



Report

Parliament House Visitor Study

2011



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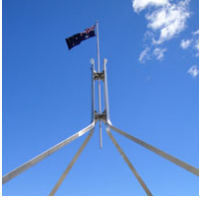
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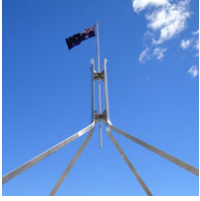
Department of Parliamentary Services

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Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2. BACKGROUND TO THIS STUDY	8
3. DISCUSSION	10
4. VISITOR SURVEY FINDINGS	14
1. Profile of visitors	14
2. Character of a visit	16
3. Perceptions of the visiting experience	27
4. Value and Importance	34
5. Interpretive Themes	39
6. Other Canberra Attractions	41
5. SITE OBSERVATIONS	43
6. TEACHER SURVEY FINDINGS	51
APPENDIX	68



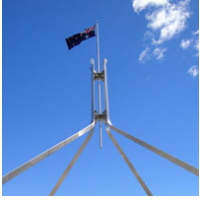
1. Executive Summary

The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) commissioned this study to support forward planning that will ensure that Visitor Services continues to meet the needs of visitors effectively.

The study collected data from visitor surveys (200 onsite and 25 online), a teacher survey (35 online) and visitor observation/tracking.

Key findings

- A quarter (27%) of visitors were from overseas and are likely to have low levels of knowledge about Australian Parliament.
- Half (55%) the visitors had been to Parliament House before.
- The reasons for visiting fall into three main types which offer different kinds of visitor experience.
 - **The experience of being there** – the drawcards are the building itself, its iconic status, the architecture and art works.
 - **The wish to learn about a topic** – the drawcards are information about the political process; the experience of Question Time and seeing a specific display.
 - **The social experience of being with others** – the drawcards are spending time with family/friends; showing others around; going to the café.
- The most popular (76-78%) activities at Parliament House were visits to the two Chambers, clearly these spaces are at the heart of the meaning of the place. The shop is located close to the exit which makes it very easy for most (72%) visitors to enter and browse.
- The roof of Parliament House is a key feature and allows visitors to appreciate the pivotal location of the building in the surrounding landscape, so it has strong appeal to visitors. Although access is only by lift, two-thirds (65%) of visitors in the sample went to the roof.
- A quarter (28%) said they had joined a Guided Tour. It is interesting to see that repeat visitors were just as likely as first time visitors to join a Guided Tour. People who used a map/brochure were twice as likely as



others to join a Guided Tour. This may be because they received the map/brochure from a Visitor Services officer who also told them about the Tours.

- Only one-fifth (22%) had visited the Theatrette and many people commented that they hadn't seen it in the course of their visit.
- 96% said they preferred to wander and discover for themselves, while 77% said they like to have tour guides show them around.
- 75% said that maps and floorplans are essential, only 49% received a floorplan during their visit.
- On the overall rating score, nearly half (47%) gave the highest score of 5, and 94% gave a combined 4+5 score. This compares very favourably with major Australian museums and galleries.
- The survey gauged visitor perceptions of important events at Parliament House. The findings indicate that many people arrive at Parliament House with little knowledge of specific events that have occurred here. Two key events were recalled most often: the key political events of 2010, and the 2008 Apology.
- Strong feelings of pride and gratitude as well as admiration for beauty and quality of workmanship were expressed. For many people, their visit to Parliament House evoked feelings that rose above partisan politics.
- There was considerable interest in thematic tours/interpretive materials, such as: history, Indigenous, Artist, Migrant, Children's Trail.
- Detailed positive comments and suggested improvements are presented in Section 4 of the report.
- The tracking study notes that:
 - The first personal contact at a venue is an important touch point in the visitor experience. DPS should consider stationing a Visitor Services officer on the forecourt to 'meet and greet' visitors. This would allow Security personnel to focus on security issues.

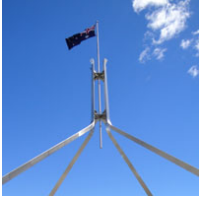


Alternatively, the role of the Security officer in the Forecourt could formally acknowledge the 'meet and greet' role.

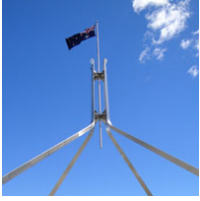
- The Visitor Guide could be enhanced by including suggestions for a self-guided tour that covers the main highlights of the building.
- Section 5 outlines some suggested improvements to the floorplan.
- The Teacher Survey included teachers of primary and high school classes from across Australia, with a preponderance from NSW.
- Most teachers (97%) said they received accurate information and that the booking process met their requirements.
- There was considerable interest in pre-visit resources, especially printed resources that include visual elements and activities, and DVDs.
- Most teachers visited Parliament House in order to give students the living experience of how the Australian Parliament works and to link the visit with specific curriculum studies.
- At Parliament House, most participants (79%) participated in the parliamentary role-play and two-thirds (64/67%) attended the hospitality area and looked at art works.
- It is encouraging to see that 85% of the sample said the visit met all their expectations and that 30% of teachers reported pleasant surprises.
- The Australian War Memorial was the most widely visited (87%) attraction, followed by the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (75%) and Questacon (69%).
- Detailed positive comments and suggested improvements are presented in Section 6 of the report.

This Study presents the following implications for consideration.

- To cater for the range of visiting styles, Parliament House should review the interpretive materials it offers for self-directed 'wanderers'. Guided tours should be reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of different types of visitors.



- New interpretive materials should align with the emotions of pride and gratitude as well as an appreciation for beauty and the strengths of Australian society.
- It is likely that The Apology could bear the weight of a strong interpretive presentation at Parliament House. A reproduction of the calligraphy could be a meaningful addition to the shop.
- DPS should ensure that floorplans and self-guide brochures are on visible display in the foyer to facilitate self-service.
- A signage review should examine the visibility and prominence of directional signage inside and outside the building.
- DPS should consider locating Visitor Services staff outside the security entrance so that the first point of contact for visitors has the specific role to greet and assist them.
- DPS should consider developing interpretive material on a range of themes. Each guide should cover core material along with an additional focus on thematic material.



2. Background to this study

The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) is committed to ensuring that:

(a) Visitor Services at Parliament House are dynamic in meeting the needs, expectations and evolving profile of visitors and stakeholders now and into the future; and

(b) resources allocated to the Visitor Services are used effectively to offer a range of services.

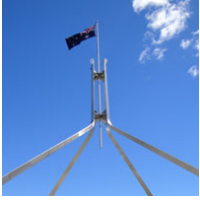
This visitor study will help DPS to achieve these goals by providing up-to-date and relevant information about the visitor experience.

Research Method

We carried out four strands of data collection.

1. Onsite interviews with a sample of 200 visitors. On a base of 200, reported findings are accurate to within approximately +/-6%.
2. Online survey of 25 visitors. We aimed to survey 50 people and collected 150 email addresses, however the response rate was lower than we expected.
3. Site visit including observation and 'mystery shopping'. We carried out two days of observation that involved participation in five tours, tracking five visitor groups and observation at three points: Forecourt, Foyer and First Floor.
4. Online survey of school visitors. We aimed for a sample of 50 and achieved 35. The response rate was reduced by the timing of the survey which did not go into field until the last days of the 2010 school year.

Questionnaires were developed in association with DPS and copies are in the Appendix.



Interviewing was carried out by fully trained and experienced market research interviewers.

About this report

Some percentages have been rounded off. When this occurs, totals may be a little more or a little less than 100.

Percentages add to more than 100 when multiple responses are possible. When the term 'significant' is used in this report, it refers to a statistically significant difference between two percentages.





3. Discussion

3.1 Reasons to visit

The reasons for visiting fell into three main categories which relate to different kinds of visitor experience.

- **The experience of being there** – the drawcards are the building itself, its iconic status, the architecture and art works.
- **The wish to learn about a topic** – the drawcards are information about the political process; the experience of Question Time and seeing a specific display.
- **The social experience of being with others** – the drawcards are spending time with family/friends; showing others around; going to the café.

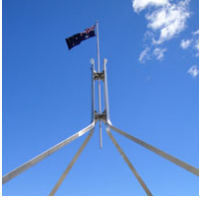
It is clear that the iconic status of Parliament House and its architecture were the dominant reasons for visiting. For most visitors the building fulfilled their high expectations.

When asked to nominate the most important things they experienced at Parliament House, many visitors referred to emotional qualities of pride and gratitude as well as admiration for beauty and quality of workmanship.

Implication

A review of Visitor Services should ensure that these different kinds of needs are supported by an appropriate array of services.

New interpretive materials should align with the emotions of pride and gratitude as well as an appreciation for beauty and the strengths of Australian society.



3.2 Guided tours and self-guided exploration

Nearly all visitors agreed that they were happy to wander and discover things for themselves at Parliament House and a similar proportion said they preferred to soak in the atmosphere.

Three-quarters said that maps and floorplans are essential for them, and a similar proportion said they liked to have guides to show them around.

Implication

To cater for the range of visiting styles, Parliament House should review the interpretive materials it offers for self-directed 'wanderers'. Guided tours should be reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of different types of visitors.

3.3 Important events

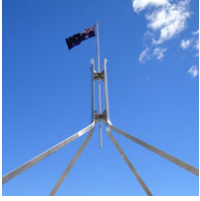
The survey gauged visitor perceptions of important events at Parliament House. The findings indicate that many people arrive at Parliament House with little knowledge of specific events that have occurred here. They expect that their visit will inform them about important events.

Two key events were recalled most often: the key political events of 2010, and the 2008 Apology.

Those who remember key events expect that these events will be acknowledged in some way during their visit. For example, the prominent painting of Queen Elizabeth in the Wattle Dress is a reminder of her constitutional and ceremonial role. Similarly, The Apology is acknowledged by a small display that includes a fine calligraphy of the speech. In observation, we noted that this display was overlooked by most visitors.

Implication

It is likely that The Apology could bear the weight of a strong interpretive presentation at Parliament House.



A reproduction of the calligraphy could be a meaningful addition to the shop.

3.4 Wayfinding

Visitors reported that they did not find places such as access to the roof and the Magna Carta exhibition.

Three-quarters (75%) said that maps and floorplans were essential but only 49% received a floorplan during their visit.

We observed that a high proportion of visitors did not interact with staff in the foyer and therefore did not get interpretive materials.

Implication

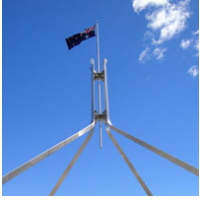
DPS should ensure that floorplans and self-guide brochures are on visible display in the foyer to facilitate self-service.

DPS should develop a range of interpretive guides that support self-directed exploration.

The body of this report suggests specific improvements to the current floorplan.

A signage review should examine the visibility and prominence of directional signage inside and outside the building.

DPS should consider locating Visitor Services staff outside the security entrance so that the first point of contact for visitors has the specific role to greet and assist them.



3.5 Thematic guides/tours

Visitors were receptive to a variety of thematic guides/tours. A general historical perspective had the widest appeal, along with an Indigenous perspective, an Artist's perspective, and a Children's Trail.

Implication

DPS should consider developing a range of self-guided tour brochures on a range of themes. Each guide should cover core material along with an additional focus on thematic material.



4. Visitor survey findings

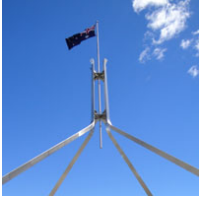
This section reports the findings from the exit survey and the online survey of general visitors.

1. Profile of visitors

The following table summarises the demographic profile of visitors.

Table 1. Demographic profile

Residence	Onsite (n=200)	Online (n=25)
Local	12%	50%
Australia	61%	46%
Overseas	27%	4%
Age		
Under 35	35%	33%
35-54	38%	25%
55+	27%	42%
Gender		
Female	42%	50%
Male	59%	50%
Occupation		
Skilled/Trade/Unskilled	9%	8%
Clerical/Admin/Sales	12%	4%
Professional	45%	46%
Looking for work	1%	0%
Home duties	3%	13%
Student	16%	29%
Retired	15%	0%
Education		
Primary/Secondary	22%	21%
TAFE/CIT	16%	8%
UNI - undergrad	38%	29%
UNI - postgrad	25%	42%



Comments

Data for the online survey should be treated with caution due to the small sample size. The following comments relate to the onsite survey.

Residence

Most visitors (61%) were non-local Australians. It is likely that the proportion of overseas visitors is under-represented because only people with good English language skills participated in the survey.

Age

Visitors represented a spread of age groups. The proportion of older (55+ years) visitors was lower than is typical for major Australian museums and galleries.

Gender

The gender profile included a high proportion of men (59%). Major Australian museums and galleries typically attract a higher proportion of women than men.

Occupation

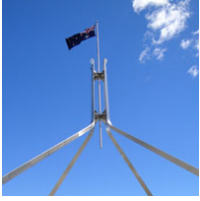
A broad range of occupational types were present, however there were few unemployed or engaged in home duties.

Education

The education profile is similar to visitor profiles for major Australian museums and galleries.

Comment

Overseas visitors comprise a high proportion of visitors. They will benefit from interpretive materials that include basic information with little assumed knowledge.



2. Character of a visit

This section describes key characteristics of a visit: repeat visits, length of visit, visit companions, reasons for visiting, things seen/done.

Data refers to the onsite survey. Where online survey data is reported, it is identified separately.

2.1 Repeat visits

Across the period, about half (55%) of visitors were making their first visit to Parliament House, while 45% were repeat visitors. The following differences were evident in key sub-groups.

- 75% of Canberra visitors were repeat visitors
- 50% of other Australian visitors were repeat visitors
- 20% of overseas visitors were repeat visitors

Most repeat visitors had visited Parliament House only a few times in the previous five years. Canberra residents were more likely to have visited 4+ times.

Table 2. Previous visits

	n=90
Once	36%
Twice	23%
Three times	18%
Four + times	23%

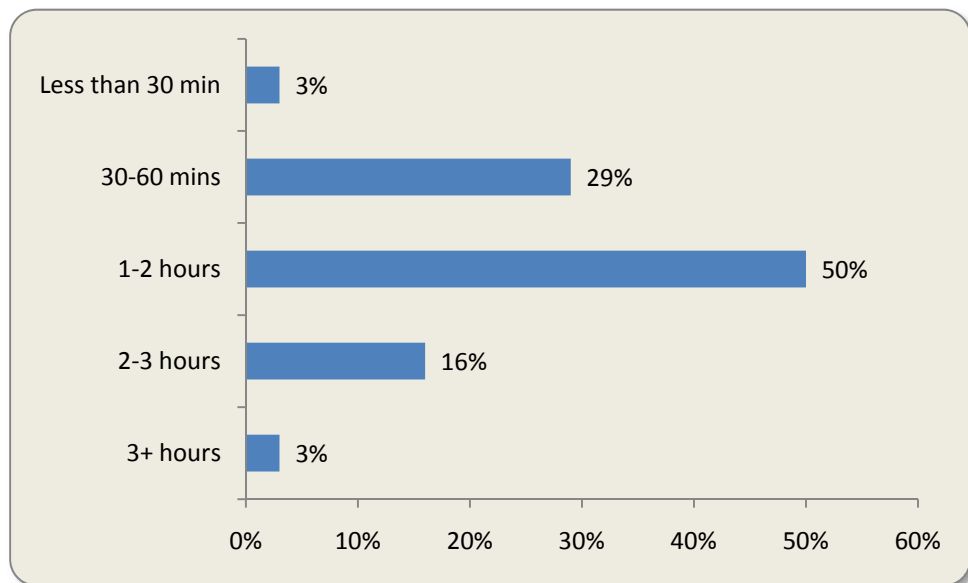
Online survey respondents were more likely to be repeat visitors (65%) which is consistent with the high proportion of Canberra locals in the sample.



2.2 Length of visit

Visitors were asked how long they stayed at Parliament House. The following graph summarises the data.

Fig 1. Length of visit



Base = 200

Half (50%) the visitors stayed 1-2 hours, while 29% made shorter visits of 30-60 minutes and 16% stayed 2-3 hours.

It was interesting to note that this pattern was the same for first time visitors and repeat visitors. People over 55 years and people who used the map/brochure were more likely to stay 2-3 hours.

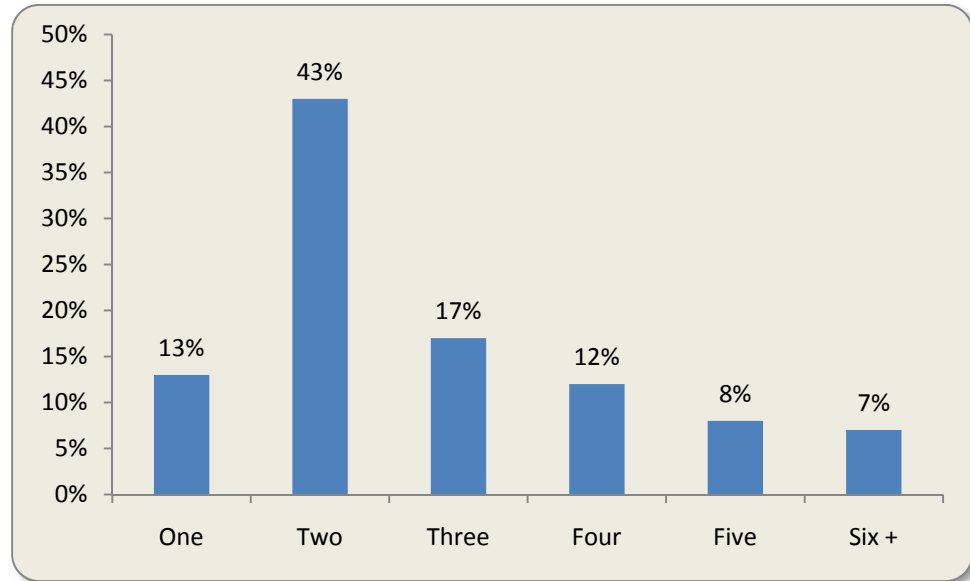
Online survey respondents were slightly more likely to make longer visits of 2-3 hours.



2.3 Visit companions

The following graph shows the size of visiting groups.

Fig 2. Size of visiting group



Base = 200

It is clear that the couple/pair was the most common visiting group, comprising 43% of visitors in our survey. Note that our survey did not include school groups, and it is likely that tour groups are under-represented in the sample.

One-fifth (18%) of visitors had children under 12 years with them.

Lone visitors were more likely to:

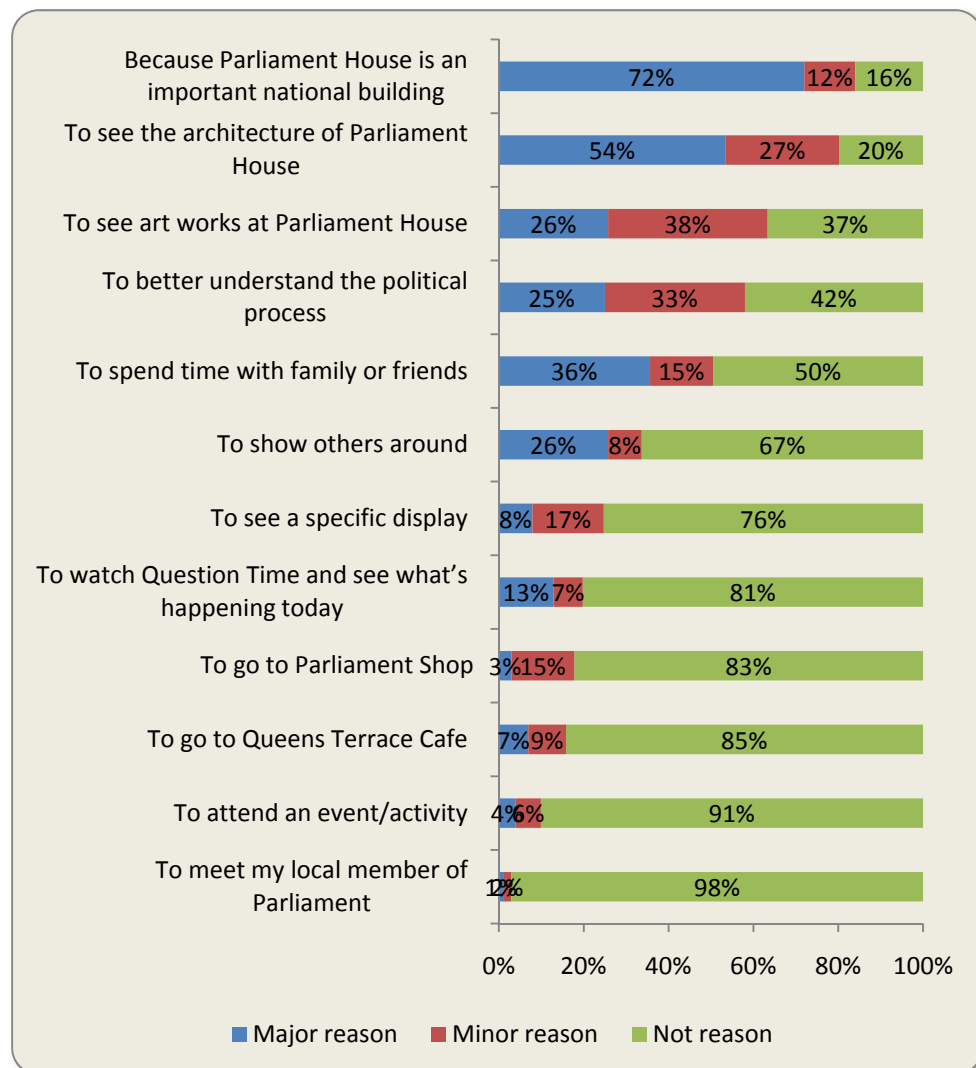
- Be first time visitors
- Be under 35 years
- Visit when Parliament was sitting.



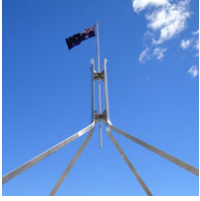
2.4 Reasons for visiting

Survey participants were asked whether 12 factors were contributing reasons for their visit. They were asked whether each one was a 'major' reason, a 'minor' reason or not a reason for their visit. The following graph summarises the findings.

Fig 3. Reasons for visiting Parliament House



Base = 200



The reasons for visiting fall into three main types which offer different kinds of visitor experience.

- **The experience of being there** – the drawcards are the building itself, its iconic status, the architecture and art works.
- **The wish to learn about a topic** – the drawcards are information about the political process; the experience of Question Time and seeing a specific display.
- **The social experience of being with others** – the drawcards are spending time with family/friends; showing others around; going to the café.

It is clear that the iconic status of Parliament House and its architecture were the dominant reasons for visiting.

These visitors were more likely to be making their first visit, more likely to come from overseas, more likely to use the map/brochure and more likely to come when Parliament was not sitting.

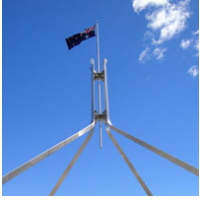
Those who came to see Question Time were more likely to be Australians (non-Canberra) making a repeat visit.

Those seeking to better understand the political process were more likely to be first time visitors from Australia (non-Canberra) and Overseas.

Those who wanted to spend time with family and friends, and those who were showing others around, were more likely to be repeat visitors from Canberra.

Apart from the broad desire to see the place as a whole, the following factors gave Parliament House niche appeal to smaller numbers of visitors.

- To meet my local member of Parliament
- To attend an event/activity
- To go to Queens Terrace Cafe
- To go to Parliament Shop
- To watch Question Time and see what's happening today



- To see a specific display

The pattern of responses was similar for people who completed the online survey.

Comment

Visitors seek three kinds of experience at Parliament House:

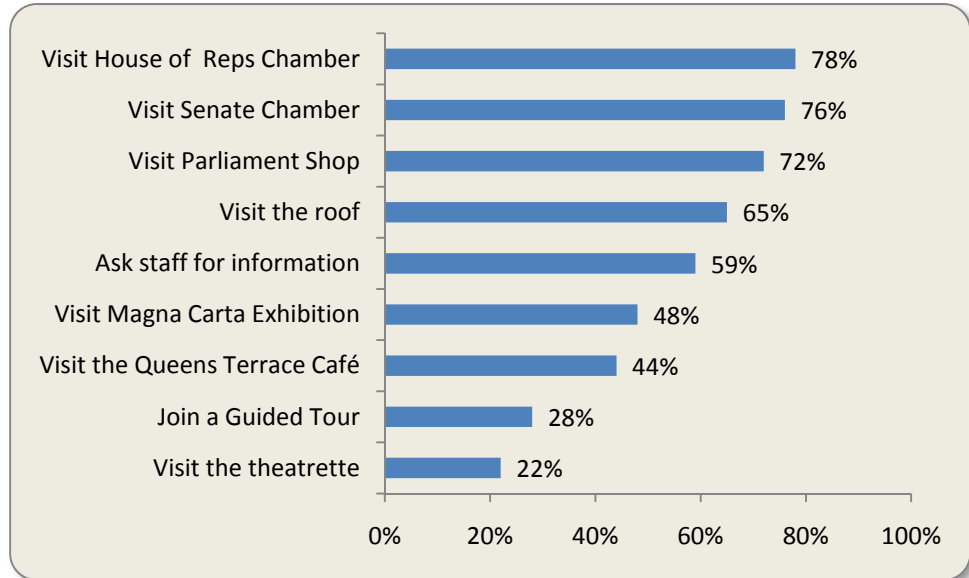
- The experience of being there
- The wish to learn about a topic
- The social experience of being with others.

2.5 Things done at Parliament House

Visitors were asked whether or not they did nine things during their visit. The following graph shows the extent to which these things were done.



Fig 4. Things done at Parliament House

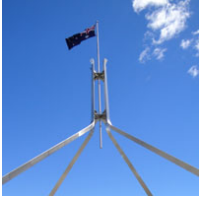


Base =200

It is not surprising to see that the most popular (76-78%) activities were visits to the two Chambers, because these spaces are at the heart of the meaning of the place. The shop is located close to the exit which makes it very easy for most (72%) visitors to enter and browse.

The roof of Parliament House is a key feature and allows visitors to appreciate the pivotal location of the building in the surrounding landscape, so it has strong appeal to visitors. Although access is only by lift, two-thirds (65%) of visitors in the sample went to the roof.

More than half (59%) reported that they asked staff for information during their visit. In our observation, we noted that there were many conversations with security staff and staff at the upstairs cloak desk. We saw that many visitors passed through the Main Hall without approaching the Information Desk or speaking with a 'meet and greet' staffer. It is likely that a high proportion of interaction with staff happens with security personnel.



Nearly half (48%) said they visited the Magna Carta exhibition. However several people indicated to the interviewer that they didn't know the exhibition was there. One respondent said they planned to go back into Parliament House after the interview in order to see the exhibition.

We couldn't find the Magna Carta exhibition and didn't see the theatre - so we are going back in. So, more signs please.

Nearly half (44%) said they had visited the Queens Terrace Café.

A quarter (28%) said they had joined a Guided Tour. It is interesting to see that repeat visitors were just as likely as first time visitors to join a Guided Tour. People who used a map/brochure were twice as likely as others to join a Guided Tour. This may be because they received the map/brochure from a Visitor Services officer who also told them about the Tours.

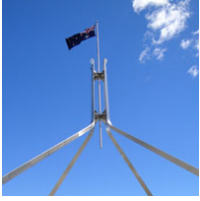
Only one-fifth (22%) had visited the Theatrette and many people commented that they hadn't seen it in the course of their visit.

The pattern of responses was similar for people who completed the online survey, except that they were more likely to mention the House of Representatives Chamber and less likely to report visiting the Senate Chamber. It may be that memories of the two chambers blurred over time.

Implications

In addition to Visitor Services staff, security personnel play an important role in ensuring that visitors' needs are met.

Contact with Visitor Services staff is a strong encouragement for visitors to join Guided Tours.



2.6 Use of map/guide book

Only 49% of visitors used the Parliament House map or brochure, while 5% used a published guide. Half (50%) used no interpretive guides or maps. The use of maps/brochures was slightly higher for first time visitors, but still 43% of them did not use a map/brochure.

In comments, a considerable number of survey respondents indicated that they would have used a map/brochure if they had known they were available. Some visitors suggested that there should be a prominent brochure stand at the entrance where they could get interpretive materials. Some verbatim comments were:

They should have maps to show where we are - we didn't find the visitors map until we came out. They need to be placed near the entrance. We couldn't find the lift to the roof. We went in a lift but not the right one.

There should be a stand with some brochures nearer the security entrance. We didn't realise we could get a map.

We didn't get the visitors map as it wasn't obvious where from.

There should be brochures as soon as we walk in telling us about tours and where we should start.

In observation, we noted that 'meet and greet' guides in the main hall were not always on the floor, and even when they were present, they were not able to make contact with many visitors. We observed many visitors who entered the Hall took time to pause to take their bearings. They often took photos and explored the area before going up one of the staircases.

Implication

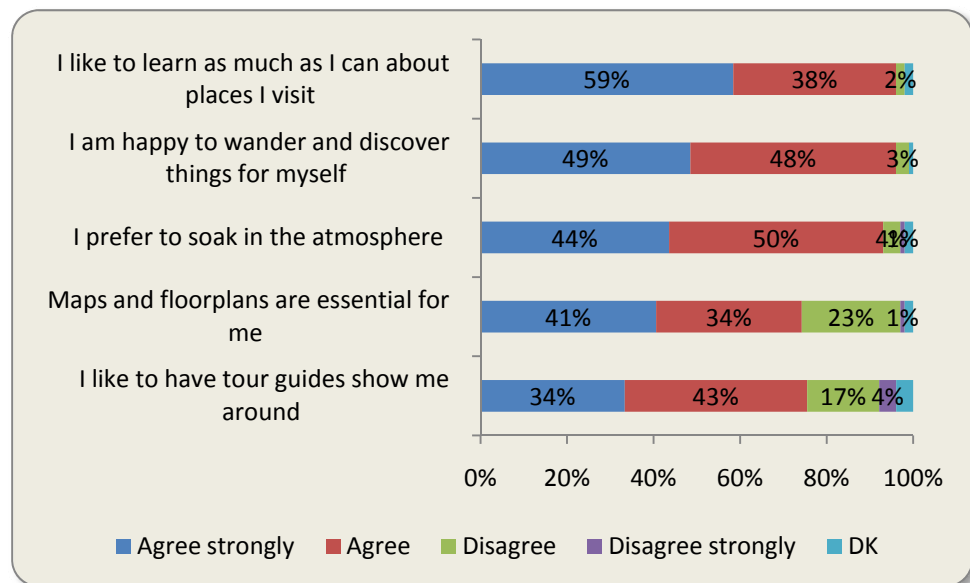
Many visitors who would benefit from having a map/brochure did not get one at the beginning of their visit.



2.7 Preferred visiting style

Visitors were asked to show their agreement with five statements about preferred ways to visit Parliament House. The statements were not mutually exclusive and visitors could agree with several statements. The following graph shows the responses.

Fig 5. Preferred visiting style



Base = 200

Most people (97% agreed + agreed strongly) said that they liked to learn as much as they can about the places they visit. This should not be taken literally, but as a strong indication that visits to places like Parliament House are seen as learning experiences. First time visitors were more inclined to 'agree strongly' with the statement. This can be seen as consistent with the stronger 'learning gradient' of first time visitors.

There was similarly high agreement with the idea of wandering and discovering, with 96% who agreed (agreed + agreed strongly). Visitors from overseas were a little more inclined to favour this approach.



A strong majority (94% agreed + agreed strongly) said they preferred to soak in the atmosphere. This was slightly lower for visitors from Canberra.

Three-quarters (75% agreed + agreed strongly) said that maps and floorplans are essential for them. This was stronger for first time visitors, those who came when Parliament was sitting and those who used a map/brochure.

Finally, three-quarters (77% agreed + agreed strongly) said that they liked to have guides to show them around.

Comment

To cater for the range of visiting styles, Parliament House should offer interpretive materials for self-directed 'wanderers' as well as guided tours for those who prefer a guide.

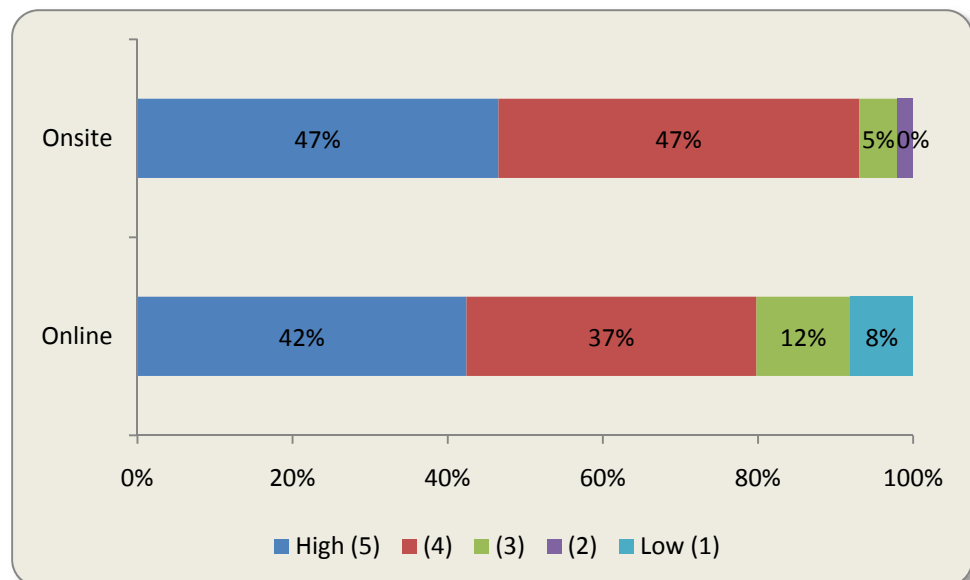


3. Perceptions of the visiting experience

This section discusses rating of the visitor experience, perceived strengths and suggested improvements.

3.1 Rating

Visitors were asked to rate the exhibition on a scale of 1 to 5. The following graph shows the results for visitors who were interviewed at the end of their visit and visitors who completed the online survey one or two weeks later.



As the graph shows, visitors who were interviewed onsite gave very positive ratings. Nearly half (47%) gave the highest score of 5, and 94% have a combined 4+5 score. Visitors who completed the online survey gave slightly lower ratings. This is a typical finding that is a result of having more time for reflection and a lower sense of social obligation to please an interviewer.



Rating benchmark

The rating can be compared with the following results from Australian museums and exhibitions.

- At the 2005 Museums Australia Conference, Lynda Kelly reported that visitor surveys in 10 regional museums in NSW included this question. The average rating across all the museums was 87% for the 4 + 5 category.
- An iconic exhibition at a national institution in Canberra in 2001 recorded a rating of 96% for the 4 + 5 category. Other exhibitions at the same location have recorded ratings of 88% (2002), 94% (2005) and 96% (2001).
- Two special interest exhibitions at the National Museum in 2008 recorded ratings of 94% for the 4+5 category.
- A national institution in Canberra recorded an average rating of 98% for the 4 + 5 category across 12 months of visitor surveys.
- Museums in Queensland scored 83%, 90%, 96% and 97% for the 4 + 5 category in visitor surveys across a 12 month period in 2005-6.
- At one of Australia's State museums, the following scores were recorded for the 4 + 5 category.

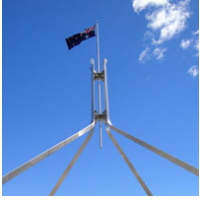
Major exhibition with entry fee (2006)	87%
Major exhibition with entry fee (2005)	90%
Modest exhibition (2005)	90%
Family-oriented exhibition (2005)	83%
Overall visit(2005)	90%

Factors that influence exhibition ratings

In our experience, some factors that influence the ratings that audiences give exhibitions are:

Free or paid entry. Free entry places tend to rate more favourably.

Purposeful or accidental visitors. Exhibitions that attract visitors who come intentionally are likely to score higher. Many accidental visitors (those



who stumble across an exhibition) are simply not very interested in the subject, though a proportion will be pleasantly surprised.

Scale. Larger exhibitions/museums tend to rate more favourably than smaller places.

Significance. Unique/rare, valuable or significant items or subjects tend to rate more favourably.

Presentation. Well-designed exhibitions with professional interpretive devices tend to rate more favourably.

Environmental factors. Detrimental factors like crowding or noise can reduce ratings.

Audience demographic. Older people tend to rate things more favourably (perhaps they recall simpler times). Audiences with less experience of major museums tend to give higher ratings. Non-Canberra people often give higher ratings for exhibitions in Canberra than local residents.

Promotion. Exhibitions that are promoted to their 'natural audience' are rated more favourably than those that attract people who are not particularly engaged by the subject or presentation. Places that are over-promoted can disappoint audiences and get a lower rating than they might otherwise get.

Parliament House conforms to many of the factors that lean towards higher ratings: it has free entry; visitors make a deliberate decision to visit; large and important scale; well-presented; pleasant environment; and it is promoted to its natural audience. It is not surprising that it is rated so positively.

Comment

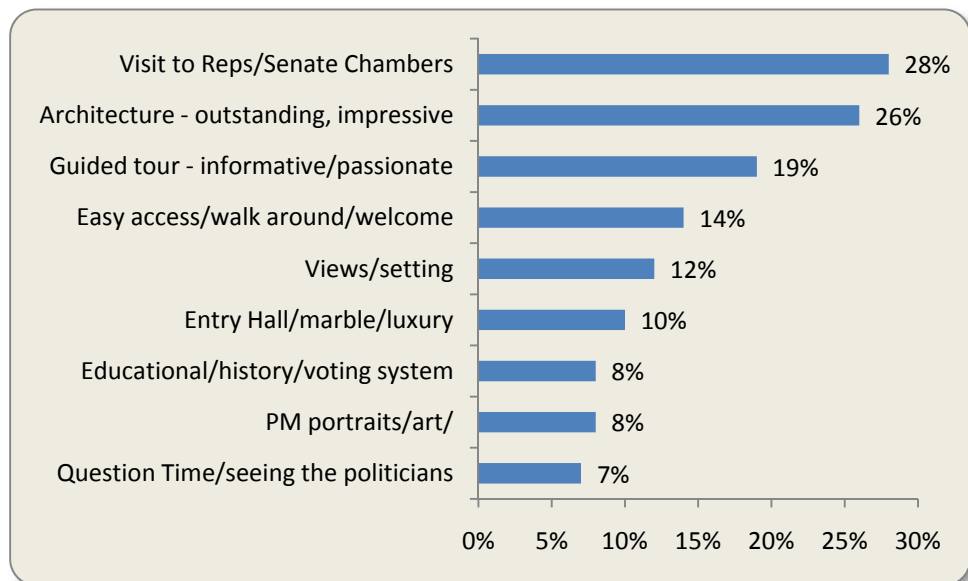
Ratings for Parliament House are in line with the best Australian cultural attractions.



3.2 Best things about the visit

Visitors were asked to nominate the BEST THINGS about their visit, in their own words. Responses were grouped by topic and the following graph shows the main topics.

Fig 6. Best Things about the visit



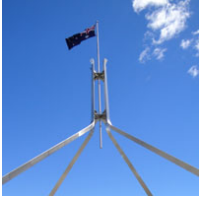
Base = 200. Percentages add to more than 100, due to multiple responses.

It is rewarding to see that the main themes emerging here are central to the meaning of the place – the Chambers, the impressive building, the ease of access and the setting within the Canberra landscape.

It is also rewarding to see that 19% mentioned the Guided Tour as one of the best things about their visit. Overall, 28% of people joined a Guided Tour and it is clear that the tour had a memorable impact for a high proportion of them.

Some verbatim comments are shown here.

Actually going in the Reps and Senate Chambers. I was amazed that we were able to wander anywhere.



To be able to walk around easily. Helpful staff. The marble hall. All very impressive here-the architecture.

The tour - the lady was quite good and gave a lot of explanations and detailed information.

The Parliament of Australia and its appropriate building which reflects a great democracy.

To see the magnificence of this building close up and first hand. The craftsmanship used, the wood and the marble. It will be here for a long time and I am glad it is built to this standard.

The layout and the ambience. The staff are so willing to point things out to you.

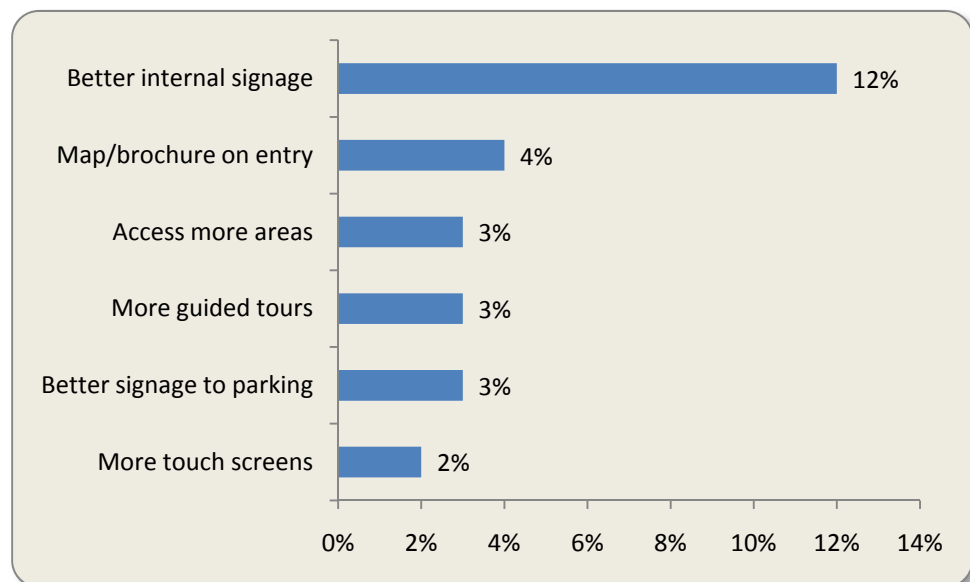
There was a Polish tour guide and she really helped my Polish cousins who don't understand English well.



3.3 Suggested improvements

Visitors were asked to suggest IMPROVEMENTS that would make Parliament House better for visitors, in their own words. Most people (57%) had no suggestions to make. Responses were grouped by topic and the following graph shows the main topics. In addition, there were a considerable number of individual comments that could not be grouped.

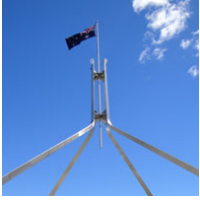
Fig 7. Suggested Improvements



Base = 200.

Many of the comments related to issues with wayfinding and people suggested that internal and external wayfinding signs could be better. Some pointed to the need to get the map/brochure when entering. More tours were suggested by those who found that the tour times did not fit their schedule. Several suggested that there could be more touch screens with interesting details about a variety of topics. Some people wanted access to areas such as back of house offices, the press area and the gardens.

Some verbatim comments are shown here.



Signage inside as to where the Houses of Representatives and Senate are. If signs had been better we would have found the Magna Carta exhibition.

The signs - we had difficulty finding our way out.

To walk around inside the gardens that we can only see through the windows.

It would be nice to see where the PM's office is.

Comment

It is important to recognise that suggestions are useful for identifying underlying problems. Visitors often suggest signage as a solution to a difficulties they had finding things or places. This is an indication that wayfinding is an issue that should be studied in more detail before applying appropriate remedies that may not necessarily involve signage.





4. Value and Importance

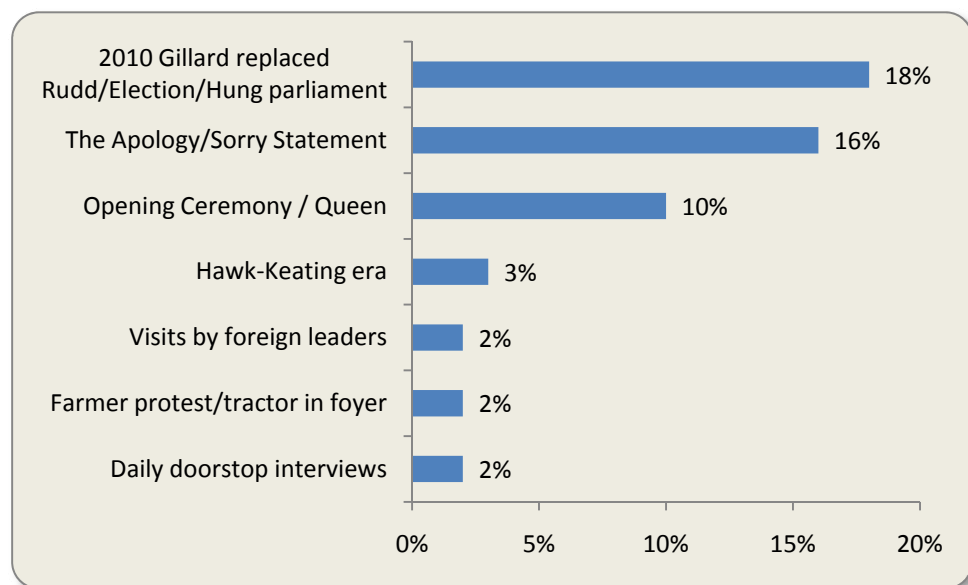
This section discusses visitor perceptions about important events at Parliament House, and their own experience during the visit.

4.1 Events since 1988

The survey asked people to nominate what events since 1988 at Parliament House stood out in their memory. These memories will give an indication of what visitors may expect to encounter at Parliament House.

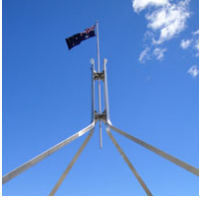
Responses were grouped into topics and summarised in the following graph.

Fig 8. Memorable events at Parliament House



Base = 200

Half the sample (50%) said they could not think of any memorable events. This was higher for overseas visitors (81%); first time visitors (65%); and people under 35 years of age (67%). To some extent, this indicates levels of awareness of Australian political events. It is not surprising that recent events dominated suggestions.



Among those events nominated, the dramatic 2010 political change when Julia Gillard replaced Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister and the following election that took so long for a government to be formed was the most widely recalled (18%). This reflects the role of Parliament House as a seat of power and government.

Also strongly recalled were two ceremonial events: the 2009 Apology given by the Rudd government (16%) and the Opening of Parliament House by Queen Elizabeth (10%).

Comment

It is clear that recent events were most widely recalled than distant ones. However, it is likely that the political events of 2010 will fade into memory similar to memories of the Hawke-Keating era. In contrast, a powerful symbolic ceremony like The Apology is likely to stay in the public memory more strongly, as seems to be the case with the Opening Day ceremony.

Many people arrive at Parliament House with little knowledge of specific events that have occurred here. They expect that their visit will inform them about important events.

Those who remember key events expect that these events will be acknowledged in some way during their visit. For example, the prominent painting of Queen Elizabeth in the Wattle Dress is a reminder of her constitutional and ceremonial role. Similarly, The Apology is acknowledged by a small display that includes a fine calligraphy of the speech. In observation, we noted that this display was overlooked by most visitors.

It is likely that The Apology could bear the weight of a strong interpretive presentation at Parliament House.

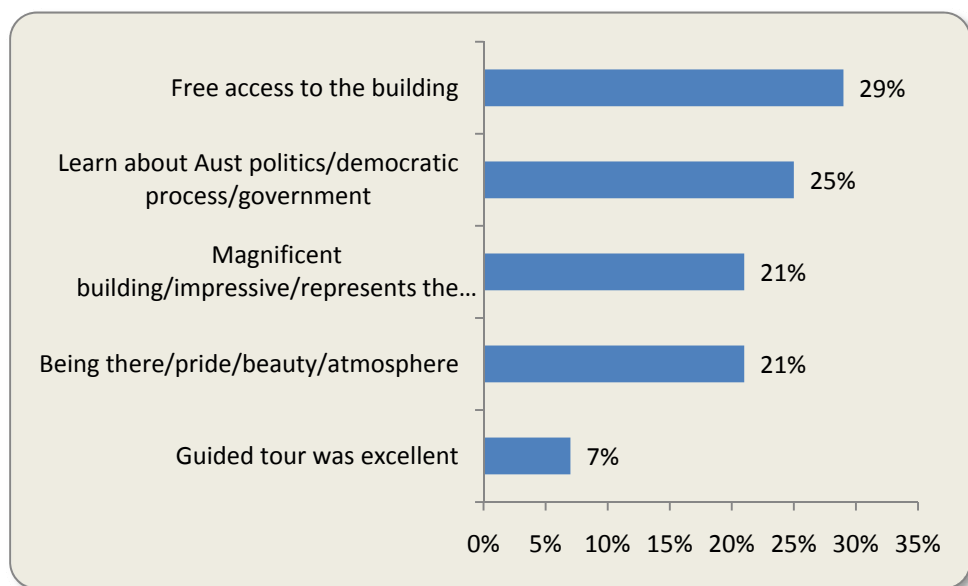


4.2 Important aspects of the personal visit

Visitors were asked to describe the things they had experienced in their visit that were most important to them personally.

Responses were grouped into topics and summarised in the following graph.

Fig 9. Important experiences in the visit



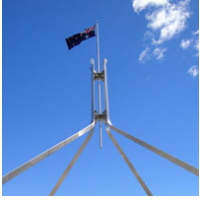
Base = 200

Many (29%) visitors were impressed by the freedom to explore the public areas of the building in their own time as this allowed them to follow their interest and to absorb the experience.

There are no restrictions after passing through security, which highlights our democracy.

The ease of getting around without security being over zealous.

It was a joy to walk about without being barked at or fenced in. Security is at a minimum, which is absolutely great. We are the lucky country.



For others (25%), the most important aspect related to new understanding of the processes of the Australian government system, especially democracy. This was both an intellectual and emotional experience for many.

To feel a paramount respect for both ruling and opposition parties that govern and guide this great nation of Australia successfully into the 21st century.

Gaining experience for what happens in Parliament first hand as opposed to seeing it on television.

Interesting to learn how the political process in Australia differs from my own country.

The scale and architecture of the building and quality of fittings were the most important element for a solid proportion (21%) of visitors.

Surprised by the interior, the wood, marble and the magnificence of it all.

Seeing the architecture and the fine work inside. Wood types, marble, even the expanse of carpet.

The fantastic spectacular building and the great vista linking other important buildings, e.g. The War Memorial.

Others (21%) commented on the experience of being there and feelings of beauty and pride.

It is an important landmark and great to show visitors around as well as enjoy the time with them.

To be able to see a really beautifully designed building.

First time here so it is very emotional. We have a good country here.

A small proportion (7%) commented on the value of the guided tour.



Information given by the tour because it would be difficult to get this information by yourself.

A good guide to explain and point out details and this was what she did.

Comment

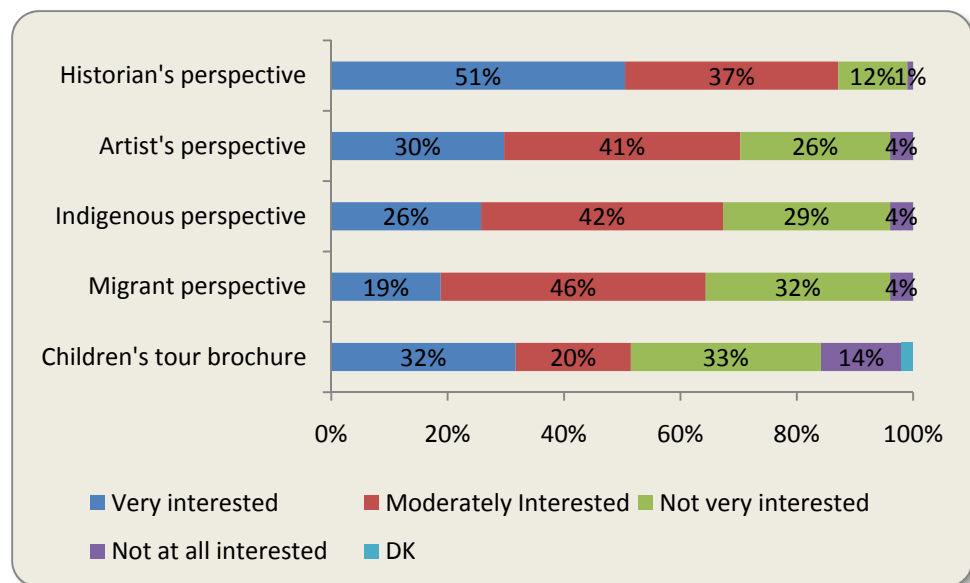
It is valuable to note that many of the comments related to emotions that were stirred by the visit. People experienced strong feelings of pride and gratitude as well as admiration for beauty and quality of workmanship. For many people, their visit to Parliament House evoked feelings that rose above partisan politics.



5. Interpretive Themes

The survey asked participants to rate their interest in five themes that could be used in self-guided brochures or guided tours. The following graph shows levels of interest.

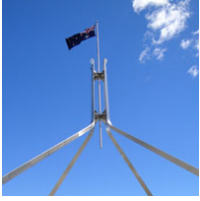
Fig 10. Interest in Interpretive Themes



Base = 200

While interest levels varied between the suggestions, there was considerable interest in all suggestions. Clearly, a general historical perspective had the widest appeal, however, although only 16% of our sample were accompanied by children under 12 years, nevertheless about half (52%) showed interest in having a children's brochure. It is interesting that 32% expressed this as strong interest.

Interest in the different themes was fairly consistent across sub-groups with some exceptions.



- The Indigenous perspective was much more interesting to people from Overseas (67%) and non-local Australians (72%) than to Canberra people (46%).
- The Indigenous perspective was much more interesting to people under 35 years (80%) compared with people over 55 years (53%).
- A migrant perspective was less interesting to Canberra people (46%) than non-local Australians (66%) and Overseas people (70%).
- A children's brochure was much more interesting to people who were more likely to have children with them, including people from Canberra (63%) and people over 35 years (62%).

Comments

The findings encourage the development of interpretive materials or tours that highlight different perspectives or aspects of Parliament House, while ensuring that core information is conveyed.

A children's tour brochure would be a very valuable addition to the resources available to visitors.



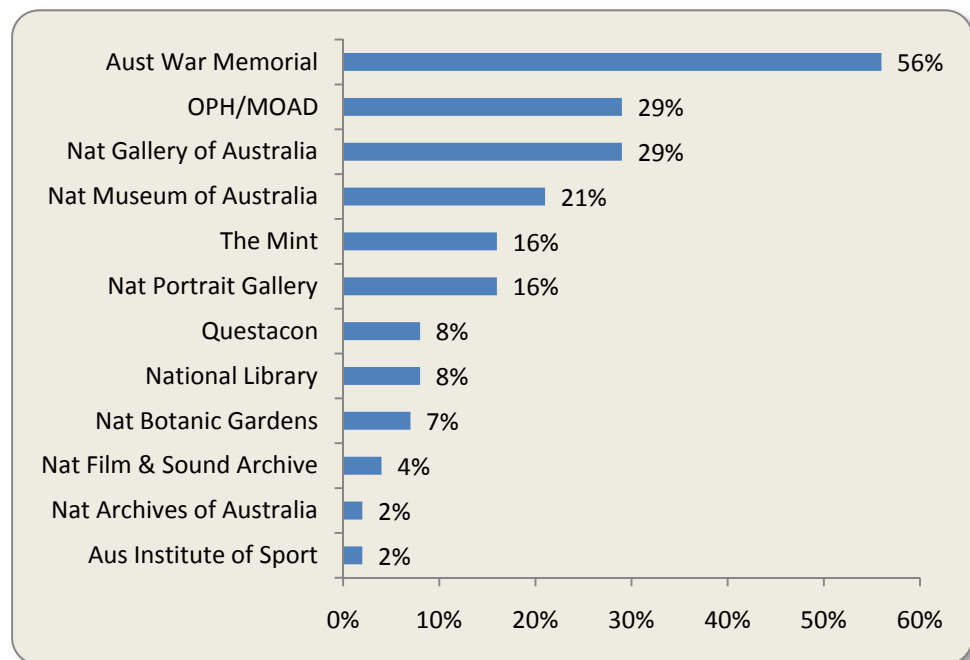
6. Other Canberra Attractions

The survey asked whether visitors planned to see other Canberra attractions on the day of their visit to Parliament House. Two-thirds (68%) planned to see another attraction on the same day.

Most (75%) Canberra residents did not plan to visit other attractions.

The following graph shows where people went.

Fig 11. Other Attractions Visited



Base = 135

The findings confirm the strong appeal of the **Australian War Memorial** to Parliament House visitors (56%). The War Memorial was visited more by repeat visitors (63%) and weekday visitors (59%).

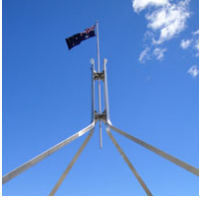
The **National Gallery** and **OPH/MOAD** were well-frequented (29%) each. The National Gallery was visited more by repeat visitors (39%) and people



under 35 years (40%). OPH/MOAD was visited more by overseas visitors (35%) and those who came when Parliament was sitting.

National Museum visitors (21%) had a very different profile as they tended to be: First Time visitors (28); Overseas visitors (40%); people who used a map at APH (27%) and those who came when Parliament was not sitting (29%) and at weekends (31%).





5. Site observations

This element of the research comprised two days of structured observations. We conducted participant observation of five guided tours, tracked five visitor groups, and observed visitor pathways and behaviour at key locations.

Observations and key findings are noted here.

Guided Tours

Visitors found the Guided Tour through conversations with staff and by discrete signage. We observed many visitors who either did not know about the Guided Tours, or ignored them. This is consistent with the data that shows only 34% agreed strongly that they liked to have guides show them around.

The Tours that we observed started on time and followed a set path that included the Chambers. Overall, the Guides were effective at establishing a connection with their visitors and fostered some exchange with individuals in the group or the group as a whole.

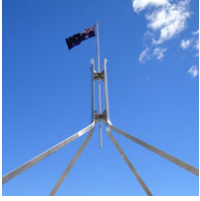
Guides were confident and knowledgeable. In some cases, this confidence led to a fast-paced 'gallop' through a mass of detailed facts and figures.

As well as taking people through key spaces in the building and giving interpretive information about locations, historical events and the working of Parliament, Guides pointed at other areas of the House that visitors might like to return to or explore independently.

Comment

There is scope to provide a variety of Guided Tours with a range of themes and more diversity (age, ethnicity, gender) of guides.

The content of the standard tour should be reviewed each year and re-calibrated to include salient events and activities.



Visitor Behaviour

We tracked the following visitor groups.

1. Young couple (30ish), toddler in stroller and grandmother.
2. Couple, 50-60 years
3. Group of eight men and women, Asian, 40-50 years.
4. Dad and three children (1 teen + 2 sub-teen)
5. Couple, 50-60 years

In addition, we observed visitor behaviour in three locations:

- On the forecourt
- On entering the Foyer
- The Members Hall

Following the typical path of a visiting group, we observed some common behaviours.

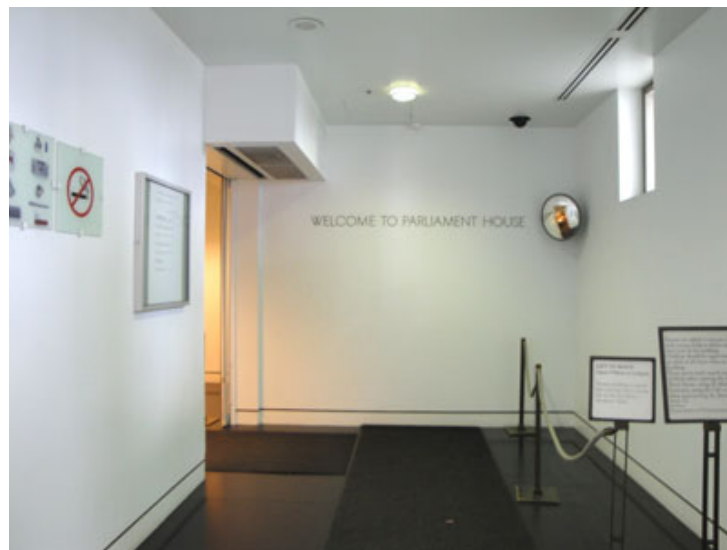
Forecourt

- Some people headed directly to the security entrance, while others looked around to orient themselves. Some of these people lingered in the Forecourt and walked over to the columns to admire the outlook. This was a popular place for photo-opportunities.





- The Forecourt is staffed by a Security Officer who becomes the de facto first point of contact for visitors who need information. Some visitors looked to the Security Officer for reassurance about the entrance, or approached to ask for more specific information.
- Visitors entered through the security screening entry. Most visitors found these procedures tedious, but accepted them as familiar and appropriate for Parliament House.



- The signage in the entry corridor was rarely read because most people kept moving through the passageway.

Comment

The first personal contact at a venue is an important touch point in the visitor experience. DPS should consider stationing a Visitor Services officer on the forecourt to 'meet and greet' visitors. This would allow Security personnel to focus on security issues. Alternatively, the role of the Security officer in the Forecourt could formally acknowledge the 'meet and greet' role.



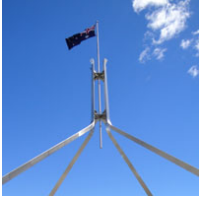
Foyer

- In the Foyer, we observed once again that visitors either headed purposefully upstairs or along a corridor, or they paused to orient and explore the space of the Foyer. After the formality of security screening, entry into the Foyer appeared to have a strong sense of arrival for many visitors.



- Sometimes there were Visitor Services staff on the floor ready to 'meet and greet' visitors. However, for extended parts of the day there were no staff on the floor, while the Visitor Services counter was staffed at all times. We noted during our observation several occasions when two staff members on 'meet and greet' duty spent periods of time talking to each other and ignoring visitors.
- We observed a number of visitors who were looking around for assistance. They did not always recognise the Visitor Services counter as a relevant service point. Indeed, seeing the Floor Staff busy talking to each other, and not recognising the counter as a service point, one visitor headed towards the researcher who was holding a clipboard, to ask advice.
- Some visitors approached the Security Desk and were re-directed to the Visitor Services desk.





- At busy times, staff at the Visitor Services desk were very pressed and could not give extended time to visitor queries.
- Some visitor groups spent considerable time in the Foyer, looking around, talking with each other and taking numerous photos/videos of their group members with the Stairs or Foyer as background. This was a clear manifestation of a sense of arrival and pleasure in 'being there', simply experiencing the place, and recording the fact with photos.

Comment

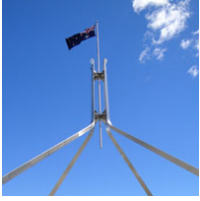
Staff on 'meet and greet' duty should be fully attentive to visitor needs. They could be located in different situations, e.g. on the Forecourt and in the Foyer. At quieter times, only one officer is needed on the floor.

Prominent self-service racks for brochures and maps would relieve pressure on staff. Several venues (National Portrait Gallery, Old Parliament House and National Library come to mind) have a brochure rack along the face of the service desk. This allows those who simply want to pick up a map or brochure to do so, without cutting off the chance for contact with service staff. The visible brochures would help to signal that this is a service point for visitors.

At Parliament House, it would be helpful to provide similar racks at the Visitor Service desk, the Security Desk and perhaps also outside the Shop.

First Floor

- Visitors circulated around the First Floor in a relaxed manner, moving largely by line of sight from one point of interest to another. Visitors showed an easy curiosity by looking into doorways, looking at displays and artworks, and reading information labels. Those visitors with maps could be seen consulting them.
- It was clear that visitors enjoyed the freedom to wander and explore. Many visitors did not have a floorplan or brochure and they followed visual cues in the environment or asked staff (often

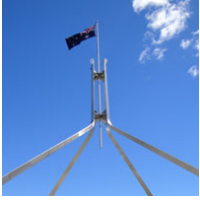


Security staff). Some visitors missed visual cues to places like the lift to the roof. The displays in the free standing semi-enclosed display cases (e.g. The Apology) were overlooked by a high proportion of visitors.

- Once again, photography was an important way visitors engaged with the spaces and art works.



- Most visitors were observed to make a loop path around the First Floor, so that they went up one staircase in the Foyer and came down the opposite one. However, some visitors were observed to make a circuit of the Members Hall and then return to the foyer the way they had come.
- Visitors used the cloaking desk on the First Floor for information and to leave belongings when they observed Question Time. During Question Time, most people accepted the additional security screening process, however some people were frustrated when they found they had to return to the cloak desk more than once to leave additional items.

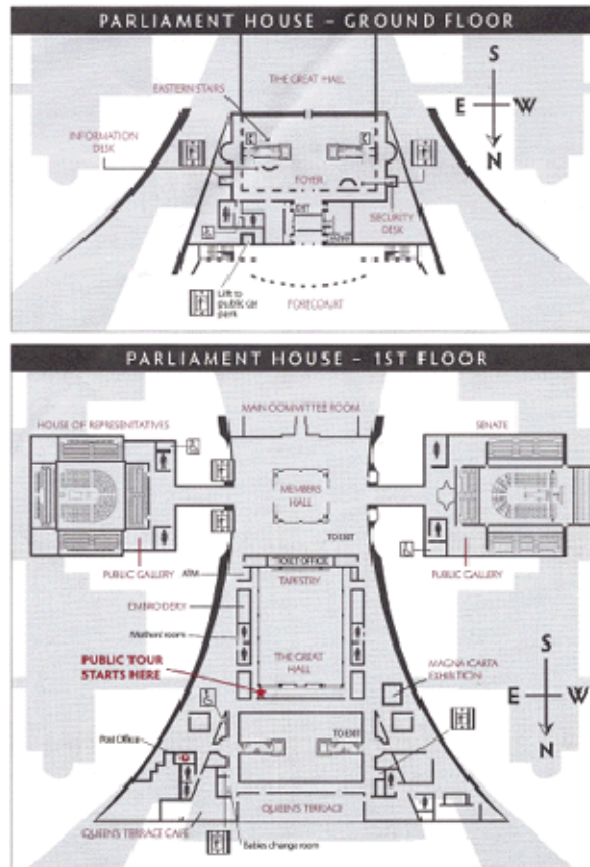


Comment

The open spaces on the First Floor and freedom to explore were attractive features of the visitor experience.

Floorplan and Brochure

Visitor Services offers a full-colour Visitor Guide along with a simple schematic map shown here.



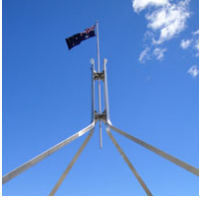


- The map provides a simple schematic that locates key features and services. Some people had difficulty orienting the map to their location.
- We have identified some small shortcomings of the map.
 - It does not identify the lift that goes to the roof.
 - The First Floor services desk is labelled 'Ticket Office' which does not reflect its functions as an information desk and cloakroom desk.
 - The lift icons are not immediately clear.
 - The standard knife and fork icon could be used to help identify the café.

The full-colour Visitor Guide provides information about the House and the working of Parliament. As such, it functions as an introduction to the building and a souvenir of the visit. However, it does not help visitors to structure a path through the building.

Comment

The Visitor Guide could be enhanced by including suggestions for a self-guided tour that covers the main highlights of the building.



6. Teacher survey findings

Overview

The survey included teachers of primary and high school classes from across Australia, with a preponderance from NSW.

Most teachers (97%) said they received accurate information and that the booking process met their requirements.

There was considerable interest in pre-visit resources, especially printed resources that include visual elements and activities, and DVDs.

Most teachers visited Parliament House in order to give students the living experience of how the Australian Parliament works and to link the visit with specific curriculum studies.

At Parliament House, most participants (79%) participated in the parliamentary role-play and two-thirds (64/67%) attended the hospitality area and looked at art works.

It is encouraging to see that 85% of the sample said the visit met all their expectations and that 30% of teachers reported pleasant surprises.

The Australian War Memorial was the most widely visited (87%) attraction, followed by the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (75%) and Questacon (69%).

Detailed positive comments and suggested improvements are presented in this section of the report.



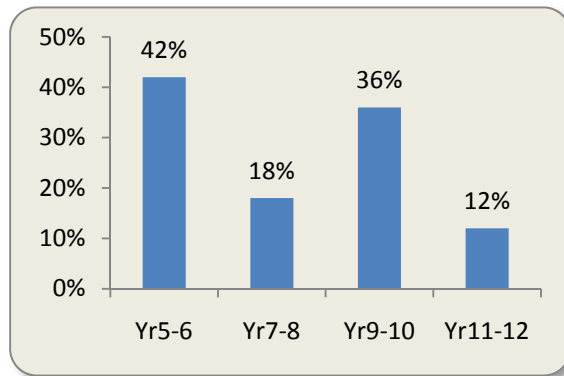
Survey Findings

There were 36 teachers who responded to the survey. Most (94%) visited in 2010 and 6% visited in 2009.

Most (86%) participants had booked their visit directly with Parliament House, while others booked through an agent or bus company.

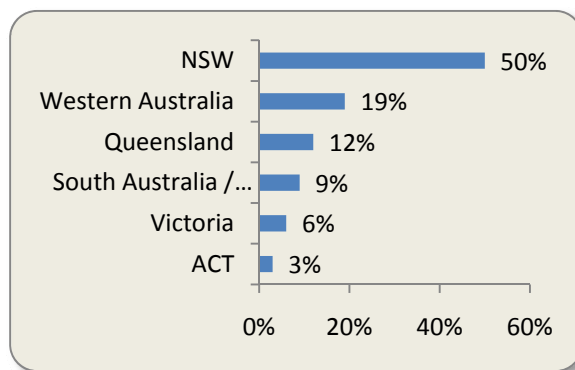
Participants represented both Primary and High Schools as shown in the following graph.

Fig 12. Year level



Base=33

Teachers in the sample came from most states, with preponderance from NSW as shown in the following graph.



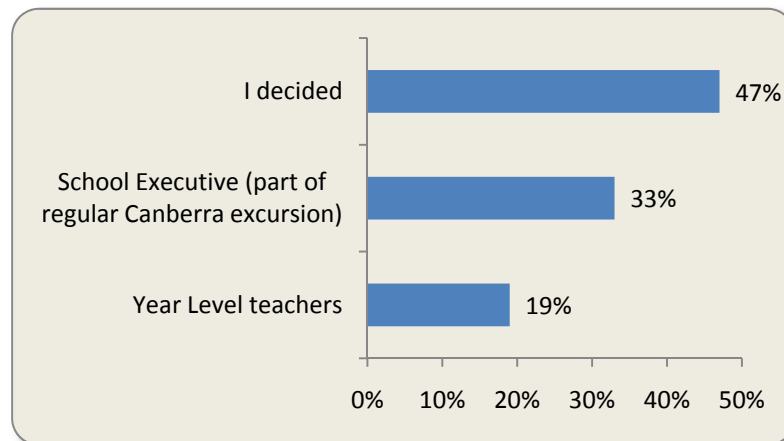
Base=33



6.1 Decision

Half (47%) the survey participants said that they made the decision to visit Parliament House, while others said the decision was made by the school executive or year level teachers.

Fig 13. Who decided to visit Parliament House



Base=35

Some teachers added comments that indicated the range of types of visit to Parliament House.

I have been taking Year 6 students to Canberra for 30 years on an annual excursion.

I took 30 children to attend the River Health International Youth Environment Conference and went to Parliament House as part of our Canberra Experience and our democracy studies.

Part of our understanding of government processes for Legal Studies [NSW] curriculum.

This was our college's first trip to Canberra.

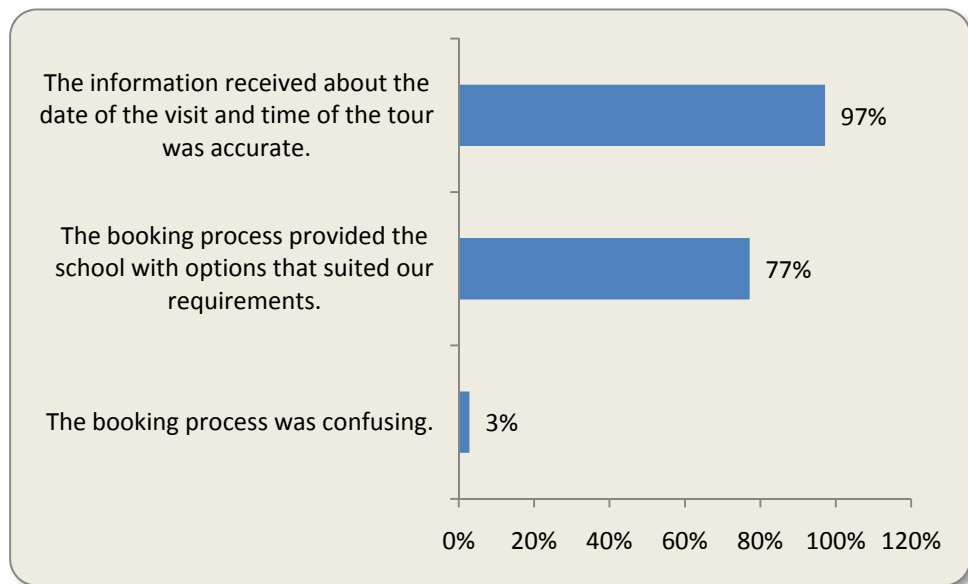
To complement our unit on Democracy.



6.2 Booking Process

The following chart shows that nearly all (97%) teachers said they received accurate information; and most (77%) said they were offered suitable options. Only 3% found the process confusing.

Fig 14. Booking Process



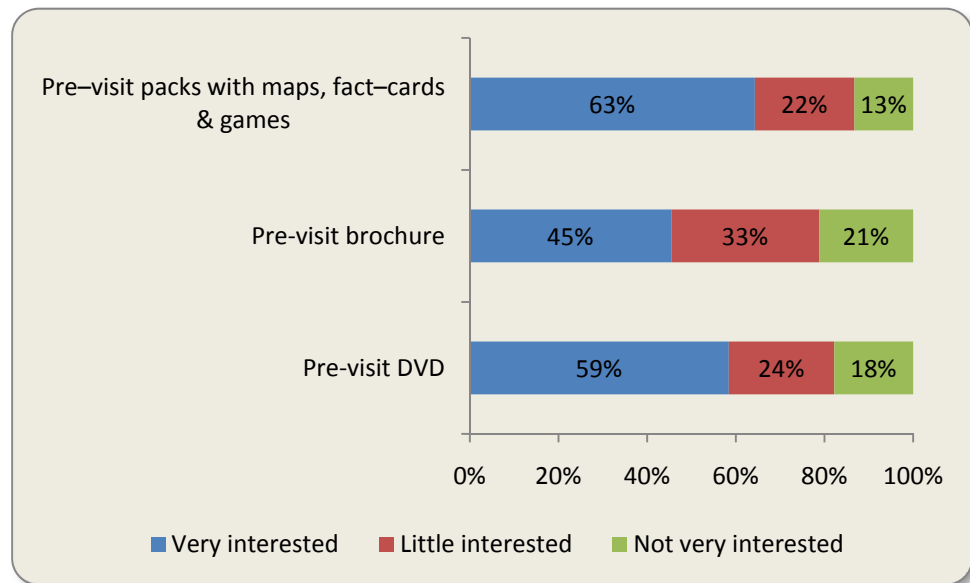
Base=35



6.3 Interest in pre-visit resources

Participants were asked to show their interest in a range of pre-visit resource materials.

Fig 15. Interest in pre-visit resources



Base=35

Interest in printed resources was strongest, especially if the resources included visual elements and activities.

A DVD was also well-received.

A simple brochure was also welcome, although not quite as appealing as the other resources.

Two participants offered the following comments.

Role play, resources for passing a bill, committees, question time, etc. Biographical details of past Prime Ministers, Speakers of H of R, etc (including details to support a study of the Prime Ministerial and other portraits). Historical details of Federal Parliament, old and new Parliament Houses, move towards Federation (1890s).



The pre-visit kit was most helpful as it assisted us with our democracy and parliamentary studies.

Participants were evenly split with respect to the way they preferred to access pre-visit resources, as shown in the following table.

Table 3. Preferred access to resources

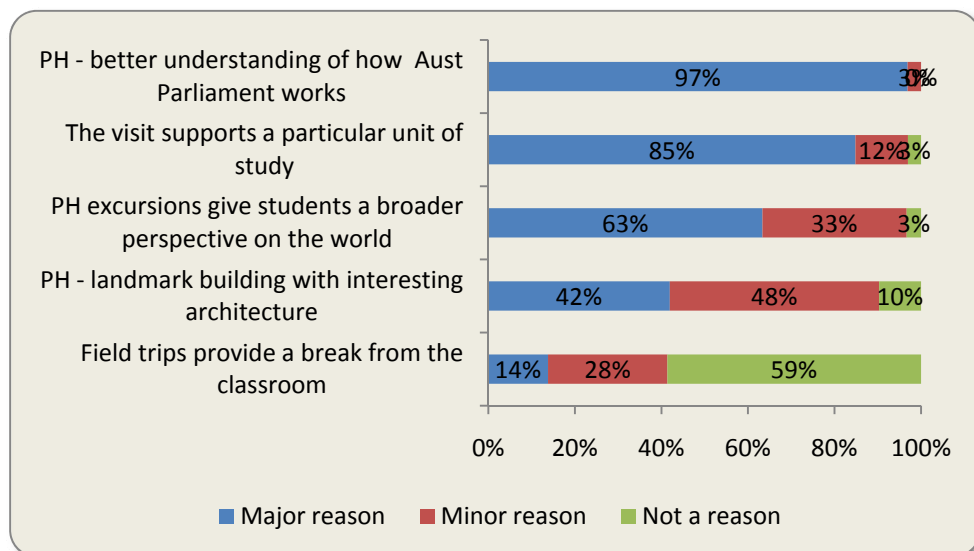
Download	55%
Sent by email	48%
Sent by mail	42%

Base = 35; multiple response

6.4 Reason to visit Parliament House

Teachers were asked to say whether five factors were reasons for their visit. The following chart shows the results.

Fig 16. Reasons to visit Parliament House



Base=30/33



It is clear that teachers value the opportunity to give students the living experience of how the Australian Parliament works and they linked the visit with specific curriculum studies.

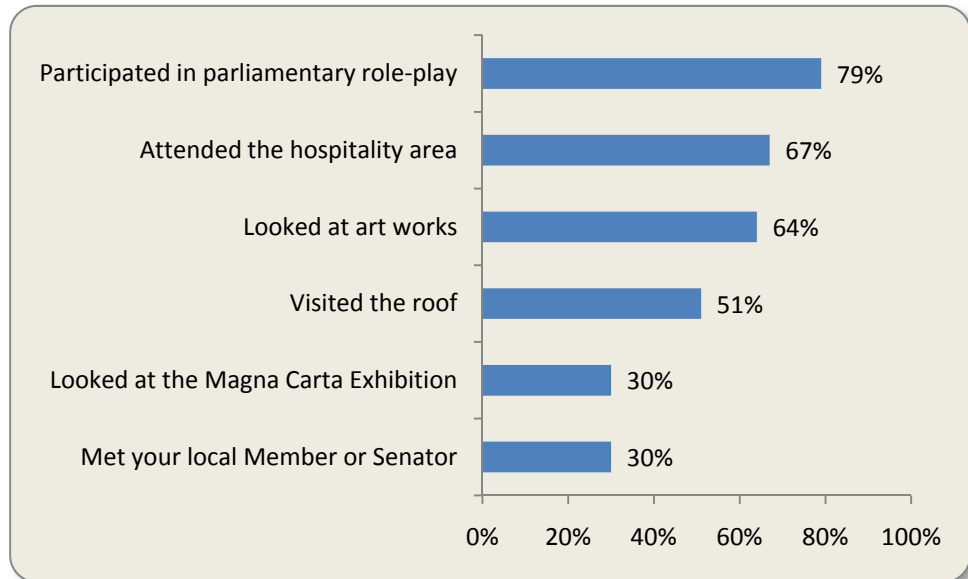
They were also motivated by more general aims relating to broadening perspectives and the experience of a landmark building.

While field trips were recognised to provide a break from the classroom, this was not the primary reason for many visits to Parliament House.

6.5 Activities

Teachers were asked to indicate which activities they had undertaken at Parliament House. The follow chart shows the results.

Fig 17. Activities undertaken



Base=33



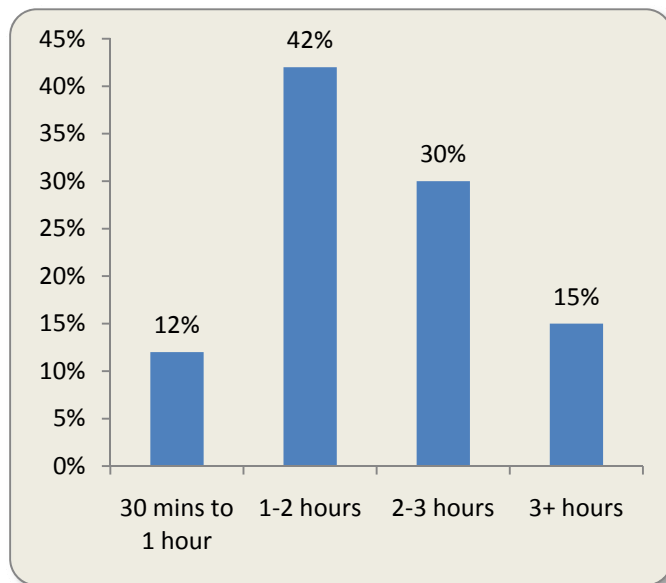
Most participants (79%) participated in the parliamentary role-play and two-thirds (64/67%) attended the hospitality area and looked at art works.

Only half (51%) visited the roof and about one-third (30%) looked at the Magna Carta exhibition or met their local Member/Senator.

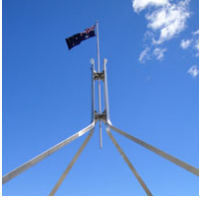
6.6 Time spent at Parliament House

Most teachers in the sample said they spent 1-2 hours at Parliament House (42%). About one-third (30%) spent 2-3 hours.

Fig 18. Time spent



Base=33



6.7 Expectations

Teachers were asked to describe their expectations of the visit. A number of teachers said they had no expectations, and some expressed expectations that were very general or very modest.

Not sure how interested the students were going to be. Hoped that the presenters would engage students.

That officials would meet with us on time in the foyer. We would be able to go to our various booking on time.

To have a general tour of New Parliament House.

Most teachers had very specific expectations as shown in the following examples.

The parliamentary role play is an important part of the students' understanding of how parliament operates. Question time really brings to life the students' understanding of the politicians and the role debate plays in the parliamentary process. It is always good to meet the local member and in the past the members have been generous with their time.

That students would be able to see the two chambers. That students would participate in the role-play. That the tour guide/s would be informative and interesting.

Our main expectations were that the visit would bring to life what we had been studying back in the classroom. As this was part of a 7 day camp, we needed this visit to be relevant to what the children were learning back home, as well as providing a real life experience for them - showing them that Parliament House is a vitally important part of our government.

An opportunity for my students to experience first hand the seat of government in Australia as well as the insightful knowledge provided by staff.

To have students see the House of Representatives and Senate as students had learnt a lot about these places in class. The role play also consolidated roles they had learnt about in class.





The following chart shows how well the visit met teachers' expectations.

Fig 19. How well the visit met expectations



Base=33

It is encouraging to see that 85% said the visit met all their expectations and that 30% of teachers reported pleasant surprises.

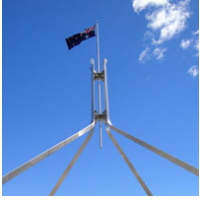
Teachers noted the following 'good surprises'.

Met the PM! and many of the politicians

Nearly literally running into Peter Garrett, seeing Tony Abbot

The courtesy and interest shown by the ministers and the generosity of our local member, Mr Gary Grey was fantastic as it gave the students a further dimension to their visit and they experienced an occasion that was memorable

The students got a lot out of the role-play



The tour showed the children some of the areas that they had heard about/seen on TV, but seeing it in real life added another dimension. The art works throughout the building were also of great interest.

They noted the following shortcomings.

I felt that the tour was not enough to engage our students.

It was disappointing that we didn't get to spend time with the local member. One of the guides did too much talking during question time and the children found it really frustrating as the debate going on in the House of Reps was very interesting. It would be good if the guides touched base with the teachers and asked what the requirements are for the specific group of students. Some of the guides are excellent and strike a really good balance between asking the children questions, giving information and allowing the children to listen.

Not being able to book in to the role play or question time meant it wasn't as worthwhile as normal.

Overall, the visit was fine. However, because of the size of our group we were divided into 3 groups at Parliament House. Perhaps due to a misunderstanding, I was under the impression that all 3 groups would see the House of Reps in session but only one group did so. (We understood at time of booking that all groups would unfortunately miss question time.)

Student questions resulted in unexpected discussion which was relevant to students and course of study. Although the guides are excellent, in one instance the comment made by a student in innocence was interpreted by the guide as a deliberate comment meant in disrespect. Teacher had to intervene to explain to guide. Guide was receptive to the explanation.

The courtesy shown by hospitality was well below par. We were left waiting and the young lady who eventually came to assist with morning tea was rude and abrupt. This caused us to run late in meeting our pre arranged tours. The parking for buses was inadequate and the students were forced to walk quite a distance. Had this been communicated earlier we could have planned earlier departures from other activities.



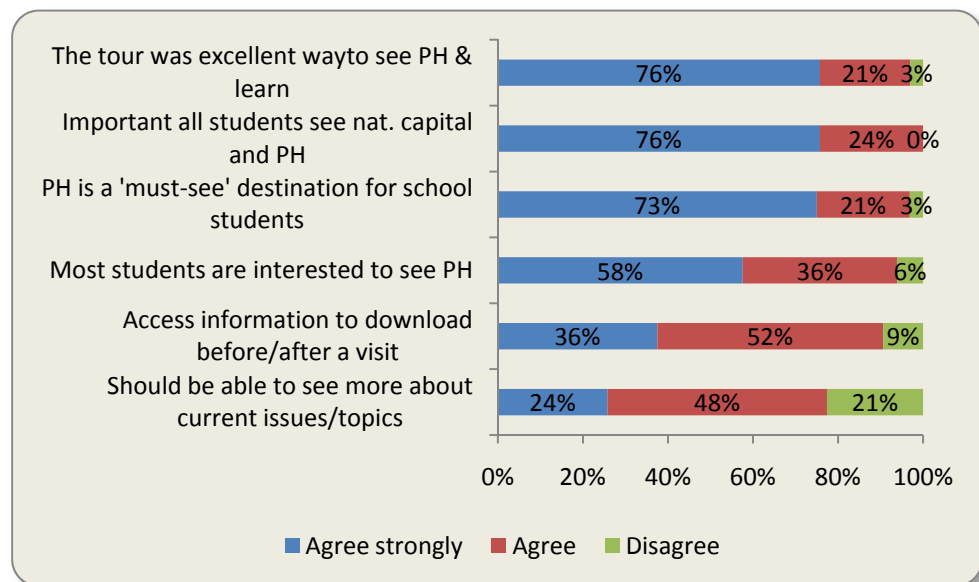


The tour guide was like she was rehearsing a script. She didn't wait for students to answer her questions she just answered them herself.

6.8 Views and preferences

Teachers were asked to indicate their agreement with six statements. No one 'disagreed strongly' with any of the statements and the following chart shows the results.

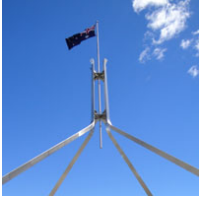
Fig 20. Agreement with views and preferences



Base=33

There was near-universal agreement with the quality of the tour; the importance of the national capital and Parliament House and the appeal of Parliament House as a destination.

Teachers agreed that most students were interested to see Parliament House.



One-third (36%) showed strong interest (agreed strongly) in accessing education resources online.

One-quarter (24%) showed strong interest (agreed strongly) in seeing more about current issues and topics during their visit. One teacher noted:

Some discussion about the demise of Kevin Rudd would be interesting, as would the whole notion of a minority government. These would be quite topical at the moment.

6.9 Best things about the visit

Teachers were asked to note the best things about their visit to Parliament House. The following themes recurred in the verbatim comments.

Seeing the Chambers/seeing Parliament in action

Seeing the House of Reps and Senate were great.

The talk in the Senate and House of Representatives.

The visits to the actual chambers. Seeing the places we see on the TV news with question time and other parliamentary procedures.

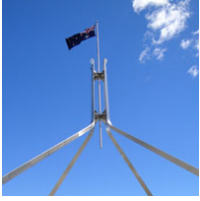
Question time, although it was extremely disappointing that we have missed out on Question time in 2011 and we booked on the first day bookings became available.

Visiting both Houses (but especially House of Reps) whilst sitting - (preferably in Question Time).

The role plays

The parliamentary role play and tours of the houses.

The parliamentary role plays.



The role-play. Seeing the chambers.

The guided tour

The guide was very knowledgeable and visit interesting.

Guided tour was superb.

The knowledgeable tour, viewing parliament whilst in session and getting the tidbits of information that students don't normally get in the classroom.

Age appropriate language of tour guide made things easy for all students to understand.

Meeting local Member/seeing politicians

Being able to meet the politicians.

Difficult to ascertain as entire visit was worthwhile. Getting to meet our local member was a plus.

Meeting our local member. Seeing parliament in action.

The arranged visit for the students to meet the Deputy Prime minister and the ministers and present a petition. this gave students a memorable experience and built a very positive understanding of the complexities of governing. It gave students a realistic view of parliamentary roles as real people who were genuinely interested in young Australians. All the aspects of the visit were most positive and memorable. Excellent.

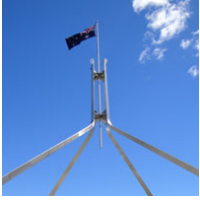
General enthusiasm

It was a fantastic experience for our students they particularly enjoyed morning tea on the roof of the House.

The educational program was outstanding and the facilitators were excellent; the Magna Carta exhibition and the overall experience for our students.

We are coming again next May and we would just like to meet Julia!





Several participants noted the excellence of the PEO and help from staff.

6.10 Suggested improvements

Participants were asked to suggest improvements to the services provided for teachers and students. About half the participants suggested improvements which were quite diverse. The following topics were mentioned more than once.

Guides

ALWAYS... have guides who can relate to students of the relevant age.

A more interactive tour is needed.

The tour is very dry - I know it is a working Parliament but there is very little that students can touch or be involved in.

Interactive learning

Interactive displays would be useful for students. An ability for students to access a segment of question time or other section of parliamentary routine would allow students who visit on non-sitting days to better appreciate the role of various personnel in parliament.

Information labels and displays, because we walk past many things that are not pointed out by the guide.

Older students

A program for older students, especially Legal Studies students, who are quite politically aware. Visits to the areas where the committees are held.

Older students, especially ones studying politics, not stuck behind the glass areas.





Bookings

Ensure that all the bookings for tours are confirmed. I had booked a tour which didn't eventuate and I had to conduct the tour of both Houses myself.

Make booking easier.

Practical information

We'd like to go upstairs to the roof and weren't sure if this was possible.

Clearer information on whether you can bring cameras and bags.

Other comments

Many of the children wanted a small memento of the visit. Perhaps some inexpensive items could be included in the Parliament shop for students?

Folders or brochures for students' notebooks.

Support resources for pre and post visit as mentioned elsewhere in this survey.

The Hospitality 30 minutes needs to be reviewed as we would rather obtain a drink, move on and spend more time looking around if our Federal representative isn't available (which is most of the time).

Hospitality staff who are hospitable and catering staff in the canteen who are efficient and friendly.

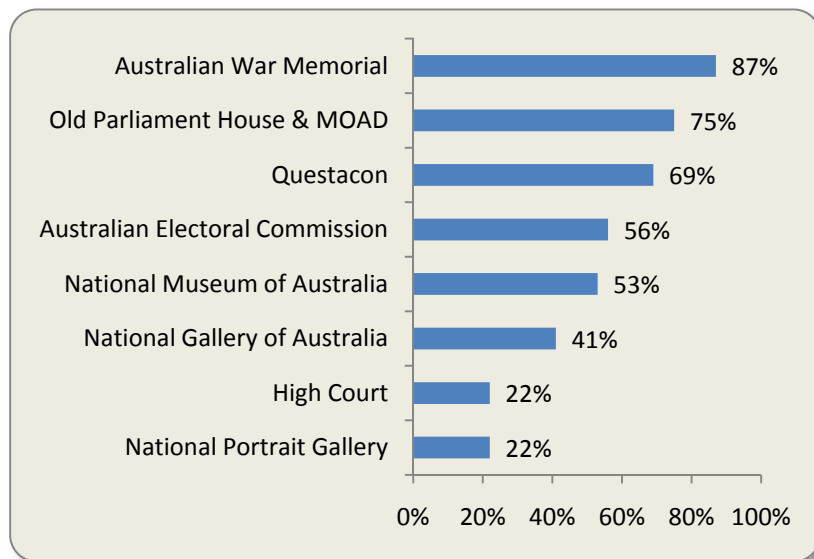
I was disappointed that the coach areas for parking had changed. Students now have to walk much further and at higher safety risk. Due to the many thousands of students visiting Parliament House each year I would of thought that parking close to the stair wells would have been a priority. It seems to me that the coach parking area has in fact been reduced which in my opinion is a big mistake. I can see the newspaper headlines now " student 12yrs hit by car at Parliament House on school visit.



6.11 Visits to other attractions

Participants were asked whether or not they had visited a range of other cultural institutions in Canberra. All participants had visited other venues. Visitation is shown in the following graph.

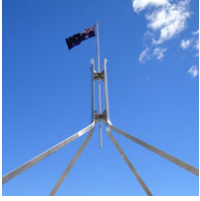
Fig 21. Visits to Cultural Attractions



Base=32

The Australian War Memorial was the most widely visited (87%), followed by the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House (75%) and Questacon (69%).

The art galleries (National Gallery and National Portrait Gallery) and High Court were visited to a lesser extent.



Appendix

Questionnaire



Hello, my name is and I am doing a survey of visitors to Parliament House. Have you come to visit Parliament House or do you have business here? VISITORS – May I ask you a few questions? (It will take about 10 minutes.)

1. Is this your first visit to Parliament House? Yes 1 **SKIP TO Q3**
No 2 **ASK Q2**

2. How many times have you visited Parliament House in the past five years?

3. People visit Parliament House for different reasons. How important to you were the following reasons for this visit?

	A major reason	A minor reason	Not a reason
To see the architecture of Parliament House	1	2	3
To see a specific display	1	2	3
To attend an event/activity	1	2	3
To meet my local member of Parliament	1	2	3
To watch Question Time and see what's happening today	1	2	3
To better understand the political process	1	2	3
To see art works at Parliament House	1	2	3
Because Parliament House is an important national building	1	2	3
To spend time with family or friends	1	2	3
To show others around	1	2	3
To go to Queens Terrace Cafe	1	2	3
To go to Parliament Shop	1	2	3

4. How long did you spend at Parliament House? **DO NOT READ OUT.** Less than 30 mins 1
30 mins to 1 hour 2
1 to 2 hours 3
2 to 3 hours 4
More than 3 hours 5

5. Which of the following things did you do at Parliament House today? **READ OUT.**
- | | YES | NO |
|--|-----|----|
| Visit House of Representatives Chamber | 1 | 2 |
| Visit Senate Chamber | 1 | 2 |
| Join a guided tour | 1 | 2 |
| Visit Magna Carta Exhibition | 1 | 2 |
| Visit the roof. | 1 | 2 |
| Visit the Queens Terrace Cafe. | 1 | 2 |
| Visit Parliament Shop | 1 | 2 |
| Ask staff for information. | 1 | 2 |
| Visit the theatrette | 1 | 2 |

6. Did you...? **(READ OUT)**
- Use the Parliament House visitor map or guide brochure 1 2
Use a published guide book or tourist publication 1 2



7. How would you rate your visit OVERALL on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being LOW and 5 being HIGH?

	LOW	<< =====>>			HIGH
Overall rating	1	2	3	4	5

8. What were the BEST THINGS about your visit today? **Probe for details.**

.....

.....

.....

9. What IMPROVEMENTS would make Parliament House better for visitors? **Probe for details.**

.....

.....

.....

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about visiting Parliament House?

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know
I am happy to wander and discover things for myself	1	2	3	4	5
I like to have tour guides show me around	1	2	3	4	5
I like to learn as much as I can about places I visit	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer to soak in the atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
Maps and floorplans are essential for me	1	2	3	4	5

11. Thinking about events that have taken place here at Parliament House since it opened in 1988, what particular events stand out in your memory? **(Probe for specific description of the event).**

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. From what you have seen and experienced here today, WHAT THINGS are the most important to you personally? **(Probe for specific description).**

.....

.....

.....

.....

13. Here are some ideas for new thematic tours which could be led by a guide or be offered as self-guided tour brochures. How interested would you be in the following types of tours?

	Very interested	Moderately interested	Not very interested	Not at all interested	DK
An artist's perspective on the building and artworks	1	2	3	4	5
An Indigenous perspective on events and artworks	1	2	3	4	5
A migrant perspective on Parliament House	1	2	3	4	5
A historian's perspective on Australian Parliament	1	2	3	4	5
A brochure for a children's tour	1	2	3	4	5

14. How many people are in your visiting group today, including yourself?

15. Do you have children under 12 years with you today? Yes 1
No 2

16. On this outing today, will you visit other Canberra attractions or not?
No – just Parliament House 1 **SKIP TO Q19**
Yes – other attractions 2 **ASK Q18**

17. Which of the following places have you visited or plan to visit? **READ OUT.**

National Gallery of Australia 1	National Botanic Gardens 8
Old Parliament House/Museum Aust Democracy... 2	National Museum of Australia 9
National Portrait Gallery 3	National Archives of Australia 10
National Library 4	Drill Hall Gallery 11
Australian War Memorial 5	Canberra Museum + Gallery 12
National Film and Sound Archive 6	Questacon 13
Australian Institute of Sport 7	The Mint 14

18. How did you travel to Parliament House today? Car 1
Bus 2
Walk/cycle 3
Other 4

19. **IF CAR:** Where did you park today? Parliament House carpark 1
Streets nearby 2
Other 3

20. **IF CAR:** How easy was it for you to find a parking place? Very easy 1
Quite easy 2
Quite difficult 3
Very difficult 4

21. Do you live in Canberra OR Queanbeyan? If not, where do you live?

Canberra/Queanbeyan 1	
Other Australia 2	Postcode
Overseas 3	Country



22. What year were you born?

23. What is your main occupation? **SHOW CARD A**

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| Skilled work/Trade/unskilled | 1 | Home duties | 5 |
| Clerical/Administration/Sales | 2 | Student | 6 |
| Professional | 3 | Retired | 7 |
| Looking for work | 4 | | |

24. What is the highest education level you have gained?

READ OUT

- | | |
|---|---|
| Primary school/High school | 1 |
| TAFE/CIT | 2 |
| University – undergraduate degree | 3 |
| University – postgraduate degree | 4 |

Thank you for your help

25. Record gender Male1
 Female2

Interviewer name

Date



Tell us what you think.

Our survey is for teachers who have visited Parliament House with school students.

We are interested to hear about your visit so we can improve the services we offer to schools.

Your responses will be kept confidential. Only grouped responses will be reported.

Please click the 'NEXT' button to start.

★ **1. When was the most recent time you visited Parliament House with school students?**

- 2010
- 2009
- 2008
- 2007
- Earlier
- Have not visited with school children

The following questions are about your MOST RECENT visit to Parliament House with school children.

★ **2. Who made the decision to visit Parliament House? (please tick one)**

- I decided
- School Executive (part of regular Canberra excursion)
- Year Level teachers
- Tour company (part of tour package)

Comment



★ **3. Did you book your visit directly with Parliament House, through an agent, or some other way? (please select one)**

Directly with Parliament House

Through an agent

Other (please specify)

★ **4. Which of the following statements are true for you?**

	Yes	No	Don't know
The information received about the date of the visit and time of the tour was accurate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The booking process provided the school with options that suited our requirements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The booking process was confusing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If the process was confusing in some way, please give details.

5. How interested are you in having receiving the following information relating to your Parliament House experience?

	VERY interested	A LITTLE interested	NOT interested	Not sure
Pre-visit DVD	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pre-visit brochure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pre-visit packs with maps, fact-cards and games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other resources you would like to have (specify)

6. How would you prefer to access resources like these? (tick all that apply)

Download

Sent by email

Sent by mail

Other (please specify)

★ **7. What year levels did you bring on your most recent visit to Parliament House?**

- K-Yr2
- Yr3-4
- Yr5-6
- Yr7-8
- Yr9-10
- Yr11-12

Other (please specify)

★ **8. Teachers visit Parliament House for different reasons. How important were the following reasons for your visit?**

	Major reason	Minor reason	Not a reason
Field trips provide a break from the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parliament House excursions give students a better understanding of how the Australian Parliament works	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parliament House excursions give students a broader perspective on the world	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parliament House is a landmark building with interesting architecture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The visit supports a particular unit of study in the curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

9. All school groups take a guided tour of Parliament House. Which of the following things did you do in addition to the tour? (tick any that apply)

- Participated in the parliamentary role-play
- Met your local Member or Senator
- Looked at the Magna Carta Exhibition
- Looked at art works
- Visited the roof
- Attended the hospitality area

Other (please specify)

★ **10. How long did you spend at Parliament House?**

Less than 30 minutes

30 mins to 1 hour

1-2 hours

2-3 hours

3+ hours

★ **11. What were your main expectations before you visited Parliament House?**

5

6

12. Which of the following statements are true for you? (select as many as apply)

- The visit met all my expectations
- The visit included some good surprises that I didn't expect
- The visit fell short of my expectations in some ways

What surprises? / How did it fall short?

5

6

★ **13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.**

	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know
The tour was an excellent way for students to see Parliament House and learn about it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visitors should be able to see more about current issues and topics at Parliament House	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Parliament House is a 'must-see' destination for school students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most students are interested to see Parliament House	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is important for all students to see the nation's capital and Parliament House	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to access information about the experience to download and use with my classes before or after a visit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Any comments

5

6

* **14. In your view, what were the BEST THINGS about your visit to Parliament House?**

	5
	6

15. Can you suggest some IMPROVEMENTS to the services we provide for teachers and students?

	5
	6

* **16. Which of the following places in Canberra did you also visit with your students? (tick all that apply)**

- Nowhere else, only Parliament House
- Australian War Memorial
- Old Parliament House and the Museum of Australian Democracy
- National Museum of Australia
- Australian Electoral Commission
- Questacon
- National Gallery of Australia
- National Portrait Gallery
- High Court

Other (please specify)

	5
	6

17. Do you have any comments or suggestions to make about visiting Parliament House or the services we offer? What other things would you like to see or do at Parliament House? What other topics would you like to address during a visit?

	5
	6

* **18. Where are you located?**

ACT

NSW

Victoria

Queensland

South Australia / Northern Territory

Western Australia

Tasmania

Thank you for giving your time to complete our survey.

We will continue to develop our education services and hope that you find them interesting and useful.

Please click the DONE button to exit the survey.

This survey is managed by Environmetrics on behalf of Parliament House. If you have any queries about the survey, you can contact us by email: Gillian Savage, gillian@environmetrics.com.au, or by phone 0412 928 302.