

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Program 1.6

Question No. 90

Senator Trood asked the following question at the hearing on 22 February 2011:

- A. The Counter-Terrorism White Paper 2010 p.62 states that “This will be demonstrated through the establishment in 2010 of a Parliament House Briefing Room and a National Crisis Coordination Centre to provide holistic, real-time support to senior decision makers during a crisis.” Was the Crisis Coordination Centre completed in 2010 as stated in the Counter-Terrorism White Paper?
 - a. When did the centre open?
- B. Is the Crisis Coordination Centre fully functional and operational?
- C. Was either the Parliament House Briefing Room or the Crisis Coordination Centre used during the Queensland Floods and Victorian Floods and the West Australian bushfires? If so, on what dates were they used?
- D. During a Press Conference on 2 February 2011, the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, made reference on two occasions to the “Australian Crisis Coordination Committee.” Is this a new Committee or was the Prime Minister referring to either the Australian Government Crisis Committee (AGCC) or the National Crisis Committee (NCC)? If so, which committee was she referring to?
 - a. Who are the members of these committees?

The answer to the honourable senator’s question is as follows:

To support the activation of the Parliament House Briefing Room (PHBR), the Interim Crisis Coordination Centre was established in September 2010 in existing departmental accommodation and is fully functional and operational. An enhanced CCC is being constructed and is scheduled to be operational in August 2011.

The CCC operates, 24 hours a day 7 days a week, to monitor and report to stakeholders on international and domestic events. The CCC was used throughout the Queensland and Victorian floods and the WA bushfires (November 2010 to February 2011).

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) is responsible for the activation and operation of the PHBR. PM&C has advised that the PHBR was used during the Queensland and Victorian floods. PM&C has also advised that the Government does not disclose detailed information about Cabinet and Committee meetings, including the dates of those meetings, due to the sensitive nature of the meetings.

PM&C will provide a response in regard to the Australian Crisis Coordination Committee, through PM36.