



**Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee—
Additional Estimates Feb 2008**

Parliament Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Answers to Questions on Notice

**Topic: Original/future intentions regarding grassed areas around
Parliament House**

Question P13, F&PA 33

Senator BOB BROWN—...The woodlands on top of Capital Hill were removed to build this great building and the seed bank was kept. The intention was to put them back into what are now the grassed areas...because we are moving into not a period of drought but prolonged new weather due to climate change, which is drier—whether that option might not be looked at again amongst the couch grass and other options that are being investigated to see whether native grassland and bushland is not an option for all those green areas we see around Parliament House, as was originally intended.

The PRESIDENT—I have no idea what the original intention was. I guess that we can find out whether what you are proposing to us was indeed the case and, again, it can be an item for discussion between me and the Speaker.

Answer

1 DPS has consulted with the original landscape architects, the Australian National Botanical Gardens (**ANBG**) and the Yarralumla Nursery to identify any recollection of a seed bank and the purpose of such a collection for the Parliament House landscape.

2 The original landscape architects are not aware of a seed bank being taken from Capital Hill before construction started on Parliament House. They have advised that the endangered Button Wrinklewort, *Rutidosia leptorhynchoides*, was collected and propagated by ANBG and this plant was reintroduced back to the site in 1994.

3 Their advice on the original design intent identifies that the areas surrounding the building were to be of a high quality, visually consistent, low growing, easily maintainable, high wearing ground cover. In their opinion, grass satisfied these requirements.

4 They have noted that the peripheral areas away from the building, such as outside of Parliament Drive, were intended to replicate a modified ACT woodland/forest environment and would also include some additional species.

5 The Curator of the Living Collections at ANBG has advised that they are not aware of a seed bank being taken for Capital Hill and the only plant that was endangered on Capital Hill was the Button Wrinklewort as referred to above. ANBG continues to maintain a seed bank and living collection of this plant.

6 The Yarralumla Nursery (the local ACT Government nursery that supplied the bulk of the plants to Parliament House) have advised that they do not know of a seed bank that was collected for Parliament House, however Capital Hill was one of their regular seed collecting sites before construction of Parliament House commenced. Certain plant species supplied to Parliament House (especially eucalypts) would have most likely been grown from seed collected from Capital Hill.

