

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee—Budget Estimates May 2008

Parliament Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Answers to Questions on Notice

Topic: Earth Hour - Lighting system malfunction in Ministerial Wing



Question P3, F&PA 28

Senator FIFIELD—Sure. Mr Nakkan, if you could take on notice which office suites were affected by the malfunction.

Mr Nakkan—Yes.

Senator FIFIELD—And also the exact nature of what the malfunction was. I do not want, in any way, shape or form to be cynical, but it would seem to be extremely convenient for the ministers concerned that there was a malfunction affecting their suites on the night of Earth Hour. But, as I say, I am not being cynical—I am sure that you will provide us with the answer as to what the malfunction was and which ministerial suites were affected.

Answer

1 A Building Management System (**BMS**) signal control card that controls the western Ministerial pelmet lighting zone failed due to a burnt out resistor. This meant that the control signals sent out from the BMS for this zone would not have switched the lighting control relays (R7 latching type).

2 The R7 type relays stay in their previous (on or off) state unless they receive a signal to change. When the BMS switched for Earth Hour, the signal to turn off would not have been received by the relays.

3 The offices that are controlled by the affected BMS signal control card are:

Suite	Occupant	Suite	Occupant
MG-08	Prime Minister-support staff	M1-40	Minister-Environment, Heritage and the Arts
MG-60	Minister-Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs	M1-41	Minister-Defence
MG-61	Special Minister of State	M1-44	Minister-Youth, Sports
MG-62	Lunch room	M1-45	Minister-Housing, Status of Women
MG-64	Minister-Human Services	M1-46	Minister-Superannuation and Corporate Governance

MG-68	Minister-Immigration and Citizenship		M1-48	Minister-Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
MG-70	Minister-Broadband, Communications and Digital Economy		M1-49	Minister-Defence Science and Personnel
			M1-51	Minister-Employment Participation

4 Some of these suites have a local manual override switch on some pelmet light circuits. The manual switches override automatic switching commands. As a result, on the night some lights remained on through a combination of automatic switch failure and manual switch override. The result was an uneven look to the lighting from the Ministerial side.

