

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee —Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing—October 2012

Answers to Questions on Notice

Parliamentary departments, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: **Freedom of Information**
Question: **218**
Hansard reference **F&PA p.41, 15 October 2012**

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 30 November 2012

Senator RHIANNON: I think that helps me pinpoint the need for the very sensitive information that should not be released about putting them into the exemptions. I thought it would be useful if you could explain what information your department holds that should not be made public through the FOI process, and why it should not be made public.

Ms Mills: At this point I would probably take that on notice. ...

Senator RHIANNON: If you could take that on notice, I think it would help advance this discussion which is so important.

Answer

DPS is committed to open and transparent access to information.

In assessing an FOI request, DPS is bound by the FOI Act and uses the guidelines that are published by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner. In doing so, the principles relating to freedom of information and the public's right to access are applied to a request.

Information held by DPS that should be exempt from FOI is client advice provided by the Parliamentary Librarian under section 38B of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*, which requires the Parliamentary Librarian to provide, in a confidential manner, high-quality information, analysis and advice to Senators and Members of the House of Representatives in support of their parliamentary and representational roles.