

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2008-09 (February 2009)

Index to Questions on Notice (QON)

Parliamentary Departments

Note: the FPA Committee resolved that agencies provide answers to Questions on Notice by Thursday, 9 April 2009.

QON No.	Department	Senator	Hansard Reference	Question	Comments/ date answer received
P1	Senate	MOORE	3	<p>Senator FERGUSON—What does this extra \$1.3 million in expenditure entail? Is it on personnel? Is the bulk of the expenditure on extra personnel that might be required to service the committees, on extra hours that are worked or on extra travel time? I am just curious to know how that extra \$1.3 million, or whatever it is, was spent.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator MOORE—Mr Evans, is it possible to get a breakdown of that expenditure in terms of the process over the last financial year?</p> <p>Mr Evans—Yes, we can do that.</p>	27/2/09
P2	DPS	BROWN	8-9	<p>Senator BOB BROWN—Can you explain why there are a row of lights in my room for which there are no switches, which you cannot turn off and which burn morning, noon and night regardless?</p> <p>...</p> <p>Mr Kenny—I have just been advised that they should not be on, so we will look at it.</p> <p>Senator BOB BROWN—And they are on all weekend. Could you tell me why, when it is an internal courtyard, they should burn all night? What security reason is there? I am thinking about much wider security here—the security experts tell us that climate change is the biggest security issue facing the planet’s future. Why should an internal room have lights burning all night? Who is watching? Does that area have a camera on it that if somebody passes through that light is</p>	9/4/09

				going to tell somebody? It just does not add up. There is no rationale for it. Mr Thompson —Could we take that on notice? Our offices are very similar to yours with a similar aspect, and at night time our lights are off. I am a bit puzzled that yours are on. It is the same end of the building—	
P3	DPS	FIFIELD	11,12	Senator FIFIELD —Were the Parliamentary Library staff, the research staff, asked to email evidence of deficiencies that were revealed in the trialling to directors and managers? Ms Missingham —Every person who uses ParlInfo is asked, at the bottom of the page, if they have any comments or any issues, to communicate with ParlinfoSearch. There is a mailbox set up and we have provided phone numbers. Ever since it was introduced, we have asked every user for feedback. Senator FIFIELD —Would it be possible for those emails—obviously with the identifier of who sent them removed—to be tabled? ... Senator FIFIELD —I am just talking about the emails from the Parliamentary Library research staff. Ms Missingham —We will give you information on those. ... Senator FIFIELD —Sure. Okay. You are no doubt aware, but we are getting feedback that there is quite some discontent amongst the research staff of the Parliamentary Library about how user-friendly the system is and some of the old features not being transferred across to the new system. These are concerns of experienced researchers. I am also aware of a number of colleagues and other users of the system who have similar concerns. I am really just endeavouring to get a handle on the degree of concern and the extent to which those concerns are being addressed. It would be helpful if you could provide that information. Ms Missingham —Certainly.	9/4/09
P4	DPS	FIFIELD	11	Ms Missingham —We log them. I can tell you that in the last week we have had four inquiries about alerts—people asked for assistance with creating, modifying or deleting alerts. We had five questions from external users about searching bills and two questions from bills staff. We had one inquiry from an internal user and one from an external user of ParlInfo during that period. Senator FIFIELD —What time period does that cover? Ms Missingham —That was for the week of the 16th to the 20th. Senator FIFIELD —What about for the period from late 2008 until today? Ms Missingham —We can provide you with those statistics. What we found is that, when the system was introduced, there were a lot more inquiries than there are now. Now we are getting basically a couple a week.	9/4/09
P5	DPS	COLLINS	20	Senator LUNDY —I would like to ask some questions about information technology in the	9/4/09

				<p>building. What is the current status of internet streaming of sessions of parliament and the parliamentary committees?</p> <p>...</p> <p>Ms Lynch—That is correct. We certainly always do the chambers. Committees are often done at the request of the committee secretariat or the committee chairs.</p> <p>Senator JACINTA COLLINS—Is it only by request?</p> <p>Ms Lynch—I will have to check on that. I am not entirely certain about that.</p>	
P6	DPS	MOORE	22	<p>Senator MOORE—Ms Lynch, do you keep or can you keep records as to how many people are webcasting? If you have increased it to over 1,000 from 700, was that because more than 700 people wanted to watch?</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator MOORE—Is there a way of finding out whether the access is being utilised?</p> <p>Ms Lynch—I will need to check on that. I will take that one on notice. There are certainly systems around which will tell us that. We are in the process of actually trying to get some of that software together so we have a better handle on how many are accessing at any given time to help with planning and load balancing and the like. But I do not think it is in place as we speak.</p>	9/4/09
P7	DPS	MOORE	22,23	<p>Senator MOORE—Ms Lynch, one of the things we have noticed is that, particularly when we are travelling, there is an increase in outsourcing. We recognise the Hansard staff and we can see that there is outsourcing. Do you have any records of what the balance is now of the use of Hansard staff travelling from Canberra and the use of outsourced services across the country?</p> <p>...</p> <p>Ms Lynch—With the first component, we do have numbers and costings for comparison of outsourcing some away committee support and doing it in house. I do not have them with me; I will need to take that one on notice.</p>	9/4/09
P8	DPS	FORSHAW	26	<p>Ms Hanley—The caterer was involved in looking at designs and was certainly consulted as part of the designs. We employed LFA Architects, who were responsible for the whole design. As part of the design process we also brought in a catering expert.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator FORSHAW—Because if that contract was to be tendered again and taken up by a new contractor it would not necessarily follow that they would agree with the original design. You had an expert.</p> <p>Ms Hanley—We did; yes.</p> <p>Senator FORSHAW—Who was that?</p> <p>Ms Hanley—I cannot remember.</p> <p>Senator FORSHAW—Take it on notice.</p>	9/4/09

P9	DPS	COLLINS	29	<p>Senator JACINTA COLLINS—I am not sure if I am in the right place, but I have a question, while we are on functions, about the set out of functions in the sense of dinners that occur in the Mural Hall. I have had this discussion in the past in terms of how they lay themselves out and the extent to which that becomes difficult for members and senators, particularly senators attending committee hearings, and I have noticed in the last 12 months that that is becoming a problem again. Mr Thompson, I am not sure whether you recall what I am talking about here, but a problem that a number of senators find is that they come through the doors in the central area to make their way to a committee room and all of a sudden find themselves essentially in the middle of a dinner function. Are there guidelines about how dinner tables can be set up and established in that space, so that it does not interfere with the operations of the parliament?</p> <p>Ms Griffith—I would have to take that on notice.</p>	9/4/09
P10	DPS	PARRY	32	<p>Senator PARRY—The question is: what is the perceived risk of a senator, a member or a staff member entering on the daily basis, who have obviously gone through some form of security clearance in the first instance in order to be here? There must be a perceived risk, otherwise we would not be doing this. So what is the perceived risk?</p> <p>...</p> <p>Mr Kenny—We might have to take this on notice because you are asking about things that go back quite a long time. Certainly I can recall coming into this building and being scanned before 2001. So, regarding the process by which those decisions were taken, the risk assessments that were made and all the analysis—I would presume by agencies outside this building as well—we would have to go through our files.</p> <p>...</p> <p>Senator FIFIELD—Indeed. Anyway, it would be useful to go back to find out what the rationale is— whether it is because of perceptions of discrimination or whether it actually goes to genuine issues of security. Mr Kenny—As I said, we can take the history on notice. What I can tell you is that I am not aware of there being any distinction based on the side of the House or the side of the building. That is based on recalling discussions at the security management board, which, as the Clerk of the Senate said earlier today, is the committee under our legislation responsible for providing advice to the Presiding Officers on security in the building.</p>	9/4/09
P11	DPS	FERGUSON	36	<p>Senator FERGUSON—There is one other issue, in relation to passes: has there been a change of policy in relation to the spouses of former members of parliament?</p> <p>The PRESIDENT—Not that I am aware of, but we can take that on notice.</p>	9/4/09
P12	DPS	POLLEY	37	<p>CHAIR—I have some questions in relation to PDAs. I was wondering if you could update us as to what PDAs are now in service to senators and members, and how many PDAs have been returned and senators and members going back to using a mobile phone?</p>	Tfr. To Finance

				Mr Kenny —I will have to take that second part on notice, Senator, in terms of the statistics.	
P13a	DPS	COONAN	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P13b	DPS	COONAN	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P14a	DPS	COONAN	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P14b	DPS	COONAN	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P15	DPS	COONAN	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P16	DPS	FIFIELD	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P17	DPS	HUMPHRIES	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P18a	DPS	RONALDSON	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P18b	DPS	RONALDSON	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P19a	DPS	RONALDSON	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P19b	DPS	RONALDSON	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P19c	DPS	RONALDSON	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P20a	DPS	BOYCE	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P20b	DPS	BOYCE	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P21a	DPS	BOYCE	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P21b	DPS	BOYCE	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P21c	DPS	BOYCE	Written	See Attached Sheet	9/4/09
P22	DPS	FIFIELD	Transfer	See Attached Sheet (Previously PM38 – PM&C)	9/4/09
P23a	Senate	COONAN	Written	See Attached Sheet	3/4/09
P23b	Senate	COONAN	Written	See Attached Sheet	3/4/09
P24a	Senate	COONAN	Written	See Attached Sheet	3/4/09
P24b	Senate	COONAN	Written	See Attached Sheet	3/4/09
P25	Senate	COONAN	Written	See Attached Sheet	3/4/09
P26	Senate	HUMPHRIES	Written	See Attached Sheet	3/4/09

Written Questions on Notice

P13(a-b) (COONAN)-DPS

- a) How much did each department and agency spend in 2007-08 on:
 - a. Consultants in total
 - b. ITC Consultants
 - c. Legal Consultants
 - d. HR Consultants
 - e. Accounting Consultants
- b) What was the average cost per hour for each department of the above A-E?

P14(a-b) (COONAN)-DPS

- a) How much is it estimated that each department and agency will spend in 2008-09 on:
 - a. Consultants in total
 - b. ITC Consultants
 - c. Legal Consultants
 - d. HR Consultants
 - e. Accounting Consultants
- b) What is the average cost per hour for each department and agency of the above A-E?

P15 (COONAN)-DPS

Over each year of the forward estimates, how much will each department and agency spend on:

- A) Consultants in total
- B) ITC Consultants
- C) Legal Consultants
- D) HR Consultants
- E) Accounting Consultants

P16 (FIFIELD)-DPS

Please provide all emails from Library Staff in relation to the development, testing and use of the new ParlInfo search system.

P17 (HUMPHRIES)-DPS

How many SES positions were there in this department as at:

- 24 November 2007
- 26 February 2009

P18(a-b) (RONALDSON)-DPS

- a) Has there been any damage reported to Suite MG-8 since October 2008?
- b) If so, can the Committee please be provided with details of the damage that occurred and any associated repair costs?

P19(a-c) (RONALDSON)-DPS

- a) Has the Department received any complaints or expressions of concerns about the behaviour of security staff at night in MPs offices?
- b) Specifically, have you had any complaints about security staff taking photographs in Senators' offices?
- c) What action has the Department taken in relation to these matters?

P20(a-b) (BOYCE)-DPS

The Department of Parliamentary Services' 2007-2008 Annual Report often presents statistics of performance for 2006-2007 without being able to compare those figures with 2007-2008. This is because the DPS customer survey is not taken every year.

In particular we do not have statistics to compare satisfaction levels with such performance indicators as facility performance, the parliamentary records service or library services.

Clearly the survey is a valuable tool for assessing the performance of the DPS.

- a) What are the reasons for the survey not being undertaken each year?
- b) What are the costs involved with taking the survey?

P21(a-c) (BOYCE)-DPS

- a) Will the Department's meet its energy consumption target of 96,951 gigajoules in 2008-2009? What additional steps are being taken to meet this target?
- b) Does the Department measure the energy efficiencies of each suite/office in Parliament?
- c) If yes, Can the Department provide the details of energy efficiencies in each office, including the Prime Minister's.

P22 (FIFIELD) – DPS Note: Previously PM38–PM&C (FIFIELD)

Please provide an itemised list of the artworks in all ministerial offices in Parliament House

P23(a-b) (COONAN)-SENATE

- c) How much did each department and agency spend in 2007-08 on:
 - a. Consultants in total
 - b. ITC Consultants
 - c. Legal Consultants
 - d. HR Consultants
 - e. Accounting Consultants
- d) What was the average cost per hour for each department of the above A-E?

P24(a-b) (COONAN)- SENATE

- c) How much is it estimated that each department and agency will spend in 2008-09 on:
 - a. Consultants in total
 - b. ITC Consultants
 - c. Legal Consultants
 - d. HR Consultants
 - e. Accounting Consultants
- d) What is the average cost per hour for each department and agency of the above A-E?

P25 (COONAN)- SENATE

Over each year of the forward estimates, how much will each department and agency spend on:

- F) Consultants in total
- G) ITC Consultants
- H) Legal Consultants
- I) HR Consultants
- J) Accounting Consultants

P26 (HUMPHRIES)- SENATE

How many SES positions were there in this department as at:

- 24 November 2007
- 26 February 2009