

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Parliament House Portfolio**

**Joint House Department**

Additional Estimates, Monday 10 February 2003

**Question:** P3  
**Outcome:** GEN  
**Topic:** Blinds in Parliament House  
**Hansard Page:** 17

**Senator Faulkner asked:**

‘How much has been spent on the problems with the blinds in Parliament House?’

**Answer:**

There are over 1,800 cedar blinds at Parliament House. These blinds were installed under a Parliament House Construction Authority (PHCA) contract, dated 10 August 1987, for the amount of \$817,000.

Prior to the completion of the contract, failures of the raising and tilting mechanisms were reported. PHCA and the contractor had a lengthy dispute over responsibilities for these failures.

In 1991, the Joint House Department (JHD) let a contract for \$372,000 for rectification of faults and modification of mechanisms on all blinds. Variations were made to the contract to include the purchase of spare blinds and materials. With supervision, the project cost was \$411,705.50. The work was completed using additional funds provided by the Department of Finance related to its responsibilities associated with the winding up of PHCA.

The work completed in this project included:

- Replacement of breaking and holding mechanism to enable the blind to be raised safely.
- Replacement of tilt adjustment gears.
- Modification to cord runners to prevent fraying and breaking of cords.
- Installation of sacrificial links so that the mechanisms were protected from heavy operator induced forces.

At the completion of the work, blind failures had been substantially reduced but not eliminated.

In 1995, JHD commenced a prototype project to completely refurbish a sample of blinds. By 1998, a total of 64 blinds had been completely refurbished with new mechanisms and strengthened with steel support cords. The cost of this project was \$63,525. These 64 blinds have been tested in operation for four years and no failures have been recorded.

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Total costs to date have been:

		\$
1987	Original purchase/installation	817,000.00
1991	Rectification Project	411,705.50
1995	JHD Prototype Project	<u>63,525.00</u>
		1,292,230.50

Future plans identify that all cedar blinds will be refurbished as per the successful prototypes. The potential cost of this project is \$1,800,000. The project will be completed over a number of years and will be scheduled to coincide with end-of-life-cycle replacements of the blinds.