

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee—Budget Estimates May 2008

Parliament Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Answers to Questions on Notice

Topic: Internet Filter-Inappropriate access by staff reported to Senators or Members.

Question P7, F&PA 39

Senator NETTLE—I know there has been discussion at this committee in the past about whether disciplinary actions had occurred because of inappropriate access when it was applied originally to all the staff in the building. Are you able to tell the committee whether there has been any disciplinary action in relation to senators or their staff accessing inappropriate sites?

Mr Thompson—I am not able to. I am very new in the service. David, do you know?

Mr Kenny—I know of incidents where there was inappropriate access in electorate offices. Whether they were offices of senators or members I cannot recall. The role that DPS would take in such an event would be to report the incident to the member or senator and leave it to them.

Senator NETTLE—Do you know how many times DPS has had to report that to a senator or member?

Mr Kenny—No. We could trace back. It is not a large number. I am aware of one or two. I would not expect necessarily to be aware of every particular case, although I might well get a report.

Answer

1 Since January 2006, there has been one case of inappropriate access which DPS referred to the then Department of Finance and Administration (now the Department of Finance and Deregulation), the employer of Electorate Office staff. That department would then be involved in any subsequent discussion with a Senator or Member.

2 On one occasion over the same period, DPS was requested to report all website accesses by a staff member to a Senator/Member.

