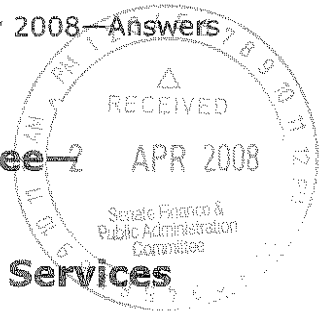




## **Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee—2 Additional Estimates Feb 2008**

### **Parliament Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services**

#### **Answers to Questions on Notice**

##### **Topic: Senator's Office Windows**

##### **Question P17, F&PA 40-41**

**Senator ABETZ**—I was just going to ask one further question and that is about the autonomy of senators in their offices. If a senator requested a key to the window, would they be given one? Would they be allowed to open their window?

**Mr Kenny**—The issue of keys, as I said earlier, goes to the Department of the Senate. As I said a minute ago, I do not know what the consequences of having windows open might be and maybe we need to get some advice on that.

**Senator ABETZ**—It seems to me that, whilst I can understand the working of the air-conditioning units et cetera, if somebody is feeling particularly cold in their office there would be nothing stopping them from bringing in a little fan heater, plugging it in to heat their office more. So if that is allowed—or, if they think their office is too hot, they might be able to install a little in-office air-conditioning unit to cool it down. If that is not stopped, why do we stop senators opening or closing their individual windows in their suites? That does not seem to follow, unless you ban the fan heaters, the little air-conditioning units et cetera. I am one of these people who love natural air conditioning, namely an open window.

**Mr Kenny**—I do not know the source of the original decision.

**Senator ABETZ**—Can you take that on notice and just see what can be done?

**Mr Kenny**—Yes.

#### **Answer**

##### *Security*

1 Any requests to DPS by a Senator to access window keys to allow a Senator to open their office windows would be referred to the Usher of the Black Rod. Advice from the Usher of the Black Rod is that such a request would not be supported. From a security perspective the opening of a Senator's windows would breach the physical security of the Senator's office and potentially expose the office to unauthorised entry by an intruder. This vulnerability would be significantly increased if the open window was on the external perimeter of the building.

##### *Locks*

2 The windows in Senators' and Members' suites are opened by a zone maintenance key. This is the same key that provides access to plant rooms and

maintenance locations in a specific area. The lock on the window keeps the key captive when it is in the unlocked position. In addition to the lock, the windows are also secured by hex key bolts; these have to be removed by a tool to allow the window to pivot open.

3 The Maintenance Services Section has identified over the years that some windows were installed incorrectly and the glass must be removed to access additional screws that lock the opening mechanism in place. It is not known how many windows have this problem.

#### *Airconditioning*

4 The airconditioning system is designed to operate with all the windows and doors closed. It uses a sophisticated computer-controlled system to maintain the indoor air quality in the most energy efficient manner.

5 Should windows be opened, depending on the climatic conditions, unfiltered outside air could be drawn into the building and conditioned building air could escape. This would result in increased energy consumption as the system would have to heat, cool or humidify additional outside air to make up for the loss.

