

Response to Submission No. 3 from the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers and the Professional Officers' Association Victoria

Introduction

1. 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.

Process Followed by the Bureau in Determining Space and Storage Issues

2. 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.
3. The Commonwealth has in the past had accommodation guidelines endorsed by the Government in June 1985 and issued by the Department of Local Government and Administrative Services (DOLGAS) in July 1986. These guidelines were issued when DOLGAS and the Department of Housing and Construction (DHC) had key roles in the provision of office accommodation. Since that time both these Departments have ceased to exist and Commonwealth agencies have been required to determine standards appropriate to their functional activity. These standards should reflect needs for office environments that meet occupational safety and health requirements eg. ergonomic desks and chairs and standard building code requirements such as fire safety.
4. Comparisons were sought from the Bureau's property lease managers KFPW and we have been assured the proposed space allowances reflect contemporary public sector allocations.
5. Equipment and storage requirements for all parts of the Bureau's Head Office and the Victoria Regional Office have been extensively researched and the Bureau believes that those identified for APS 1-6 employees can be efficiently and ergonomically accommodated within the above space allocations.
6. As outlined in paragraphs 26 and 27 and Appendix C of the Bureau's submission, interior designers are being employed to ensure best use is made of the allocated space and that accessibility, acoustic privacy and other desirable qualities of the fit-out design are maximised within resource provisions.
7. Space considerations will be taken into account in the detailed design of the 700 Collins Street fit-out as well as in replacement plans for current equipment. Strategies in place include moving to progressively greater use of flat computer screens (on current estimates, these are expected to extend to 50% of workpoints by April 2004 and throughout the organisation by mid 2005), common shared printer and scanner facilities located in convenient locations on each floor, and where multiple screens are required by individual employees as a consequence of their role, progressive replacement with screens which are designed to facilitate efficient space usage.
8. Storage is addressed in paragraphs 103 to 106 of the Bureau's submission. A consultant is being employed to advise the Bureau on the large quantities of material currently stored on site, and to assist the Bureau in reviewing its current storage practices and procedures. Changes in technology have significantly reduced the need for personal storage in some cases. For example, in personnel environments large

amounts of storage were required for Personnel Management Manuals (approx. one linear metre) but this material is now available on CD as well as stored on the server obviating the need for manuals to be sited next to staff. Similarly, most software packages now have online help facilities thus reducing the need for all users to have printed manuals.

9. Strategies that may ultimately be employed with regard to storage include:

- ☞ Standardisation of personal library space & promotion of the Library alternative
- ☞ Standardisation of personal item storage space
- ☞ Review of operational requirements
- ☞ Rationalisation of personal compared with shared storage (e.g. centralisation of computer manuals software copies to central repository)
- ☞ Greater use of electronic storage,
- ☞ Greater use of on-line reference documents
- ☞ Greater use of off-site storage
- ☞ Review of current policies covering on-site retention of official Bureau files
- ☞ Review and rationalisation of transient storage required for equipment repairs and calibration.