

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—October 2011

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Passwords on BlackBerrys
Question: 19
Hansard reference F&PA p.35, 17 October 2011

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 December 2011

Senator HUMPHRIES: As I read the information security manual, it is the Department of Parliamentary Services which is responsible for setting the policy on how often passwords need to be renewed. If that is the case, and it is not the Department of Finance, then I am anxious to settle this. At the last set of estimates I asked the question of the department and you answered the question rather than said it was a matter for Finance. You said, 'It is the policy set by DFD'. I went to DFD and they said it was the Department of Parliamentary Services. I am not anxious to be flick-passed again on this matter. Do you have responsibility for determining what the policy is with these password issues?

Mr Kenny: Historically, and again this is by way of background, when the BlackBerrys were first provided Finance gave us fairly non-negotiable directions as to what had to be set and we did not argue with that. We had some discussions as to whether there were better options but we took the role that it was their decision. What you have just said suggests that we did not question the authority enough and possibly now we should. I am quite happy to undertake to do so.

Senator HUMPHRIES: While you are doing that checking I have got to forego another set of estimates before I can get the answer to my question. This is the third set of estimates I have brought them to.

Mr Kenny: I can have an answer well before next February.

Answer

1 DPS now has responsibility for determining the BlackBerry security settings.