

## Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee —Budget Estimates May 2009

### Answers to Questions on Notice

### Parliamentary Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary Services

Topic: Couch grass analysis

#### Question P8, Hansard reference F&PA 33

**Senator BERNARDI**—Has the department done a cost-benefit analysis of retaining the existing lawn versus the cost of putting in the new grass coupled with the water savings?

...

**Mr Kenny**—We have analysed the cost in terms of dollars and the cost in terms of the amount of water that the current environment needs and that is based on how much has been used in the last couple of years because how much water it needs depends on the weather. So we have done that analysis as well.

**Senator BERNARDI**—Would you be able to provide that to us please.

#### Answer

1 The review of the Parliament House landscape identified that 8.3 hectares of cool-season grass could be converted to couch grass. It is estimated that this could provide annual water savings of 36,500 kilolitres per annum when compared to irrigating cool-season grasses. At the current water cost of \$3.70 per kilolitre, this would equate to approximately \$135,000 per annum.

2 The cost to convert 8.3 hectares from cool-season grass to couch grass would be in the order of \$830,000 and be spread over several years using various forms of turf laying.

3 Prior to the drought, DPS (and previously the Joint House Department) would routinely replace approximately 1 hectare of cool-season grass each year, primarily to eradicate a weed known as winter grass. The cost of converting to couch grass is similar to the cost of replacing the cool-season grass. Winter grass can be more easily removed from couch grass than from cool-season grass.