

DPS ENVIRONMENTAL MYTH BUSTERS—# 1

Myth: Don't switch fluorescent lights off because they use more energy in starting up than from being left on, and they have to be replaced sooner.

It is true that there is a slight surge of electricity when turning a fluorescent light on, but that amount of energy equals the lights running for only a short period. For Parliament House's type of fluorescent tube fittings, this equals **only a few seconds**.

The part of this myth that has some truth is that the life of the tube is shortened by turning them off and on. However, this effect is insignificant because:

- (a) tube life claimed by the manufacturer includes a significant amount of switching on and off; and
- (b) an hour of lost life from switching the fluorescent tube on and off is only 3 cents.

The tubes at Parliament House are replaced in bulk at regular intervals based on the tube life advised by the manufacturer. There is a buffer period built into the bulk replacement strategy so that tubes are replaced before they fail, cause flickering or require maintenance. This buffer absorbs the small amount of lamp life lost from switching lights off more regularly.

Parliament House's lighting is a significant portion of electricity usage. Office lighting accounts for nearly 70% of Parliament House's total lighting.

So the message is simple—"Switch off lights when you leave the room" and help reduce Parliament House's energy consumption.

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