

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee—
Additional Estimates Feb 2008**

Parliament Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Answers to Questions on Notice

Topic: MPs denied access to Front Entrance

Question P12, F&PA 32

Senator BOB BROWN—...I want to talk about the closing of the access to the front of Parliament House last Tuesday. There was an Aboriginal convergence on the lawns in front of Parliament House and then the band arrived as a presage to the firing of the 21-gun salute. I was certainly amongst MPs who were prevented from gaining access to the front door of Parliament House. Who authorised that closure of access to Parliament House?

Mr Kenny—Could we take that on notice? We are not aware of any closure of the front entrance.

Answer

- 1 There were several closures of the Forecourt to Parliament House on 12 February 2008 during the ceremonial events associated with the official opening of the 42nd Parliament.
- 2 During these ceremonial events, the Forecourt was closed to pedestrian movement, as is the usual practice on such occasions. A viewing area was available to the public on the eastern side of the Forecourt for all of the ceremonial events with the exception of the firing of the 19-gun salute. Due to OH&S requirements related to the firing of the artillery pieces, it was necessary to clear the entire Forecourt area during the firing of the 19-gun salute.
- 3 Although direct access to the front doors via the Forecourt was restricted during this period, access was still available through Security Point One and all the other entrances to the building.
- 4 All closures of the Forecourt were managed by Australian Federal Police Uniform Protection officers who were complying with requirements set down in the orders of proceedings developed by the offices of the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod.

