

# Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Budget Estimates Hearing—May 2011

## Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Original decision for APH to participate in Earth Hour

Question: 44

Hansard reference F&PA p.39, 23 May 2011

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 8 July 2011**

**Mr Kenny:** I cannot recall whether or not the Presiding Officers agreed to or made the decision. We can go back to our records and find out how that happened. I would be surprised if we had gone down that path without getting agreement—very surprised.

**Senator KROGER:** It would be very interesting to know who made the decision that we should participate in Earth Hour originally, what the process is to determine whether we continue to participate each year, whether it is a worthwhile event and on what basis that assessment is made. Is it purely a political stunt, or are we making that decision on some reasonable basis?

**Mr Kenny:** We will take that on notice. I presume it is a request to see what the original 2007 decision-making process was. We will provide that.

#### Answer

1 On 26 March 2007, Senator Christine Milne wrote to the President of the Senate, Senator the Hon. Paul Calvert, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. David Hawker MP requesting that Parliament House participate in the Earth Hour initiative.

2 Senator Calvert wrote back to Senator Milne on 26 March 2007, advising that he and the Speaker had consulted the Secretary DPS and that lights on the Australian Coat of Arms on the Great Verandah would be doused as the Parliament's symbolic contribution to Earth Hour.

3 Each year the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency writes to Commonwealth agencies asking for 100% participation. DPS considers Parliament House's operational requirements for the date and time of Earth Hour, and then determines our ability to participate. For 2011, DPS sought approval from the Presiding Officers.