



Senate told Parliament trespasser 'had no particular direction'

By Peter Martin

The intruder who came within inches of Prime Minister Julia Gillard during a press conference at Parliament House in August dropped into the offices of the Speaker Peter Slipper and Deputy Prime Minister Wayne Swan on the way, a Senate hearing has been told.

Department of Parliamentary Services chief Carol Mills told the hearing the man ambled through the high security area for 40 minutes before stumbling upon the Prime Minister's press conference, deciding on the spur of the moment to place a document on her lectern.

"He had no particular direction, he just walked around," she said.

Artem Naumov had attended a parliamentary hearing on August 23 and had left through the wrong door. Usually two security guards would have been on hand to guide him back into the public area, but a mix-up in rostering meant none were in place.

Asked whether the appearance of a young man in a "hoodie" wandering through the ministerial and representative wings without a pass had struck anyone as unusual, Ms Mills said parliamentary staff often forget to wear passes and it was "not unusual to see media staff and some staffers dressed similarly".

Mr Naumov dropped into Mr Slipper's office and put a piece of paper in front of his receptionist who was on the phone and did not think it was "anything more extraordinary than a regular mail delivery".

After that, he visited the Deputy Prime Minister's office, whose staff

alerted security who were catching up with him as he approached the Prime Minister two minutes later.

"If someone can get from the Deputy Prime Minister's office to within a thrust with their hand of a weapon to the Prime Minister then I put it to you two minutes is not sufficiently short response time," Liberal Senator Scott Ryan said.

Ms Mills believed it would not happen again and warned against a "knee-jerk reaction" that "over-engineered" security.

Her department uses "shadow shoppers", sometimes disguised as school children, to break free from tour groups and see how long it takes security staff to pick them up. It happens "almost immediately".

Meanwhile, Labor Senator John Faulkner quizzed the Department of Parliamentary Services on the safety of the green marble used in many interior and exterior parts.

About 850,000 people visit the Capital Hill building in Canberra each year and most enter through the

area facing the Australian War Memorial, known as the Great Verandah.

The Great Verandah and other areas near the two parliamentary chambers are constructed partly with green marble.

Ms Mills told the Senate committee there was a review of maintenance in 1990 and a second review in 2005. She said the second review consultant had identified sections of green marble as "unsuitable in the long term for the locations in which

it has been placed, as it has a risk of breaking up in shards and could fall from the building".

The Diagnostech review found the marble was known to be unstable, could develop hairline cracks and had been installed in "patches and groove sections which is not usual practice". The review said there was a 30 to 40 per cent risk the panels might fail and called for immediate steps to protect public safety.

"No significant work has been done on those panels since this report," Ms Mills told the committee.

While there had been no reports of marble pieces breaking off, small plastic cordons had been set up in some places to ensure safety.

Ms Mills said the building, constructed in the 1980s at a cost of \$1.1 billion, needed a long-term maintenance and repair plan.

"It's essential ... it is appropriately maintained," she said.

Senator Faulkner said he was concerned the department had not done enough. "I would be a little worried that a small plastic cordon ... might not be adequate to stop a shard of marble falling on someone's head," he said.

"Perhaps we should put out an all-points bulletin to people about where they walk."

Referring to last week's chaotic parliamentary session, Senator Faulkner said: "People talk about Parliament metaphorically falling to bits, well, here is the risk it is literally falling to bits."

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