



Australian Government

Department of Finance and Administration



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Mr Alistair Sands
Committee Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Estimates Hearings of 1 November 2005 - Correction to Response

Dear Mr Sands

I am writing to you to correct some evidence I provided to Senator Faulkner during the appearance of the Department of Finance and Administration (Finance) at the 1 November 2005 hearings of the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee.

Senator Faulkner asked a series of questions relating to the provision of equipment by Finance to the Government Members Secretariat (GMS). The questioning appears on page F&PA 55 of the proof Hansard for 1 November 2005.

It was my understanding at the time that the answers I was providing were correct. However, other Finance officers later drew my attention to the possibility that the answers I provided may not have been correct. I have since checked our records carefully and would now like to correct my evidence.

Finance, as 'home department' for the GMS, has a responsibility to support the GMS through the provision of IT and other equipment in a similar fashion to the support provided to our portfolio Ministers. Since early 2004, Finance has provided each staff member of the GMS with a laptop computer, configured to the Finance network environment. On 29 June 2004, the GMS requested that the hard drives on the laptop computers that it had been issued be reconfigured to allow its staff to carry out their duties in a non-Finance network environment during the period of the 2004 election. The restrictions in place on Finance issued laptops preclude these machines from operating in a non-Finance environment. It was estimated that to reconfigure eleven existing laptops would have cost \$5,500. In contrast, to provide eleven temporary laptops that had not been configured to the Finance network environment would cost in total \$1,636 per month.

On 17 July 2004, on the basis of the above costings, the GMS was provided with eleven laptop computers without Finance configured hard disks to allow it to carry out its work in a non-Finance network environment. These laptops were returned to the Department on 22 October 2004. My answers to Senator Faulkner's questions were based on my understanding that the eleven laptop computers originally issued by Finance and configured

to the Finance network environment had been recalled to the Department for the period that these alternative laptop computers were provided, and that the number of laptops issued by the Department to the GMS at any one time remained at eleven. I have since been informed that this was not the case. The eleven original machines were not recalled, and as a result, from 17 July 2004 to 22 October 2004, twenty-two laptops were on issue to the GMS, half of which were configured to the Finance network environment and half of which were on a standard Microsoft configuration.

I would appreciate you bringing this matter to the attention of the Committee.

Should you have any queries or require further clarification on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 6215 3580.

Yours sincerely



Lembit Suur
First Assistant Secretary
Industry, Education and Infrastructure Division

9 November 2005