

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
Department of Finance – Proposed Fit-Out of New Commonwealth Parliament Office, Perth,
Western Australia
Public Hearing - Questions on Notice

1. **Mr ZAPPIA:** Since the current offices were upgraded, has there been any security incident that required calling in the AFP?

Ms Bryant: Not that I'm aware of, but I would need to take that on notice.

Mrs Bektas: We'll need to take that on notice.

Answer-

There have been security incidents at the Perth CPO, such as unplanned protests and unauthorised access on site, requiring an AFP response.

2. **Mrs Bektas:** I want to add, on the previous point, that the trigger for the Department of Finance to request and conduct this review was the end of the lease life of the current property. We had no extension options, which was a good trigger for us to then go out to market and see what the market was like.

Mr ZAPPIA: So, regardless of the additional fit-out, you're saying that you cannot continue at this location?

Ms Bryant: No. The extension options had been exhausted, so we were out to market anyway—not that the current owner was telling us we could not extend.

Mrs Bektas: That was the trigger for us to conduct the review, taking into account that we'd come to the end of the life cycle of the lease. And, given the limitations that we've talked about, it was a good opportunity to revisit and make sure that what we were going forward with was going to be fit for purpose.

Mr ZAPPIA: But the real question is: the current landlord would have extended your lease, am I right?

Ms Bryant: I might need to take that on notice.

Mrs Bektas: We can take that on notice.

Mr ZAPPIA: Did you ask?

Ms Bryant: I think the reason we're saying that we need to take that on notice is that I'm not sure we had that specific conversation with them.

CHAIR: Further to that, I want to clarify what the terms are for the current lease. Was it 10 by five by five, or some other configuration?

Ms Bryant: We will need to get that answer for you.

Answer-

In-line with Finance's obligation under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* to achieve best overall value for money for the Commonwealth, Finance undertook a two-stage approach to market. The current landlord was included in both of those stages.

The original lease was for a period of 10 years, starting in 1993, and a subsequent lease was then entered into for an additional 10 years with a 10 year extension.

3. **Senator PAYMAN:** In regard to the life span of 20 years that One the Esplanade Perth will provide, is that a short life span for CPOs?

Ms Bryant: We would say that it would be at least 20 years, but we're only entering into a 10-year lease with two five-year options. That will then give us an opportunity to review the market conditions as well and just ensure that the value for money is still being achieved. If we can get longer from the current CPO, we will. In terms of the average life span of the other CPOs, I may need to take that on notice and get back to you on that.

Answer-

It is expected that a CPO will last a minimum of 20 years.

- The Melbourne CPO is located at 4 Treasury Place, which has been a government building since the early 1900's. The last refurbishment was undertaken in 2001.
- The Adelaide CPO was established in 1994, with a minor refurbishment in 2012.
- The Brisbane CPO was established in 1996, with a new floor added in 2021.
- The Hobart CPO was established in 2011, with security enhancements undertaken in 2023.
- The Darwin CPO was established in 2012 and has had no refurbishments.
- The Sydney CPO was established in 2013, with security enhancements undertaken in 2023.

4. **Mr DAVID SMITH:** How many staff are permanently based at the CPO at the moment?

Ms Bryant: Do you mean Finance staff or the number of parliamentarians and their staff?

Mr DAVID SMITH: All staff that are actually permanently based.

Ms Bryant: I'm not sure. We will need to take on notice how many people come into the office. We may not exactly know the usage. In terms of MOP and Finance staff, it's up to 10 staff, but we don't actually have enough desks for them, so they share desks.

Answer-

Eight Parliamentarians hold permanent offices at the Perth CPO and have allocated space to accommodate their staff. Permanent work bases for parliamentarian's staff are at the discretion of the parliamentarian or Minister. In addition, Perth CPO is the Primary work base for 8 Finance staff.

5. **Mr DAVID SMITH:** Do you have an understanding—you may not, given that first answer—of what the staff requirements might be with the new CPO.

Ms Bryant: We do have an understanding of what a parliamentarian and a minister, on average, will ask for. It can vary in terms of the number of staff in each suite depending on the portfolio or whether, for example, it's a joint electorate office and senator suite. We have based the standard design of each of those suites on those numbers. I don't know if you can talk to how many desks are in each of the type A suites?

Mr Henry: Yes. It's a good question. Each of the ministerial suites have a principal or minister's suite, a chief of staff and between six to 10 work points, two of which are temporary, so we can bring them in and out depending on the portfolio for the life of that lease. The size of the suites are the same, within a couple of square metres, so you won't notice the difference around. All the suites are equitable in terms of space and utility, and we just have a different number of desks that we can bring in for surge to meet those requirements for those portfolios, which we think are adequate at the moment.

Ms Bryant: I'm just getting some answers. There are 68 work points at the current CPO.

Mr DAVID SMITH: How many will there be at the new CPO?

Ms Bryant: There will be 160 work points in the new CPO, but some of those will be—

Mr DAVID SMITH: Wow!

Ms Bryant: Some of those are using our spaces better with touchdown points. I may need to take on notice how many of those are actually allocated to the suites, because it won't be that high.

Mr DAVID SMITH: That is possibly good to hear. I think it would be worth getting a better handle on how many people are permanently using the current offices. To have such an increase is good for Western Australians, but that's a really significant increase.

Ms Bryant: I think it would be good too if we could give you a comparison of the work points that we have in the other CPOs as well, because, as I was saying earlier, one of the issues we have in Perth is that we don't have that ability to take in surge when we need to. We have put in areas with additional touchdown points so that when that surge happens we can actually allow people to connect their computers and things like that. We can take it on notice to give you a comparison of work points in the other CPOs.

Answer-

The new Perth CPO will include 160 work points to provide adequate space for parliamentarians and their staff and the PMO. This increase will closer align the Perth facility with facilities in other CPO's, the Sydney CPO has 197 work points and the Brisbane CPO has 158 work points.

The increase in Perth's work points is due to:

Space	No. of work points
Additional four suites and accompanying staff workspaces	44
PMO spaces (not available in existing CPO)	24
Secure area (not available in existing CPO)	2
CPO Facilities and Administrative Support area	2
Additional work points in some suites compared to existing CPO	6
Touch down (not available in existing CPO) - to provide increased flexibility and surge capacity	14