



Parliament of Australia
Department of Parliamentary Services

DPS ref: 12/29

6 September 2012

Ms Christine McDonald
Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Christine
Dear Ms McDonald

Thank you for your letter of 30 August 2012 inviting me to a hearing of the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee inquiry into the performance of the Department of Parliamentary Services. In accepting this invitation, I take the opportunity to provide you with my initial response to the Interim Report of the Committee tabled on 27 June 2012 at **Attachment A**.

The Interim Report raises a number of significant issues not only for the Committee, but for the many customers, clients and employees of the Department, and indeed the broader Australian community. I have personally looked into many of the issues raised in my three months as Secretary of the Department and have examined areas for improvement right across the organisation. I have considered the findings of the Interim Report very carefully in the context of my broader program of change for the Department.

On 2 July 2012, I announced to staff my most immediate priority directions for change to reshape DPS into a department with a reputation for customer focused service delivery. These priority directions include a functional realignment to better focus DPS management structures, a new corporate planning process to ensure that diverse lines of business work in harmony to achieve shared goals, and measures to strengthen DPS as a fair and ethical workplace through a new Fostering Inclusion and Respect framework.

Other emerging challenges and opportunities currently being addressed include an effective response to the DPS customer survey, implementation planning of recommendations of an independent ICT review, review of the security breach of 23 August 2012 and supporting the Parliamentary Budget Office on accommodation and shared service arrangements. In August this year I conducted a number of briefings for staff to hear more about my change program. A copy of the presentation is at **Attachment B**.

Finally, I look forward to working constructively with the Committee on the topics identified for further consideration, namely bullying and harassment, appointment procedures, projects that have raised heritage concerns, resource agreements and the delivery of ICT services. I appreciate that some staff feel reluctant to bring forward claims of bullying and harassment for a lack of trust that DPS will support them. This is despite the policies and procedures in place to do so. I have told staff that I take these issues very seriously and will treat all claims in confidence to the extent that it possible while addressing individual issues. I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Committee, in camera if necessary, to further explore these and other matters.

Yours sincerely

Carol Mills
Secretary
Department of Parliamentary Services

Response to the Interim Report into the performance of the Department of Parliamentary Services

Sale of the Parliament House billiard tables

The Committee has raised some significant concerns about the accountability and integrity of DPS management and processes arising from the sale of the Parliament House billiard tables. I take these concerns very seriously.

As previously advised, DPS has accepted all of the recommendations from the Review of DPS disposal policies and procedures, undertaken by Mr Robert Tonkin in September 2011. I can advise that a majority of those recommendations have been fully implemented including training to support the revised asset recognition procedures for items that may have heritage value.

I am continuing to closely monitor the implementation of all outstanding actions from the Review. Work is progressing on the preliminary survey of moveable cultural heritage items provided to the Committee in September 2011. A Museums and Collection Management consultant has been engaged to review items that were listed during the survey as having potential heritage value. Further, a draft procedure for identifying and recording heritage items has been reviewed by heritage management staff of Old Parliament House, the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPAC) and the Department of Finance and Deregulation. It is also being reviewed by a Museums and Collection Management consultant. DPS is in discussions with the Departments of the House of Representatives and Senate to develop a common heritage policy and procedures.

Heritage status of Parliament House

The Committee took evidence on the application of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) to Parliament House and the inclusion of Parliament House on the National Heritage List. As advised to the Committee, Parliament House is under the authority of the Presiding Officers and not obligated to abide by the EPBC Act. The status of Parliament House in relation to the EPBC Act has been confirmed by DSEWPAC. DPS discussed with DSEWPAC possible alterations to the EPBC Act that would enable Parliament House to be heritage listed while maintaining the administrative authority of the Presiding Officers. DPS will report back to the Committee on further developments in this area.

Heritage Management

The Committee raised concerns about the competency of DPS to manage heritage at Parliament House including a lack of rigor in its processes, lack of consultation, loss of heritage items and poor appreciation of maintaining design intent during change processes.

It is noted that a number of existing heritage management measures, such as the Heritage Advisory Board, are relatively new and yet to make a full impact. It is further noted that the Heritage Advisory Board is assisted in its deliberations by expert advice from DSEWPaC and the National Capital Authority.

In order to strengthen the management of heritage at Parliament House, I have proposed to the Heritage Advisory Board that the highest priority should be given to the development of a Conservation Management Plan based on the Burra Charter. The approach draws on the experience of the Sydney Opera House and other major buildings. A scoping process is now underway and DPS will utilise the expertise of qualified experts in a range of relevant areas in both its development and implementation.

Central Reference Document

The Committee expressed its extreme concern that an agreement with Ms Berg had not been made to finalise the Central Reference Document (CRD). The Committee recommended that the Government provide DPS a one-off additional appropriation of \$100,000 towards the completion of the document.

The Heritage Advisory Board agrees that the completion of appropriate documentation to protect the heritage values of Parliament House is very important. The inaugural meeting of the Board was held on 1 May 2012 following the approval of the Heritage Management Framework by the Presiding Officers. The CRD was discussed at Board meetings of 1 May, 8 June and extensively on 6 July.

On 23 August I met with Ms Berg and had a very constructive discussion about heritage management at Parliament House and the incorporation of the CRD into the broader Conservation Management Plan.

I intend to continue this dialogue with Mr Giurgola, the lead architect, and representatives of his firm.



Staff Briefing

August 2012

Page 1



Challenges & Opportunities

- Reduced Budget
- Changing customer/client needs
- Shifting technology
- Need to innovate
- DPS image & brand
- Diverse departmental role
- Committed, skilled & long term workforce
- Inquiry into the Performance of DPS

Page 2



Priorities



- Living within our means
- Articulating & sharing our goals
- Building on our strengths
- Being fit for purpose
- Having strong & transparent leadership
- Engendering a culture of respect
- Promoting innovation
- Measuring our performance
- Telling our stories



Current Actions

New strategic planning framework

- Results based approach
- Engaging staff throughout
- Establishing priorities
- Driving the budget allocation





Current Actions

Budget Reform

- Half year budget allocation
- Zero based budget build
- Preparing 13/14 budget bids

Page 5



Current Actions

Structural reform

- Realigning around functions to remove overlaps & gaps:
 - facilities; ICT; parliamentary support services; visitor services; corporate support
- Enhancing our strategic capacity

Page 6



Current Actions

Cultural change

- Responding to the staff survey
- Embedding an ethical approach
- Zero tolerance for bullying & harassment
- Emphasis on prevention, early intervention and timely resolution
- Appropriate delegations
- Breaking down silos

Page 7



Current Actions

Rebranding the department

- Creating a corporate style
- Disseminating timely, quality information
- Promoting our achievements
- Building networks and partnerships
- Presenting ourselves professionally

Page 8



Actions Timetable

Functional realignment

- Work area analysis underway
- Leadership roles being developed
- New leadership roles to be advertised late August
- Teams allocated to new branches/divisions from October

Page 9



Actions Timetable

Corporate Planning

- Workshops 8 & 29 August
- Town Hall sessions early September
- Final plan end September
- Budget & branch business plans – Oct to Dec

Page 10



Actions Timetable

Cultural Change

- Fostering Inclusion & Respect framework endorsed August
- Progressive review of corporate policies – Sept to Feb
- Comprehensive review of training programs – Oct to Nov
- Review of induction program – Sept to Oct
- Reconciliation Action Plan development – Sept to Nov

Page 11



Actions Timetable

Rebranding

- Corporate style guide released – August
- New approach to Estimates preparation & presentation – Aug to Oct
- Revised Annual Report format – Aug to Oct
- Develop proactive communication strategy for customers/clients – Sept to Oct
- Enhanced linkages with peer organisations, ACT Cultural Institutions – ongoing
- Simplifying access to DPS services – Sept to Nov

Page 12



The Approach

- Active engagement of staff in planning process
- Regular communication - emails, staff meetings, briefing sessions
- Ongoing union consultation
- Utilising best practice tools - keeping what's working & drawing on other organisations' learnings & tools



Outcomes

- An employer of choice for current & potential staff
- A customer focused organisation widely recognised for its expertise, flexibility & responsiveness
- A learning organisation, built on its strengths and with the confidence to innovate