

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Parliament Portfolio

Joint House Department

Supplementary Budget Estimates, Monday 3 November 2003

Question: P12

Outcome:

Topic: Cost of dealing with Bogong Moths

Hansard Page: 87

Senator Faulkner asked:

Re: Bogong moths ... would you mind taking on notice for the committee, the annual cost of dealing with this issue? We would appreciate getting some sort of understanding of that and also the sort of staff resources that are involved.

Answer:

The cost of conducting the annual spray of external areas of the building for control of spiders, ants and moths is approximately \$8,000. The task is completed over three weekends during September and October of each year.

The intensity of the annual Bogong moth infestation determines the ensuing costs of a clean up. The cost of the immediate clean up for external and internal areas (usually a three-week period) has been approximately \$25,000 per annum, for the past three years.

Removal of Bogong moths during other programmed industrial cleaning tasks continues for approximately three to four months after the infestation. It is estimated that this increases the annual cost of the operation by approximately \$20,000. In addition, the University of Technology Sydney is engaged to provide a bi-annual consultancy to assess the effectiveness of the pest control program and provide advice on procedures and treatments. The last consultancy in May 2003 cost \$10,750.

The approximate cost of the entire operation outlined above has been in the order of \$55,000 to \$60,000 per annum during the past three years.

As of the end of November 2003, the cost for the 2003 spraying and clean-up operation is approximately \$22,000.

In the event that no action was taken to deal with the Bogong moths, other issues would arise. The Bogong carcasses provide a source of food for a variety of pests, including rodents, carpet beetles and clothes moths. In the past, clothes moths have caused significant damage to the fabric of Parliament House. If the Bogong moth is

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ignored, secondary pests will build up and cause damage to the fabric of the building and perhaps the health of the occupants of Parliament House.

Bogong carcasses left on the ground and hard floor surfaces of Parliament House provide a potential slip hazard. The insects are slippery underfoot and their removal by vacuuming is essential to maintaining a safe environment. Failure to remove the moths could result in expensive liability claims from persons injured from falls caused by the hazard represented by the Bogong carcasses.