

Response by the Bureau of Meteorology to Question on Notice
(Space Allocations) from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on
Public Works

Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology
February 2003

Response to Question on Space Allocations

1. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Bureau's *Response to Submission No. 3 from the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia, and the Professional Officers' Association Victoria* (submission no. 5 to the PWC) stated:

"The Bureau confirms that in its fit-out proposals the space allowance made for individual workpoints for APS Level 6 employees is 8 m2 per person and for APS 1-5 employees is 6.5 m2 per person.

The Bureau determined these space allowances on the basis of a consideration of a number of factors including standards that existed in the past for Commonwealth agencies and consistency with those offered in other public sector agencies."

2. PWC members have enquired about the exact nature of the contemporary public service space allocations upon which the Bureau's proposed space allocation is based.

3. The Bureau's information on contemporary public service allocations has been drawn from a number of sources, including:

- ▶ Department of Defence Accommodation Guidelines¹;
- ▶ Victorian State Government Office Accommodation Guidelines;
- ▶ Government of South Australia Office Accommodation Guidelines;
- ▶ Accommodation provisions by Environment Australia in their move to the refurbished John Gorton building in Canberra in 1998¹;
- ▶ Recent PWC inquiries and reports on accommodation proposals from Commonwealth agencies; and
- ▶ Advice from the Bureau's architectural/engineering consultants GHD Pty Ltd on recent accommodation designs for public sector agencies in which they have been involved.

4. General advice on contemporary space allowances was also obtained from the Bureau's property management consultants KFPW Pty Ltd.

5. Space allocations from the above sources for APS1-6 or equivalent (in square metres) are shown in Table 1 below. The Bureau's own plans and information from the Defence Science & Technology Organisation (DSTO) plans have been included for comparison purposes. Some of the guidelines provide guidance simply on the size of open-plan workstations and offices without specifically addressing which classifications should have offices. In these cases it has been assumed that EL2 staff will have offices and lower classifications will be in open-plan accommodation.

6. The DSTO is a research organisation where the majority of the staff are engaged in defence research activities. The Melbourne facility to which the figures below apply is the Aeronautical and Maritime Research Laboratory. The most appropriate comparison between this facility and the Bureau of Meteorology is with the Bureau of Meteorology Research Centre (BMRC).

7. In its fit out proposals the Bureau has given special consideration to BMRC in consultation with the head of BMRC and staff representatives. The major concern of BMRC staff was that

¹ Information obtained informally from personal contacts in these Departments.

enclosed offices should be provided as in their view this was essential to the research function; space allowances were a secondary consideration. After internal discussions it was agreed that BMRC staff may be accommodated in enclosed offices and that the sizes of those offices may be determined during the design process, as long as the total space occupied by BMRC does not exceed an agreed area.

8. The total agreed area for BMRC has been calculated using the standard Bureau individual space allowances but with increased allowances for Senior Research Scientists (15 m²) Principal Research Scientists (18 m²), and Senior Principal Research Scientists (20 m²), all of whom are formally designated as equivalent to APS classification EL2. The outcome on current plans is that generally for classifications EL1 and below offices are provided but are shared (either two or three to an office); the average individual space allowance in shared offices is occasionally less than the Bureau allocation. However this is considered a more desirable outcome by BMRC staff than increased use of open-plan workstations. In addition, many of the occupants of the shared offices will be postgraduate students or visitors working on collaborative projects with the Bureau.

Table 1: Space Allocations Used For Planning Purposes

Agency	APS1-5	APS6	EL1	EL2
Bureau of Meteorology proposals	6.5	8	10	14
Environment Australia	8	8	8	12
Department of Defence – Accommodation Guidelines	6 (min)	12 (min)	12 (min)	12 (min)
Department of Defence - RAAF Base Edinburgh	6.96 - 7.22	6.96 -7.22	6.96 - 7.22	n/a
Department of Defence - DSTO	9.5	9.5	9.5	12
DIMA Central Office	5.76	5.76	n/a	14.2
Australian Bureau of Statistics	6.45	6.45	12.9	15.12 (Directors) 12.9 (non-Directors)
Victorian State Govt. Guidelines	7 – 9 (max)	7 – 9 (max)	7 – 9 (max)	14 (max)
Government of SA Guidelines	6.3	6.3	6.3	12.6
SA Department of Water Resources	6.61	6.61	6.61	13.17