



Department of the Environment and Heritage

Office of the Secretary

Senator Lyn Allison
Senator for Victoria
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Allison

I refer to your questions during the recent Senate Estimates hearing regarding the Department's energy performance. You indicated that a recent ANAO audit had shown the Department as being the second worst performing Department with only a 9.4% reduction in energy consumption over the four year survey period.

I should point out that of the ten Departments audited by the ANAO for the purpose of the *Energy Efficiency in Commonwealth Operations – Follow-up Audit*, my Department had the best result and maintained the lowest use of tenant light and power. Our current usage is 5648mj/pp/annum which is 44% below the target of 10,000mj/pp/annum. The audit covered the Canberra based elements of the Department.

In comparison to the other agencies in the survey, the reduction of 9.4% in energy use does not indicate that the Department has not met the Commonwealth energy intensity targets but rather the difficulty of making further significant gains over our existing low levels of energy use.

The Department has taken a number of measures in support of the Government's policy on improving energy use in Commonwealth operations including having an Environmental Management System certified to the ISO 14001 standard and a Greenhouse Challenge Agreement. The Department was awarded the "Best Performance in Office Tenant Light and Power" category in 2000 by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources and the Australian Greenhouse Office in recognition of our ability to reduce energy intensity in Commonwealth office space. At that time it was recognised the Department had already achieved well below 2002-03 energy efficiency targets set by the Commonwealth.

In addition to the areas covered by the ANAO audit, you may be interested in the energy performance of our major operational units – the Australian Antarctic Division, the National Parks and the Bureau of Meteorology. These units all run energy intensive operations and are actively exploring opportunities to reduce consumption.



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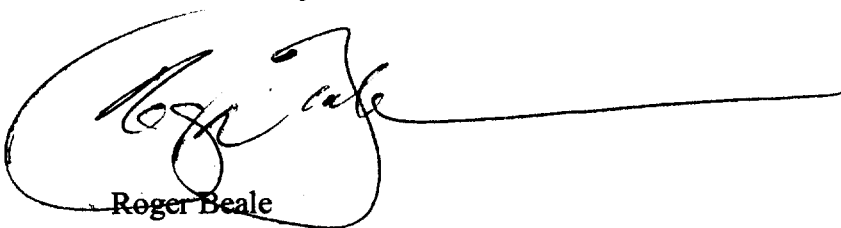
The Australian Antarctic Division provides transport and logistic support to the Australian Antarctic Research Program, maintains four permanent research stations and conducts scientific research programs both on land and in the southern ocean. The Division reduced its energy consumption by 3.2% in 2001-02 compared with the previous financial year. The Division has just unveiled the latest wind turbine at Mawson Station. Following trialling it is expected that the turbine could ultimately replace most of the diesel energy requirements at Mawson Station. Following assessment of the impact at Mawson the technology may have the potential for broader application in Antarctica.

The Director of National Parks manages 21 reserves (covering national parks, marine parks and botanic gardens) including areas located on external island territories and within Australian waters. The Parks reduced energy consumption by 1.4% in 2001-02 compared with the previous financial year. Many of the parks are heavily dependent on electricity produced through diesel generators. The Parks are actively seeking ways to introduce more greenhouse efficient and cost effective supply of electricity, and currently have ongoing discussions with the Northern Territory Government addressing in particular Uluru - Kata Tjuta National Park and the Mutitjulu community.

The Bureau of Meteorology provides meteorological, hydrological and oceanographic services through monitoring and research activity. It operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year in broadly dispersed locations across Australia. Overall the Bureau's consumption reduced by 29.1% in 2001-02 compared with the previous financial year (noting there were some anomalies in reporting in the previous year which may have resulted in the energy consumption being overstated). The Bureau is actively looking at strategies to reduce consumption including installation of geothermal technology at newly constructed field sites

I hope the above information clarifies the Department's energy efficiency performance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Beale', is written over a large, light-colored oval. A long horizontal line extends from the right side of the signature across the page.

Roger Beale
Secretary

7
March 2003