

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Budget Estimates Hearing—May 2012

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **number of formal visitor tours**

Question: **44**

Hansard reference **F&PA p.21–22, 21 May 2012**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 6 July 2012

Senator FAULKNER: Let us cut to the chase. How much has it been reduced by?

Mr Kenny: Senator, I am reading from our last annual report, so we are talking 2010-11 numbers and not current year. We have reported the total number of tours there. The total number of general public tours is down to 1,911, which is a reduction of a bit over 420 on the previous year.

Senator FAULKNER: It is down to 1,911.

Mr Kenny: That is general public tours from 2,331 the previous year and down from 4,527 the year before that. **Senator FAULKNER:** ... What is the current situation? What are the most recent figures you have got? Is it still going down?

Mr Kenny: I do not have that number in front of me. We will get something for you.

Senator FAULKNER: I would appreciate you taking that on notice. Is it true also that people now have to pay for some of the tours that had previously been conducted at no cost?

Mr Kenny: There have always been paid tours offered.

Senator FAULKNER: Yes, but that is not the question I asked, Mr Kenny. I asked: is it true that some tours that were previously provided at no cost are now provided at cost?

Mr Kenny: I do not know. I will ask Bronwyn Graham.

Senator FAULKNER: If you could take that on notice, I would appreciate it.

Answer

The number of public tours conducted since 2004–05 is shown in the table below, along with the tour participation rates where available.

	04–05	05–06	06–07	07–08	08–09	09–10	10–11
Visitors¹	878,553	880,046	889,115	867,220	863,552	866,000	820,783
Public Tours	3,340	3,160	5,055	4,981	4,527	2,331	1,911
Participants	Data not available				101,236	78,114	73,196
% on Public Tours					12%	9%	9%

Up to 18 June 2012, there have been 722,416 visitors, and 1,536 public tours with 58,283 participants—a participation rate of 8%.

Prior to 2011, there were no formal guidelines for DPS staff to determine which special request tours should attract a charge. This resulted in an inconsistent application of the way some groups were classified. In 2011, DPS developed a set of guidelines in consultation with the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives. These guidelines ensure a consistent approach to the classification of special request tours.

(continued over the page)

¹ The number of visitors is measured at the public entrance using security screening equipment, which includes tourist visitors, business visitors and visitors attending functions and events in the building.

The guidelines provide for a free private tour for guests of Senators, Members and senior parliamentary staff, guests of Government, guests of the Parliament, embassies and high commissions, not-for-profit organisations, community groups and Australian educational institutions.

For other groups not participating in one of the free public tours, a fee applies of \$9.50 per person during business hours, and \$15 per person out of hours, with a minimum of \$80 per group. This fee is applied to Government departments, private organisations, commercial tour operators, associations, conference groups, individuals, and educational institutions outside of Australia. The application of these guidelines impacts largely on Commonwealth agencies, for whom in the past DPS had provided special request tours free of charge.