



Our Ref: ESEC000288

Mr Alistair Sands  
Secretary  
Finance and Public Administration References Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Sands

**Members of Parliament Staff (MOP(S)) Inquiry – response to questions asked of the Department of Finance and Administration**

Thank you for your letter of 27 August 2003 asking a number of questions concerning certain aspects of the administration of, and employment arrangements made under, the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (the MOP(S) Act).

Answers to each of your questions are included at Attachment A.

In your letter, you asked for copies of various Determinations made under the MOP(S) Act. Many of the Determinations you requested contain the personal information of individual MOP(S) staff and will not be released on privacy grounds. We have consulted with the Special Minister of State, who makes the Determinations under the Act and the Minister has indicated his preference that the Determinations remain confidential. However, the employing Senator or Member is informed of Determinations that affect their staff and where such Determinations have broad application, a circular is provided to MOP(S) staff and is placed on the MOP(S) website. We have attached samples of these circulars at Attachment B.

You also asked for a copy of the Australian Workplace Agreement template for senior staff. Again, it is the Minister's preference that this document remains confidential.

At the Committee hearing on 2 September 2003, Ms Jan Mason, General Manager, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS), undertook to provide the Committee with data relating to the number of enquiries made by employing Senators and Members to the M&PS Staff Help Desk. For the period 15 to 21 September 2003, 616 calls were made to the Staff Help Desk in relation to staff issues. Of these calls, 96 percent came from MOP(S) staff and the remaining 4 percent from employing Senators and Members. It is important to note, however, that these figures do not distinguish between whether the MOP(S) staff were making the calls on their own behalf or on behalf of their employing Senator or Member.

Please contact Ms Kim Clarke, Branch Manager, Entitlements Policy in M&PS if you have any further queries. Ms Clarke's telephone number is 6215 3401.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian McPhee', written in a cursive style.

Ian McPhee  
Acting Secretary  
/ October 2003