

## **Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

### **ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Additional Budget Estimates Hearing – February 2009**

**Department of Finance and Deregulation**

**Finance and Deregulation Portfolio**

#### **Outcome 3, Output 3.1**

**Topic: Use of Commonwealth Parliament Offices by Parliament Committees**

**Question reference number: F33**

**Type of Question: F&PA 72 -73, 24 February 2009**

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 9 April 2009**

**Number of Pages: 1**

**Senator Collins asked:**

Why was it discussed with the House of Representatives? Was there a particular incident? Why was the security advice sought?

**Answer:**

The Protective Security Co-ordination Centre (PSCC) has responsibility for the security of Commonwealth Parliament Offices (CPO), and as a result it initiates periodic reviews of the security arrangements within CPOs. Consequently, there is regular and close contact between PSCC and Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS).

In early 2007, changes to CPO access arrangements were introduced on the recommendation of PSCC. PSCC advised that CPOs did not have the security infrastructure to mitigate properly the risk associated with the holding of open public hearings of Parliamentary Committees.

This policy was initially implemented at a local level by individual CPOs, but was discussed and later confirmed in writing by M&PS with an officer of the Department of the House of Representatives on 12 July 2007, following an enquiry from that Department.

In October 2008, the policy was again discussed and confirmed at a meeting that included the Serjeant at Arms, the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod, Departmental officials from both Chamber Departments and senior officers from PSCC and M&PS.