Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee—Additional Budget Estimates Hearing—February 2011

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Blue flashing lights on BlackBerrys**

Question: **18**

Hansard reference   **F&PA pp 39, 21 February 2011**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 15 April 2011

Senator PARRY—Yes, but I understand, though—and this was clarified at POITAG—that it is your department that actually turns it on or turns it off or enables that function to be activated by senators and members; it is not Finance. We have had this out before. Finance gives you the instruction as to what can and cannot happen, and it is your section that turns it on or off.

…

Mr Kenny—If it is us we can look at it. We will respond directly.

…

The advice is that with the upgrade of the software in December last year, the version of the BlackBerry software, 'It is now an agency decision as to whether or not you can turn it off.' It then goes on to say, 'Finance can make the call now.' So it was my sense that it was a finance call. You thought it was ours. We will talk to finance and get a decision and, if it is ours, we will look at it. Otherwise, we will ask them to look at it.

Senator PARRY—Ask them to advise you if you can do it with the newer one.

Answer

1   The Defence Signals Directorate (**DSD**) guidelines on strengthening BlackBerry Enterprise Server (**BES**) version 4 required that the "LED connection indicator" be on.

2   The DSD guidelines on hardening BlackBerry Enterprise Server version 5 have changed this to "Agency decision".

3   DPS upgraded the BES to version 5 in December 2010.

4   On 1 March 2011, Department of Finance requested that DPS turn off the LED connection indicator rule. This was done on the BES on 1 March 2011.

5   Since then, BlackBerry users will need to disable the LED on their individual BlackBerry. Instructions on how to do this were sent to clients on 24 March.