Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee—Additional Estimates Hearing—February 2012

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **IT Security, internet filtering**

Question: **49**

Hansard reference **F&PA p.15, 13 February 2012**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 30 March 2012

Senator LUDLAM: You can voluntarily put yourself on a block list?
Mr Kenny: Yes.
Senator LUDLAM: Or take yourself off. I took myself off a couple of years ago, but I did not realise that it was quite as extensive as that. By way of follow-up I ask you to take away consideration of unblocking the entire .info top-level domain or maybe providing some advice as to who believes that that entire top-level domain is a security threat.
Mr Kenny: The advice was from Defence Signals Directorate people who we have worked very closely with in the last 12 months. I am quite happy for us to revisit and report back.
Senator LUDLAM: I would appreciate that.
Mr Kenny: But the security of the network is obviously critical. I could also provide the committee with some statistics on the number of requests for unblocking specific sites that have been received. Since 27 October, when the block was put in place, we have unblocked 68 sites.
Senator LUDLAM: Three of them were mine. Were people, as in residents of the building, notified when that block was implemented?
Ms Hanley: I do not think so.
Senator LUDLAM: I do not remember being told, and suddenly I could not see an anti-war website in Queensland. Mr Kenny, you have undertaken to provide some material by way of follow-up. I found that extremely informative.
Mr Kenny: On the filtering?
Senator LUDLAM: Yes, on the filtering and also anything that you are able to provide us on the whole blocking of .info. I think you undertook to review that. That is much appreciated.

Answer

1   As part of the ongoing program to strengthen the security of the Parliamentary Computing Network (**PCN**), DPS established a default blocking of all ".info" websites on 27 October 2011. Users were able to request specific sites to be unblocked if there was a need to access them.

2   Following further consideration and advice, DPS removed the block on 21 February 2012. With the exception of known malicious websites, ".info" websites are now available to all users of the PCN.