

PART 4—Special reports

PART 4—Special reports

A—Ecologically sustainable development and environmental performance

300 DPS facilitates and coordinates sustainability issues on behalf of all the Parliamentary departments.

301 This report, prepared in accordance with section 516A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, addresses ecologically sustainable development (**ESD**) and environmental performance for 2004–05 for all parliamentary departments.

DPS's activities and administration of legislation

302 Paragraph 516A(6)(a) requires DPS to report on how our activities, and any administration of legislation by DPS, accorded with the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

303 The agencies occupying Parliament House do not manage, coordinate or administer any legislation on behalf of the Commonwealth that has any direct environmental impact. However they do comply with Commonwealth and Territory (ACT) environmental legislation and with State legislation where applicable.

304 DPS places a significant emphasis on environmental performance, and its senior management has demonstrated their commitment to it by including two references in the Corporate Plan 2004–07. Those references require DPS to:

- (a) lead by example in environmental management; and
- (b) balance environmental, social, financial and operational considerations when making decisions.

Contributions of outcomes

305 Paragraph 516A(6)(b) requires DPS to report on how the outcomes specified in an Appropriations Act for the reporting period contribute to ecologically sustainable development.

306 The outcomes of the parliamentary departments, specified in the Appropriations (Parliamentary Departments) Acts for 2004-05, are as follows:

PART 4—Special reports

- (a) **Department of Parliamentary Services:** Occupants of Parliament House are supported by integrated services and facilities, Parliament functions effectively and its work and building are accessible to the public.
- (b) **Department of the Senate:** Effective provision of services to support the functioning of the Senate as a House of the Commonwealth Parliament.
- (c) **Department of the House of Representatives:** The House of Representatives fulfils its role as a representative and legislative body.

307 None of these outcomes directly contributes to ESD. However, Output 3.3 as specified in the DPS Portfolio Budget Statement requires reductions in energy and water consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, and improvements in the rate of recycling at Parliament House. These required outcomes assist ESD by reducing the environmental effect of parliamentary operations.

Effect of activities on the environment

308 Paragraph 516A(6)(c) requires DPS to report on the effect of our activities on the environment.

309 In the course of its operations, the Parliament has negative impacts on the environment through the consumption of electricity, natural gas, diesel fuel, paper and other materials, through the generation of waste and through water usage.

310 Parliament House does not occupy a site of significant environmental heritage or environmental conservation value for the purposes of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

311 DPS reports environmental performance using the international reporting guidelines outlined in the Global Reporting Initiative (**GRI**). The Parliament House 2004-2005 Environmental Performance Report is available from the DPS web site environmental portal at <http://www.aph.gov.au/DPS/building/EMS/index.htm>.

PART 4—Special reports

Measures to minimise environmental impact

312 Paragraph 516A(6)(d) requires DPS to report on measures taken to minimise the impact of environmental activities on the environment.

Energy saving

313 In 2004-2005 the following initiatives were implemented in order to reduce energy consumption:

- (a) a major upgrade of the air conditioning controls was completed;
- (b) new, more energy-efficient light fittings were installed in the basement corridors; and
- (c) the policy on computer operation was changed to recommend that all computers, monitors, printers and associated equipment are turned off at night.

314 DPS continued to purchase 10% green energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions resulting from Parliament House's energy use.

315 The Department of the House of Representatives has an energy saving policy that requires departmental staff to conduct an inspection of all Members' suites at the end of each fortnightly sitting period to turn off all electrical equipment and lights that have been left on. They also check that taps are not left dripping.

Water use

316 To reduce potable water consumption, five waterless urinals were installed in the public underground car park as a trial of alternative technologies. A second system that uses microbial bacteria cubes is currently being trialled in three urinals in the private areas of Parliament House. The results will be reported in 2005-06.

Recycling and waste management

Paper saving/recycling

317 The Presiding Officers agreed to substantially reduce the printing of paper copies of weekly Official Hansards, except for copies for eligible libraries and those used in the production of Bound

PART 4—Special reports

Volume Hansards. Former recipients were provided with instructions for accessing electronic copies with full search functionality via the Parliament of Australia web site. As a result, it is estimated that the equivalent of up to 20,000 reams of paper could be saved over a full 12-month period. It is recognised, however, that some former recipients will themselves print copies of Hansard from the website, thus reducing the total benefit to the environment.

318 The operation and output of the Senate Print Room was reviewed. This resulted in a rationalisation of printing and copying equipment, the selection of more appropriate equipment, and other system changes. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these changes have also resulted in a reduction in the number of copies of committee briefings, minutes and reports being produced.

319 During the year, some committees in the Department of the House of Representatives decided to distribute committee documentation electronically, resulting in a reduction in the volume of paper used in and by those committees. A new electronic system (COMMDOCS) that will dramatically change the way records are produced, distributed and maintained by House of Representatives committees is currently being tested.

320 A survey of building occupants indicated a willingness to use double-sided printing. As a result, printers in DPS were converted to default to double-sided printing. The conversion resulted in approximately a one-third reduction in the consumption of paper in DPS between 1 February and 30 June 2005. Consultations are taking place about converting the rest of the Parliament House printer fleet during 2005-06.

321 Paper recycling rates continued to improve, with over 320 tonnes of paper and cardboard being diverted from landfill in 2004-05. A waste audit conducted at Parliament House in March 2005 found that an estimated 63% of all paper and cardboard is now being recycled.

Other recycling

322 A co-mingled recycling trial was undertaken on the Senate side of Parliament House during the second half of 2004-05. Five indicators of success were developed and these, along with the results achieved to date, are shown in the table below.

PART 4—Special reports

Figure 37—Co-mingled recycling trial—indicators and results

Indicator	Result
1. At least 25% of the co-mingled waste collected during the trial is clean of contamination	85% was clean
2. At least 25% of the total waste generated in the trial areas is separated by occupants for co-mingled recycling	32% of waste was separated for co-mingled recycling
3. The trial does not result in the Loading Dock staff workload increasing to a cost-prohibitive level (more than 10%)	Loading Dock staff advised that removing the bins was not causing an adverse impact on their workload, and caused no labour cost increases for the Loading Dock. It is suggested that there will be some workload impact if co-mingling is extended across the whole building
4. The trial does not result in any cost increase for the cleaning contractor	The cleaning contractor reported that they had not experienced a big increase in workload from the trial, but expect a further increase if the trial is expanded. The contractor has reserved the right to review the impact of co-mingled recycling on their operations.
5. The amount of waste going to landfill is reduced and the costs reduced as a direct result	Between February and end April 2005, 450Kg of recyclable material was recovered through the co-mingling trial. Analysis indicated that this represented 32% of the potentially recoverable co-mingled materials. The financial saving was negligible because of increased transport costs under the current uncontracted trial arrangements, but the savings are expected to increase as landfill costs escalate and a contract can be put in place. The amount of waste going to landfill has been reduced.

323 Further investigation and analysis is required on Indicators 3 and 4 and this will be a factor when DPS is considering a proposal to extend the co-mingled recycling trial to the rest of Parliament House during 2005–06.

324 Printer cartridge recycling was actively promoted to building occupants in 2004–05, resulting in 1,317 kg of toner cartridges

PART 4—Special reports

being recovered and recycled from Parliament House. Cartridge recycling opportunities were extended to the electorate offices, with 2,393 kg of cartridges being recovered and recycled from them. This resulted in a total of 3.7 tonnes of cartridge materials being removed from the waste stream over the reporting year, saving \$222 on landfill charges.

Purchasing

325 During 2004–05 the parliamentary departments complied with the *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines (CPGs)*, and in particular Department of Finance Guideline No 10—*Guidance on Complying with Legislation and Government Policy in Procurement*. This aims to ensure procurement decisions take into account a whole-of-life approach, and consider the Department of Environment and Heritage *Green Purchasing* guidelines.

326 During the year, the purchase of technology by the Department of the Senate focussed on minimising resource consumption (including power), reusability and recycling of equipment at the end of its life, and having suppliers take back packaging for reuse or recycling. Similar considerations were built into the selection criteria to select a new computer fleet for the Parliament, and photocopiers and fax machines for DPS.

327 Further amendments were made to the Parliament House Site Book, which specifies requirements and expectations of persons and companies doing work under contract to DPS. The principal change involved the development of a Contractor Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), proformas and information or instruction sheets to assist contractors.

328 The House of Representatives bulk paper contract was amended to require paper with a 10% recycled content to be supplied.

Communication and promotion

329 To promote sustainability issues in Parliament House, four short videos on waste management were prepared. When finalised, these videos will be shown periodically on the in-house television system, to remind building occupants of the facilities available to assist in better recycling and resource recovery.

PART 4—Special reports

330 The environmental portal, accessible through the Parliament House web site

<http://www.aph.gov.au/DPS/building/EMS/index.htm>, facilitates access to environmental information relating to operations at Parliament House. The site is updated periodically, and informal feedback suggests that the portal is a useful medium for communicating environmental issues and outcomes.

Mechanisms for review etc

331 Paragraph 516A(6)(e) requires DPS to identify mechanisms for reviewing and increasing the effectiveness of measures to minimise the impact of activities on the environment.

332 The DPS Environmental Management System (**EMS**) measures the effectiveness of DPS's efforts to minimise the environmental impact of its operations. This is achieved through:

- (a) regular meetings of the DPS Environmental Management Committee;
- (b) quarterly reporting of environmental performance against set targets; and
- (c) regular reviews of the EMS documentation

333 In 2004-2005 the DPS EMS Legal Compliance Register was reviewed and updated.

334 Environmental aspects and impacts training was provided by DPS staff to middle and senior management staff in the Department of the Senate as part of the process involved in undertaking an Environmental Impact Review for the Department of the Senate.

335 A number of areas within DPS were involved in seeking ways to reduce adverse environmental impacts of the Parliament's operations by:

- (a) further reducing the volume of waste going to landfill;
- (b) increasing the recycling of materials removed from Parliament House;
- (c) reducing water consumption both on the landscape and inside the building;

PART 4—Special reports

- (d) reducing reliance on potable water and gaining access to recycled water;
- (e) implementing recommendations contained in the EMS; and
- (f) improving recording and monitoring of environmental issues.

336 Further work is still required to have a common endorsed EMS for the Parliamentary Service.

B—Health and Recreation Centre refurbishment

337 As part of the ongoing asset management strategy for Parliament House, DPS commissioned a structural engineering report of the swimming pool in the Health and Recreation Centre. The report identified a possible failure of the waterproof membrane, with visible signs of corrosion in the swimming pool crawl space. The report recommended remedial action to ensure the future life of the pool.

338 In addition, fixtures and fittings (light fittings, tapware, toilet flushing systems) throughout the facility were beginning to age, requiring additional maintenance effort.

339 These circumstances led to the first major refurbishment of the centre since the opening of Parliament House in 1988. While the main focus of the project was the replacement of the swimming pool's waterproof membrane, other works included:

- (a) repairs to the underside slab of the swimming pool;
- (b) upgrading of the swimming pool lighting system;
- (c) replacing all tiles to the swimming pool and all floor tiles to the facility;
- (d) replacing the spa and upgrading associated equipment;
- (e) upgrading the swimming pool balancing tank and some associated hydraulic pipework;
- (f) upgrading air flows to the squash courts;
- (g) upgrading disabled access to the swimming pool and spa;

PART 4—Special reports

- (h) upgrading the change rooms (including those for people with disabilities);
- (i) upgrading all showers and handbasins with water efficient fittings and installing dual flush toilets and waterless urinals within the change rooms;
- (j) rebuilding the shower cubicles to rectify structural damage to internal walls;
- (k) upgrading the manager's office space, lunch room and reception counter and service area;
- (l) upgrading the gym equipment storage space and replacing carpet; and
- (m) repairing or refurbishing external doors and windows and painting throughout.

340 Refurbishment commenced in mid-December 2004 and was completed in August 2005. The approved cost was \$2.04m.

341 The Health and Recreation Centre equipment, and some activities, were relocated to the space behind the Staff Dining Room during the building period.

C—41st Parliament preparations

342 The 40th Parliament was prorogued on 31 August 2004 and the 41st Parliament commenced on 16 November 2004. Election periods, like other breaks between parliamentary sittings, provide DPS with opportunities to conduct work that would otherwise affect the provision of services to Senators, Members and their staff. As well, elections result in changes to membership of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and this requires a range of support services to assist with the departure of outgoing Senators and Members and the arrival of new Senators and Members.

343 The following are some of the more substantial tasks undertaken by DPS between the prorogation of the 40th Parliament and the commencement of the 41st Parliament:

- (a) commission and decommission workstations, telephones and facsimiles;
- (b) develop the new parliamentary communications directory;

PART 4—Special reports

- (c) upgrade the House of Representatives broadcasting control room;
- (d) update the configuration management database with asset movements;
- (e) Update the IT Service and Request Management System, Hansard Production System and broadcasting control rooms with information about new Senators and Members;
- (f) develop information and research briefs on possible key issues expected to arise during the 41st Parliament;
- (g) review and update DPS content on the APH website;
- (h) familiarise security staff with recognition of new Senators and Members;
- (i) administer signage, lock and key changes to Parliament House suites;
- (j) undertake furniture and artworks movements across Parliament House;
- (k) prepare for IT archiving services and movement of personal effects for outgoing Senators and Members;
- (l) prepare induction material, including a new consolidated Parliamentary Services Directory and information packages for new Senators and Members; and
- (m) prepare for ceremonial activities as part of the commencement of the 41st Parliament.

344 For the first time, these activities were coordinated by DPS as a single project, which resulted in the identification of some critical interdependencies and linkages.

D—Information and communications technology—system improvements and problems

Security policy

345 Considerable work has been done on updating DPS's information technology security policy and in upgrading network security to enable the Parliamentary Computer Network (**PCN**) to

PART 4—Special reports

meet the minimum security standards set by the National Computer Security Authority, Defence Signals Directorate.

346 While leaving the internal operation of the Parliamentary Computer Network essentially unchanged, the model hardens the PCN Internet gateway and provides a layered approach to network security across the network, consistent with best practice security management.

347 DPS also commenced a number of initiatives to mitigate the impact of malicious software on the PCN.

Electorate offices—slowness in systems

348 In May 2003, a number of Senators, Members and electorate office clients reported slowness with electorate office systems, such as email freezing, slow web browsing, and slow printing. In response, DPS convened a working party with members from DPS, Microsoft, Optus and Dimension Data to work on resolving the problem.

349 A variety of changes recommended by the task force have been implemented in electorate offices and the PCN. These changes have markedly reduced the incidence of applications freezing and slowness experienced by electorate office users. Slow response times are now limited to situations when users download large amounts of information from Parliament or the Internet to electorate offices with slow links to the network, such as ISDN. DPS and the Department of Finance and Administration (and their network provider Optus) are working on further measures to better manage the available bandwidth to electorate offices.

Email management

350 High volumes of email are received by Senators and Members, and the need for methods to better organise mail received in the Outlook inbox became a part of the information and communications technology enhancements for the 41st Parliament Project (41P). The 41P project delivered a number of enhancements in response to client requests. These include the following:

- (a) A set of default inbox folders to assist in classifying, prioritising and handling email.

PART 4—Special reports

- (b) A trial of anti-spam software which allows users to determine which material they will accept. The software identifies spam email using certain criteria (which may be modified by the user) and moves it into a quarantine folder. This has the benefit of reducing the contents of the inbox, while retaining the material for subsequent review.
- (c) Encoding the email addresses published on the APH website for all Senators and Members, making them more difficult to be harvested by automated software seeking to generate bulk spam emails.

351 A project to investigate and implement an enterprise-wide solution for spam management is in progress. This will assist Senators and Members with separating spam mail from valid external mail.

Broadcasting Services Asset Replacement Strategy

352 DPS has a Broadcasting Services Asset Replacement Strategy (**BSARS**). BSARS is a major initiative to implement a new and improved suite of processes, information systems and technology for broadcasting and related services within the Parliament as part of the asset replacement program.

353 The BSARS project portfolio sets out asset replacement projects to be carried out over the next four years. Initial projects under the BSARS program include a replacement of the Webcast system and provision of digital widescreen feeds of parliamentary proceedings into the distribution system, including to media bureaux.

*Chamber Local Control Room (**LCR**) Audio system*

354 The chamber LCR audio systems are used to provide sound reinforcement in the chambers and to broadcast parliamentary proceedings. A project was initiated in January 2002 with the aim of replacing existing ageing and unsupported audio systems in both chambers and to improve serviceability and audio quality.

355 The new Senate system was installed in December 2004 in such a way that a rollback to the old system would have been possible, if required. The House of Representatives Audio Desk was installed during the 2005 winter break.

PART 4—Special reports

HMS Head End Replacement and Expansion Project

356 The upgrade of the head end equipment in the House Monitoring Service (**HMS**) broadcasting transmission equipment is almost complete. The project has replaced ageing equipment, provided some capacity for future expansion and laid the foundation for the future introduction of digital television on the HMS. As part of this activity, the channel allocation on the HMS has been improved, with the addition of some extra content.

Senators' and Members' Services Portal

357 At the request of the Presiding Officers' Information Technology Advisory Group, an intranet portal was developed to provide one-stop access to information about parliamentary services of direct interest to Senators and Members, without the need for them to navigate separate departmental intranets. The portal, known as the Senators' and Members' Services Portal, has been designed to be responsive to the key service needs of users.

358 Since the commencement of the 41st Parliament, SMSP has been available to all Senators and Members through an automatic startup. Its functionality has been improved to include progressive loading of Hansard transcripts.

ParlInfo

359 New versions of ParlInfo Web and ParlInfo Full Client were released into production in April 2005. They included significant upgrades to the search engine component and underlying operating systems. Key improvements included:

- (a) the ability to generate Word and PDF extracts of Hansard transcripts; and
- (b) Permalinks—which make available a permanent URL to every ParlInfo Web document for citation purposes.

360 Despite extensive testing a number of problems were experienced, particularly in Hansard and the Parliamentary Library. A small team has been developing short- and longer-term solutions to the problems.

361 The increasing complexity of the ParlInfo system, and its dated technology base, has prompted a DPS decision to carry out a strategic review of its future during 2005-2006.

Events in Progress

362 The “events in progress” television channels allow the chamber Table Office staff to place information about proceedings in the chamber on TV screens. Parallel channels were created (Channels 2, 4 and 6) which provide information such as the stage of the bill and the question before the House; this allows for a more informed Parliament.

E—Review of furniture procurement processes

363 During early 2004, several complaints were made by DPS’s contractors or subcontractors about aspects of our procurement processes for special furniture for Parliament House.

364 As well, queries were raised about aspects of those processes during an estimates hearing of the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee in May 2004.

365 Accordingly, the Secretary commissioned Mr Stephen Skehill, Special Counsel, Mallesons Stephen Jaques, to review procurement activities in relation to several projects to replace Parliament House furniture that had been the subject of critical comment from external participants.

366 The complaints and queries centred around two aspects of recent furniture procurement processes:

- (a) the processes by which the Joint House Department and then DPS chose and sourced leather for use in making furniture (mainly chairs) to replace original furniture made for Parliament House, with specific reference to the use in some cases of imported rather than Australian leather; and
- (b) the processes surrounding contracts for the supply, in two batches, of chairs to replace a particular kind of original chair, with specific reference to the relationship between the successful tenderer to supply the chairs and a firm that had been subcontracted to supply the first batch of chairs.

367 The terms of reference for Mr Skehill’s review were as follows:

PART 4—Special reports

The review is to examine the procurement and related processes involved in the furniture procurement projects listed in Schedule 1 and report on:

- (a) whether those procurement projects complied with the applicable *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines* and if not, the nature and extent of that non-compliance;
- (b) whether those procurement projects complied with:
 - (i) the applicable Chief Executive's Instructions (CEIs) and Chief Executive's Procedures (CEPs); and
 - (ii) any other applicable Joint House Department (JHD) or Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) policies;and if not, the nature and extent of that non-compliance;
- (c) whether there is evidence of any lack of probity on the part of DPS, JHD or any staff member in connection with any of those procurement projects;
- (d) whether any issues arising in the course of the review should be addressed in the CEIs and CEPs, or other policies and procedures, currently being developed by DPS, and if so, how those issues should be addressed;
- (e) any other issues that the reviewer considers should be mentioned in the report.

368 Mr Skehill conducted his review by examining DPS files and interviewing a number of DPS staff. His findings were as follows (the names of individual people and firms involved have been omitted):

2.1 The claims made by [name omitted] do not warrant any adverse finding against DPS or its present or past officers because those claims are either:

- (a) factually incorrect; or
- (b) unreasonable in all the circumstances; or
- (c) unsustainable by reference to the evidence.

PART 4—Special reports

2.2 There is no evidence whatsoever of any impropriety in relation to any of the purchasing activities that have been examined in the course of this review and, in particular, there is no evidence to support, let alone sustain, the claim that the reasons for rejecting the Australian leather tendered for use in the black leather furniture group were “contrived because of commercial interests”.

2.3 The decision to reject the Australian leather tendered for use in the black leather furniture group was rational and reasonable, and was taken only after the Australian manufacturer had been given extended opportunities to improve its tender offering above that originally put forward.

2.4 The decision to engage CSIRO Leather Research Centre to test the Australian leather tendered for use in the black leather furniture group was reasonable notwithstanding that this facility may not have been accredited, and neither its test methodologies nor its test results have been shown to be wrong.

2.5 No breach of any of the:

- (a) Financial Management and Accountability Regulations;
- (b) *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines*;
- (c) *DPS Chief Executive Instructions*; or
- (d) *DPS Chief Executive Procedures*

in relation to any of the purchasing activities that have been examined in the course of this review adversely affected the relevant purchasing decisions.

2.6 Such breaches as may have occurred, while they cannot be condoned, were minor and inconsequential. Greater care needs to be taken by DPS to ensure complete compliance with all formal requirements in its future purchasing activities.

2.7 Further, the standard of a number of the files maintained by DPS in relation to certain of the activities examined in this review has been below an acceptable level, with some files being incomplete and disorganised and some notable activities and facts not being documented. While these defects have not on this occasion precluded a proper examination and

PART 4—Special reports

resolution of the claims made by [name omitted], that is more by good luck than good management.

2.8 It is apparent that steps need to be taken within DPS to reinforce amongst its officers a better understanding of the requirement for, and desirability of, strict compliance with all requirements of the applicable legislation, the *Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines* and DPS' Chief Executive Instructions and Chief Executive Procedures. In particular, it is evident that the standard of DPS documentation and file keeping requires some attention. Unless these defects are remedied, DPS and its officers run the risk that they may not be able to adequately respond to, or disprove, any future complaints of a like nature to those considered in this review.

2.9 Notwithstanding these problems, however, this review has not disclosed any more fundamental flaw in the conduct of DPS procurement activities in the Projects that have been subject to scrutiny in the course of it. In particular, there is no evidence:

- (a) of any lack of propriety on the part of DPS officers;
- (b) that DPS did not secure value for money in its eventual decisions; or
- (c) that the complainant firms [names omitted] were unfairly dealt with in any way by DPS.

Indeed, in my view each was afforded greater opportunity than that which was required by any applicable standard.

369 In response to those findings, policies and guidelines are being developed for improved record-keeping in DPS, with a view to ensuring in particular that decisions, and the reasons for them, are properly recorded and the documents are properly filed. As well, the issue of documenting decisions has been considered as part of our work on risk management for the department as a whole.