

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation
Committee—Supplementary Budget Estimates 2005-06,
October 2005**

**Parliament Portfolio, Department of Parliamentary
Services**

Answers to Questions on Notice

Topic: Plastic bags used in Parliament House last year

Question: P3

Senator Brown—There were 326,500 plastic bags used in Parliament House last year. Is some effort being made to cut that use, recognising that most of those will end up in landfill, if not into the wider environment?

Ms Penfold— Where is that figure from?

Senator Brown—I have something called 'Garbage bag usage in Parliament House in 2004-05'. It shows four different types of plastic bags and a total of 326,500 for last year. Half of those were kitchen tidy bags.

Ms Penfold—I am not familiar with that information. That may be the cleaners' figures; they would certainly use most of the kitchen tidy bags. In the past, the department has used plastic bags in the parliament shop but I understand we have moved to paper ones.

Senator Brown—The department wrote to me last year saying that the matter was under review.

Ms Penfold—That was not the parliament shop?

Senator Brown—No, that was the department.

Ms Penfold— I will have to take that on notice and see if I can get you some information. Can you provide that document that you have?

Answers:

The information provided to Senator Brown of 326,500 plastic bags used by contract cleaners during the period 2004/2005 was an estimate made by the DPS Sustainability Facilitator. The estimate was based on actual usage figures of 163,500 plastic bags for the period January to June 2004. This figure was used to provide a projected usage of 326,500 plastic bags for the financial year 2004/2005.

Actual usage of plastic bags for the corresponding period of January to June 2005 was 145,600 plastic bags. This represents a reduction in usage of 11% for comparable periods. This was achieved through more efficient

use being made of rubbish bin liners, including the reuse of liners where bins are only partially full.

DPS will continue to work with the cleaning contractor to reduce the number of rubbish bin liners used in Parliament House.