



**Australian Government**

**Department of Finance and Administration**

Reference: PIG07/02518-4  
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Mr Alistair Sands  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Finance  
and Public Administration  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Sands

**Senate Estimates Hearing of 13 February 2007**

I am writing to you in relation to evidence provided by officers from Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS) during the appearance of the Department of Finance and Administration at the 13 February 2007 Additional Budget Estimates hearings of the Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration.

Following the hearings, officers from M&PS who appeared before the Committee have reviewed the proof copy of Hansard and checked relevant records held within the Department. Having done so, we would now like to offer the following corrections and/or clarifications to the evidence and provide the Committee with additional information, as detailed below.

Evidence of Mr Greg Miles

*Clarification of evidence*

At Hansard page F&PA 88 in relation to additional accommodation entitlements of parliamentary secretaries Senator Faulkner asked Mr Miles "*How many parliamentary secretaries have accessed this entitlement?*" Mr Miles replied "*It is an entitlement that we only activate at a time when a member or senator's electorate office lease is up for renewal. We would not go and generally increase space which was going to incur an additional cost to the Commonwealth. I would have to take on notice the number of parliamentary secretaries who have accessed it, but I can say that it would only be in circumstances where their existing lease arrangements were coming to an end.*"

Following the hearing Mr Miles reviewed his evidence and would like to provide the following clarification:

The entitlement to additional office accommodation for Parliamentary Secretaries is applied under the following principles:

- where the provision of additional office accommodation requires the relocation of an office consideration is only given when a Senator or Member's current electorate office lease is up for renewal, thus avoiding any potential for dead rent.
- where an existing lease will continue and office space is available adjoining or in close proximity to the current office consideration will be given to providing additional accommodation.

#### *Additional Information*

At Hansard page F&PA 83 Senator Ray asked Mr Miles "*I know there was no malice intended here, but it would. Usually when I ask for these figures, I am given the first of the month. Now I am given 1 January and there has been a major reshuffle since then. Where are the 1 February figures?*".

Mr Miles answered "*Perhaps I can explain. We do believe it is important that the figures we provide are soundly sourced and referenced, and that is why they are always drawn from our staffing establishment records which are prepared, as you know, as at the first of every month. The information for those records comes through in paper format. So, depending on the timing of the estimates hearings, if it is within the first couple of weeks of the month, we are generally not able to finalise our staffing establishment records. I am able to tell you though, without giving you all the detail, that, in terms of government staffing, the 1 February figure will reflect an increase of two on what you have there.*"

Following the hearing, the Department received notification on 14 February 2007 of an additional position which had been allocated by the Prime Minister on 12 February 2007. This additional position makes the 1 February 2007 figure an increase of three, not two as stated by Mr Miles at the hearing.

#### Evidence of Ms Jan Mason

##### *Correction of evidence*

At Hansard page F&PA 96 in response to questioning from Senator Evans concerning reimbursement for travel on Special Purpose Aircraft by the Prime Minister Ms Mason stated "*It would be the highest class available, so normally business class domestically.*"

Following the hearing it was brought to Ms Mason's attention that the policy applied by Ministerial and Parliamentary Services is on the basis of an economy class fare equivalent.

Should you require any further information in relation to this matter please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 6215 3504.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jan Mason', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Jan Mason  
General Manager  
Ministerial and Parliamentary Services  
# March 2007