Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing – October 2008
Department of Finance and Deregulation
Finance and Deregulation Portfolio

Outcome 3, Output 3.1.1
Topic: Mobile Personal Digital Assistants (PDA)

Question reference number: F37
Type of Question: Written
Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 5 December 2008

Number of Pages: 1
Senator Polley asked:

Considering that a number of Senators have been pushing for the use of Blackberry's for some years now, why is it only now that they are being considered, especially since Ministerial offices have been using them for some time now?

Answer:

The Blackberry was the PDA recommended for Senators and Members as a result of a study commissioned by the then Department of Finance and Administration (Finance) and undertaken by the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS). At the meeting of the Presiding Officers Information Technology Advisory Group (POITAG) on 6 December 2005, Finance was advised by POITAG, as representatives of Senators and Members for Information Technology issues, that they preferred PDAs that used the Windows Mobile technology. Based on this advice, Finance instituted the current Windows Mobile compatible PDAs. Blackberry devices could not be used as they are not compatible with the Microsoft Windows platform. Finance undertook to review the provision of this entitlement after 2 years. This review has now been completed and the results have been provided to the Special Minister of State.