

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation
Committee—Supplementary Budget Estimates 2005-06,
October 2005**

**Parliament Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary
Services**

Answers to Questions on Notice

**Topic: PSS Supervisor access to certain areas including keys to
parliamentarians' offices**

Question: P1

Senator John Faulkner—Let us start with access to certain areas. These staff have, for example, keys to parliamentarians' offices, don't they?

Ms Penfold—They have keys that will open them, yes.

Senator John Faulkner—Do you consider—

Ms Penfold—I should possibly take that particular question on notice because it is possible that only the supervisors have those keys. I do not know whether every one of the 160—

Senator John Faulkner—I am just using that as an example.

Ms Penfold—It is quite an important example, though, because, apart from access to locked offices, we have at the moment—and this may be a problem in itself—a lot of people who are given access to this building without security clearances.

Senator John Faulkner—Yes, but most of them do not have keys to parliamentarians' and ministers' offices and the like, do they?

Ms Penfold—That is right, and that is why I would like to check whether all PSS officers have access to those keys or whether it is only the security cleared ones.

Answers

All Parliamentary Security Service (**PSS**) employees who are required to conduct patrols have access to area Master Keys which enable them to access or lock all offices as required in the course of their duties. This includes Members' and Senators' offices but excludes the Ministerial Wing.

The most frequent situation where a PSS employee might enter a Senator or Member's suite is where the suite has been left unsecured and there is a need to check that no staff remain inside before securing the premises.

There are four PSS patrols per shift and most PSS officers are required to perform patrol duties as they rotate through the roster.

In any situation where a PSS employee, in the course of his or her duties, is required to enter or secure any office, a call will be made to the Parliamentary Security Operations Room (**PSOR**) reporting the circumstances, and the PSOR will make a log of the call and circumstances. Where this occurs in response to a particular reported incident, a security incident report is completed.

Currently only PSS supervisors have security clearances, although all PSS employees undergo police checks before being engaged by the department.