penfold—We can certainly have a look at whether that ought to be—

Answer:

On Saturdays between two sitting weeks, the Senate and House of Representatives entrances are open 6am – 8pm. On Sundays the entrances open at 6am and do not close on Sunday nights.

Extending the opening hours of the entrances on a Saturday evening would involve extra costs for Parliamentary Security Service (PSS) officers to staff the entrances. The additional salary costs set out below (which include salaries and 30% overhead) are based on the following assumptions:

- (a) one PSS officer would be required to staff each of the two entrances (two officers in total);
- (b) the PSS officers would be working overtime rather than normal time;

- (c) there would be eight affected Saturday nights in each House during a year; and
- (d) "time and a half" rates would be paid for the first three hours, and double time rates, including meal allowances, after three hours.

	Saturday evening cost (\$)	Annual cost (\$)
Opening one additional hour (to 9pm):	79	632
Opening two additional hours (to 10pm)	158	1264
Opening three additional hours (to 11pm)	237	1,896
Opening four additional hours (to midnight)	397	3,176

Having regard to these costs, we propose to trial opening the entrances until 11pm on the two relevant Saturdays during the Winter sittings, to assess the level of demand.