

5. Senator Ronaldson asked if we could detail the various systems projects under development.

Senator Ronaldson asked for details about the 'Trade and other receivables' line item on page 26 of the department's portfolio budget statements for 2012-13. These funds comprise unspent appropriations from prior years which are available to the department to draw down. A significant proportion of these funds will be invested in projects to develop or update IT systems. These projects are set out in the following table.

Estimated Capital Expenditure on Systems Projects						
	Actuals	Est	Est	Est	Est	Est
Estimated Expenditure as at 15 October 2012	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
Systems Project	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
i. Table Office system replacement	0.311	0.884	0.518	0.080		1.793
ii. Senate document repository				0.095	0.210	0.305
iii. Electronic parliamentary papers series		0.100	0.300	0.150		0.550
iv. SCID and Commdocs extension project		0.060	0.120	0.100		0.280
v. Venue Management System		0.080	0.020			0.100
vi. PEO e-education tools			0.500	0.500		1.000
vii. Journals digitisation		0.150				0.150
viii. Data access project		0.050				0.050
TOTAL	0.311	1.324	1.458	0.925	0.210	4.228

NOTES

- i. The Table Office system replacement is a joint project of the departments of the Senate and House of Representatives to redevelop a shared Document Production System that assists directly with the management of the business of Parliament. The system is now close to fifteen years old and has reached the end of its useful life. The Table Offices' Production System (TOPS) is expected to be rolled out in late 2013.
- ii. The Senate Document Repository is an adjunct to TOPS, and will allow parliamentary publications, and elements of those publications (down to individual questions, notices, 'scripts' and motions) to be published to an intuitive interface, accessible to senators and staff both in and out of the chamber, including on mobile devices.
- iii. Auditor-General's Report no.37 of 2008-09 – *Online Availability of Government Entities' Documents Tabled in the Australian Parliament* made recommendations about the online publishing of documents tabled in Parliament. The electronic Parliamentary

Papers Series is being developed in response to those recommendations. The departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives are responsible for the publication of the Parliamentary Papers Series and have an approved Business Case outlining a four stage development plan commencing publication at the beginning of 2013.

- iv. Committee Office systems – the Senate Centralised Information Database (SCID) and COMMDOCS Extension is a joint project of the departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate. These systems are currently used to manage Committee business and to receive, store, circulate and retrieve documents. This project will see the functions and capabilities of each system enhanced and made available to committees of both Houses.
- v. The Venue Management System is a joint project between the chamber departments and DPS to provide a system to handle room bookings for various purposes.
- vi. PEO education tools will enable the Parliamentary Education Office to deliver education services utilising the full range of new media and will include an upgrade of the existing website to make full use of web 2.0 capabilities, as well as modern video conferencing tools to reach a wider range of school students.
- vii. The digitisation of the Journals of the Senate will allow the historic Journals to be accessed online. The Journals from 1973 are available in the ‘Parlinfo Search’ system and from 2002 are available in a searchable PDF format on the Senate’s website. This project will complete the set so that all Journals from 1901 will be available.
- viii. The Data Access Project is joint project to develop an exchange for information systems in Parliament House so that data is only entered (or amended) once and can then be used by various parliamentary IT systems to avoid duplication. The development of this system will also require some specific hardware.

Senator Ronaldson also asked about a relationship between two line items in the Budgeted Balance Sheet on page 26 of the Portfolio Budget Statements 2012-13, namely the decrease over the forward years of *Trade and other receivables* and increase in *Intangibles* over the same period. *Trade and other receivables* comprise mostly unspent appropriations from prior years, while *Intangibles* comprise computer software. The department confirms that there is an accounting relationship between the two line items, with the decrease in the former representing the source of funding for the increase in the latter, being the projects detailed above.

Senator Ronaldson also asked about the amounts that had been drawn down from the department’s unspent appropriations in recent years.

Unspent appropriations from prior years are used primarily to fund balance sheet items such as asset purchases and the payment of employee leave provisions and may also be used to fund operating deficits from year to year. However, while the department’s deficit for the

2011-12 financial year was \$1.3 million, much of this is as a result of expenses such as depreciation and employee entitlements which do not involve cash flows in the year in question. As a result, the department did not need to overdraw its appropriation in 2011-12.