

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Parliament Portfolio

Joint House Department

Budget Estimates, Monday 26 May 2003

Question: P1
Outcome: GEN
Topic: Drop in visitor numbers to Parliament House
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Senator Faulkner asked:

'Is someone from the parliamentary departments able to nail down this drop-off in visitor numbers in more detail?'

Mr Bolton replied:

'... We can tell you, virtually on a weekly basis, how many visitors we have had through the door over previous years as opposed to the last year.'

Answer:

1. Visitor Trends since the Opening of Parliament House

See attached spreadsheet (Attachment A)

2. Visitor Numbers to National Attractions for 2003

The table below compares visitor numbers to the major national attractions in Canberra from March through May 2003, in comparison with the corresponding figures from 2002.

	March	% on 2002	April	% on 2002	May	% on 2002
Parliament House	74219	-15%	62933	-28%	62584	-22.60%
Australian War Memorial	52880	-23%	93720	-17%	45305	-29%
National Archives of Australia	3305	32.40%	4309	6.10%	4231	10.30%
National Gallery of Australia	35231	5%	42609	-32%	Not Available	
National Library of Australia	38968	0.50%	44222	-9.50%	47695	-4.50%
National Museum of Australia	11051	-7%	40245	-28%	32610	-18%
Old Parliament House	11091	-7%	14919	18%	13231	-16%
Questacon	18704	-1.32%	31998	-3.80%	18715	-7.98%
Screensound	5513	-17.50%	8579	15%	8189	7.80%

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3. Factors Affecting Tourism in Canberra

In 2003, there have been a number of factors that have influenced visitor numbers.

- **Impact of changed security arrangements at Parliament House.**

The security barriers were placed around Parliament House on 28 March 2003. Visitor numbers for Parliament House for April 2003 show a decrease of -28% from 2002. However, data provided by other tourist destinations in the ACT also indicates a comparable downturn in tourist activity in April. In the above table, note the figures for the National Museum of Australia (-28%) and the National Gallery of Australia (-32%). It therefore appears that although the changed security measures at Parliament House have had an impact on visitor numbers for the month of April, trends ACT-wide indicate a general downturn in visitor numbers. The barriers have since been rearranged to improve visitor access.

- **Impact of January 2003 Bushfires**

The impact of these fires reduced visitor numbers to Canberra in the early months of 2003.

- **Impact of SARS on Tourism**

The Australian Tourism Export Council issued a bulletin in May, giving details of the impact of SARS and the war in Iraq on inbound tourism numbers. Indications are that nearly 50% of businesses in the inbound market experienced a fall in revenue, with two-thirds of those businesses experiencing a drop in revenue of over 10%.

- **International Tourist trends**

In May 2003, the Canberra Tourism and Events Corporation released figures indicating that ACT international visitor numbers have been trending downwards—from 230,033 in 2000, 214,034 in 2001, to 195,011 in 2002.

- **Impact of September 11, 2001**

Nationally, the Bureau of Tourism Research has reported an 18% decline in the number of nights spent in Australia by holiday visitors since the events of September 11, 2001.

Visitor Trends Since the Opening of Parliament House

	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	% change by month between 2001-02 & 2002-03
July	191570	122432	101769	110535	102656	115225	88991	106569	98131	93521	112030	94020	92061	100919	99963	-0.95
Aug	152807	110648	96148	101054	91238	110907	108758	105867	96950	92711	92693	102157	92178	104859	99669	-4.95
Sep	159702	124226	138306	132160	122371	155826	108915	114036	114693	124575	100637	132426	83245	121822	110564	-9.24
Oct	177836	130417	120749	143081	146094	152865	138560	124282	132805	150938	109210	115689	99265	105824	111089	4.98
Nov	121935	89241	91794	110854	109934	114290	101869	95048	92350	91855	94902	87140	93750	85354	85868	0.6
Dec	121286	96123	102149	105228	109678	114639	94992	84169	93676	85298	98815	87734	89034	92507	93850	1.45
Jan	189543	146547	139270	149313	149052	123835	117954	107210	104241	103011	94901	92130	100481	96513	78050	-19.13
Feb	74768	64564	78165	82328	72246	111106	97172	81358	80792	68545	72304	72172	64800	80094	61335	-23.42
Mar	148622	77982	106342	97932	89360	122935	102554	88246	98014	108795	86956	80092	83759	87491	74219	-15.17
April	168340	129313	118306	136025	132169	145270	117892	114732	89279	101621	94261	107901	106256	87745	62933	-28.28
May	117533	98422	96136	105616	103853	105720	92622	119276	82274	85683	82664	79678	86038	80805	62584	-22.55
June	107559	84117	88424	86944	84176	86498	101642	90252	83320	85381	89114	88347	88738	87935		
Total	1731501	1274032	1277558	1361070	1312827	1459116	1271921	1231045	1166525	1191934	1128487	1139486	1079605	1131868	940124	18697099