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The Department of Parliamentary Services

The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) is one of three departments that are based in Parliament House to support the Parliament.

The others are the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives, which focus on supporting their respective chambers and members of Parliament. A number of support activities are also conducted by the Department of Finance and Deregulation, which maintains a presence in the building.

To fulfil the DPS mission of *servicing the Australian people by supporting*



the Parliament and caring for Parliament House we have some 800 to 900 staff with a huge diversity of expertise. We also use contractors to provide some of the services such as catering and cleaning.

To manage Parliament House on behalf of the Australian people, DPS has an annual expenditure of around \$120 million including capital investment. The building is valued at approximately \$1.875 billion. Aside from the building, our single most valuable asset is Magna Carta valued at \$22.645 million.

During a non-sitting week there are staff working in retailing, heritage preservation and landscaping to name just a few. In a parliamentary sitting week and for major events the number of DPS staff and contractors swell as casuals, sessionals and other staff are brought in to handle the surge in workload.



The breadth of work undertaken by DPS throughout the year is immense. Our staff are engaged in:

Library management;	Finance;
Publishing;	Building and facilities maintenance
Arts collection and management;	including: carpentry, plumbing,
Document and file management;	electrical, cabinet-making,
Policy and legislation research in,	mechanical trades;
for example: social policy, politics,	Project management;
foreign affairs, economics, defence,	IT hardware and software
science and statistics;	development, operations and
Environmental science;	maintenance;
Broadcast services including:	Telecommunications;
development, operation and	HR services and Occupational
maintenance;	Health and Safety;
Hansard recording;	Facilities and events management;
Security services;	Nursing services;
Visitor guides;	Administration - and more.

DPS is led by the Secretary, who is assisted by a team of senior executives. Aside from the Deputy Secretary and the Parliamentary Librarian, each member of this team heads a Branch.

All ongoing employees in DPS work to a Branch Head through their Director. This allows a more structured approach to an employee's work, with personalised performance agreements that clearly show how everyone's specific tasks contribute to the performance of the Department.

Working in DPS provides many unique opportunities and perspectives about the operations of Parliament and the Australian Government in an iconic, international tourist attraction.

With a significant media interest in your work, you would have a privileged, front-row seat at events that shape the nation.



This booklet contains a number of stories from people who have made the change to working in DPS and have few regrets. They illustrate the sort of positions that you may not have considered when you think of working in Parliament House.

All ongoing positions are selected on merit, and there is no special "inside information" that rules out Australian citizens competing for advertised positions. As an ongoing employee your position is not affected by changes in government.

At the back of this booklet you will find more information on how to contact DPS and learn more about who we are, what we do and how you can be part of the next exciting chapter in the life of Parliament House.

In the meantime, please enjoy this brochure and the stories from some of our people.



Landscaping

Parliament House has some 20 hectares of landscape. To keep it looking great our hard working landscaping services teams are willing to get their hands dirty...

One of the first things visitors to Parliament House notice is the outstanding condition of the landscape. To achieve and maintain that standard requires the skills that Brock, a Turf manager in the Landscape Gardening team, brings to work each day.

Brock is proud to be a “turf”, as the staff who take care of the lawns refer to themselves, with the “horts” (horticulturalists) looking after the gardens.

Brock started with DPS 6 years ago after an apprenticeship as a mature-age student through CIT. He enjoys being outside, and takes pride in seeing a very public job well done. If a mistake is made with the lawn stripes on the side of the hill it is not something you can easily hide.

His work involves being part of a team mowing, fertilising, and conducting pest management activities all year round. *“I like the way the hours are seasonal, with different starting and finishing times*

giving me a real life with the kids. Not only that, I’m with a great team and we socialise a lot in our own time, such as playing golf.”

One of Brock’s big concerns in recent months has been the work to make the Parliament House landscape more drought-tolerant. This is most evident on the Senate side of the building, where the sporting field has been resurfaced with a grass variety that needs less water over the year. *“It’s looking good and improving each day!”*

When asked about a highlight of his time in DPS, Brock pauses before mentioning a time when he was operating a ride-on mower. *“Let’s just say I suddenly ended up a lot closer to the Prime Minister’s car than I planned to be!”*



Visitor services

Parliament House belongs to the Australian people. Our visitor services team provides school tours, with around 110,000 school children visiting Parliament House each year...

Casey is a part-time guide with DPS visitor services. She works 4 hour shifts on a 7 day roster that allows her to balance her university study in International Relations.

“Management is very accommodating of my study needs, and with flexible leave arrangements I can study and work part-time. Compared with the wages I would be getting in retail, it is great to be fully self-supportive.”

Having joined DPS earlier this year, Casey finds the conditions the greatest attraction, along with her friendly and supportive co-workers. Most days she leads small group tours of around 1 hour duration, with both public and private (VIP or schools) tours being catered for.

This entails meeting different people, answering questions and educating visitors about the parliamentary environment. She

also gets the opportunity to be part of big events such as the 2020 Summit held in 2008.

Casey is keen to point out that her role is non-political. *“Some people believe that if the Government changes we lose our jobs, but it is a secure position”.*

When asked about the job, Casey has no doubts. *“It’s definitely a job I’d recommend to students like myself. It is just great”* says Casey, giving the thumbs up.

In her role Casey gets to meet a lot of different people. *“The question I’m often asked is if I know the Prime Minister”.* Casey laughs, *“I prefer to tell them that Hugh Jackman hugged me at the 2020 Summit!”*



Hansard

It's the job of our Hansard and Broadcasting teams to make the Parliament accessible to the public by capturing and making available visual, audio and Hansard records of the Parliament's proceedings...

While studying Honours at university in Sydney, Daniel had never considered working in Hansard until he saw the advertisement.

"The specific editing skills and requirements were totally unfamiliar to me" he recounts. The intense training he undertook meant he was well prepared to start with the arrival of the new parliament in early 2008.

"Many people are unfamiliar with the complexity of what we do" he enthuses. *"We provide an accurate, substantially verbatim account of the proceedings of the parliament and its committees."*

Daniel emphasises that while they usually correct obvious mistakes, they neither add to nor detract from the meaning of the speech or the illustration of the argument. *"Getting it right is not that simple!"*

Asked what he does on a typical day Daniel explains that *"On a sitting day we go into the Senate or House of Representatives Chamber every one and a half hours. We have seven and a half minutes in there while our turn is recorded. Then it is back to the office where the more time consuming job of transcribing our turn takes place before we start again."*

Daniel continues *"I really enjoy learning new aspects to the job. The other highlight for me is the proximity to the centre of Australian politics."*

Since he moved to Canberra he's made some great friends, including people from work.

"When Parliament is sitting everyone is flat out, but in between we have the chance to take leave, including the flex time that can really build up during a parliamentary session."



Maintenance

Many of the critical roles in Parliament House go unnoticed until something stops working. We employ a range of qualified trades people including; plumbers, electricians, carpenters, painters, fitters, stone masons, sign writers and locksmiths...

Working in DPS means that, whatever your job, your work is essential to keeping the Parliament operating. This is particularly true of Jason, whose work in keeping the air-conditioning systems functioning is crucial.

Working in conjunction with the sophisticated Building Management System, a computer program that co-ordinates the optimal performance of the building, a typical day involves monitoring plant chillers and rooms, and conducting preventative maintenance anywhere from the top of the building to the bottom.

Jason came to DPS as a machinist-fitter in 2004 after working for 15 years at the Australian Mint. As part of his new role he earned a licence to go up the main flagpole,

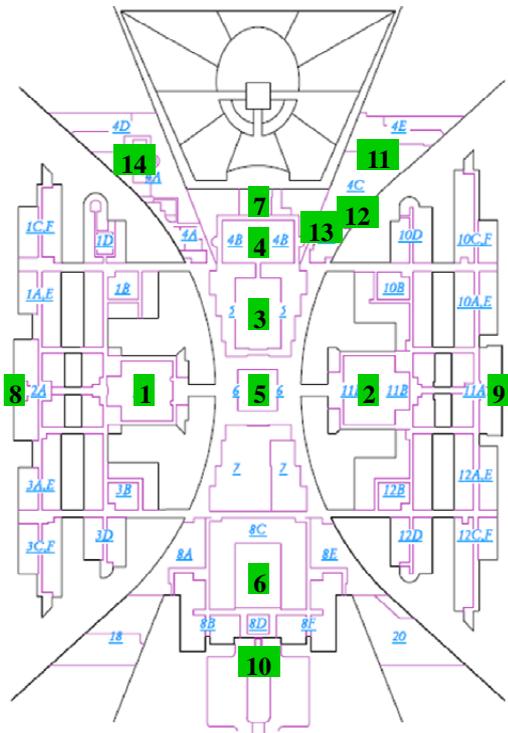
and worked hard to complete a Certificate III in refrigeration with support from DPS.

This is a rare combination of qualifications and makes him uniquely placed to perform a dual role for the Department. The satisfaction the job offers is a bonus. *"Friends, family and the public (particularly children) ask me about it. I think it is a privilege"*.

Jason acknowledges the great flexibility the job offers from day-to-day as well as with longer-term leave preferences, and doesn't mind being on call for when an emergency arises. *"I was called in to work one day to fix a problem and spotted the Queen in the Marble Foyer. That doesn't happen in too many other jobs"*.



Key locations in Parliament House



- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Senate Chamber | 8. Senate Entrance |
| 2. House of Representatives Chamber | 9. House of Representatives Entrance |
| 3. Great Hall | 10. Ministerial Entrance |
| 4. Marble Foyer | 11. Staff Dining Room |
| 5. Members' Hall | 12. Childcare Centre |
| 6. Ministerial Wing | 13. Post Office |
| 7. Public Entrance | 14. Health and Recreation Centre |

Security

The safety and security of Senators, Members, colleagues and the public is a priority of Parliament House. The Parliamentary Security Service (PSS) maintains a constant security presence to demonstrate this commitment...

Coming into DPS as a school-leaver, James undertook extensive skills training to perform his role of keeping the building and its occupants and visitors secure. This included technical training in scanning and using radio communication equipment, as well as first-aid, fire-fighting and defensive tactics.

"A typical shift for me will be working in a particular location, say the front entrance, or on patrol responding to incidents" explains James. *"When Parliament is sitting some of us even get to provide protection to politicians on the Chamber floor".*

Each day presents him with an opportunity to meet many different people, often from around the world. *"A highlight for me during my time here was the day of the "Apology" in 2008. At the front*

entrance that day I was surrounded by huge crowds of excited people. It felt like I was part of history being made. Every day can be so different".

James appreciates the flexibility available in his role, and an understanding approach by management team means he can make the most of his leave.

"The best part of the job is helping people. One time we put a woman's handbag through the x-ray, and on the image we picked up a ring hidden in the lining. It was a diamond engagement ring of great sentimental value she thought she had lost years ago. To say we made her day is an understatement"!



Environment
Stewardship of the people's house requires that DPS goes beyond traditional concerns to position the building for the challenges of the future. This includes reducing waste, energy and water consumption...

An issue that has captured the public's attention in recent years is the environmental performance of Parliament House.

That's where Clare plays her part. With a degree in environmental engineering, Clare leads the DPS response on a range of environmental issues inside and around one of the world's iconic buildings.

"People are really interested in asking what we are doing" Clare enthuses. *"The answer is - a lot"!*

With real support and commitment to achieving better environmental outcomes from very senior staff, it is a great place to work".

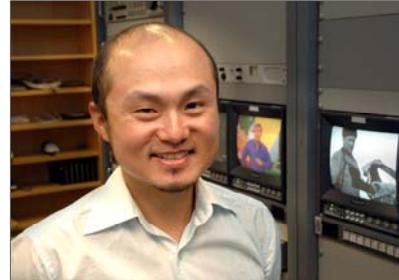


Clare's work involves rigorous assessment of data, but she's certainly not tied to her desk each day.

"I get to see all corners of Parliament House and enjoy lots of autonomy as part of a professional community. I just love my job".

With the environmental performance and credentials of Parliament House likely to come under more scrutiny in the years ahead, Clare is focussed on getting the Department, and the building, ready for the challenges ahead.

Her responsibilities span report writing, management support, attending forums, strategic planning and conducting waste audits, with the latter freeing her from criticisms that she never gets her hands dirty!



"I have had many opportunities to develop skills in using specialised software.

The software is not difficult to operate, but it is still a pretty unique job. The range of media that I work with is amazing".

After working in a number of government institutions in non-ongoing positions, Yu-Qian joined the Parliamentary Library as a permanent employee around six months ago.

"My role in the Information Access Branch is pretty unique. I rotate through two positions, four months in one and eight in the other" says Yu-Qian. *"That means I get to develop a really strong network of colleagues and never do the same work endlessly".*

One of the responsibilities Yu-Qian enjoys is undertaking media monitoring to capture the media appearances of parliamentarians. This includes occasions when a Senator or Member appears in an obscure publication that would otherwise be missed by the mainstream media.

There is a creative aspect to Yu-Qian's work too, as he is often asked to create and format material (such as information posters) for the Library and the Department.

Having recently worked in a number of public sector agencies gives Yu-Qian a unique perspective on being in DPS.

"It is different here and I enjoy it, but in terms of the employment conditions it is just like being in another government department. And the building is just great"!

Library services
Helping to create an informed Parliament through the subject, research and information skills of staff.

IT support

With around 5000 users of the parliamentary computing network our IT support team provides services to users in both Parliament House and electorate offices around the country...

Alex came to DPS with a Bachelor of Arts degree and is now a valued member of the client services team.

One of the first training opportunities Alex was presented with gave him the skills and knowledge to directly support Senators and Members by resolving system issues with the Parliament House mobile messaging service.

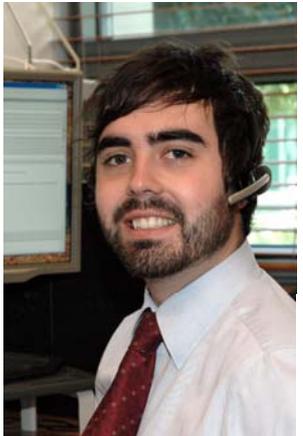
“There’s also a belief that working in IT means you are locked away, but the reality is very different” says Alex.

“Resolving problems, often before they occur, builds a great network of colleagues throughout the parliamentary environment and provides a strong understanding of how the Department operates”.

The diversity of the work Alex experiences also makes his job unique. During the day he may be

rostered on the helpdesk managing routine queries (such as requests for broadcasting footage or password resets), be asked to conduct investigations into systemic issues or help resolve complex and interesting problems. There are even opportunities for project related work.

“When Parliament is not sitting there’s a lot of freedom in when we can take our leave” Alex continues *“But when the parliament is here we are just flat out. It is great to be part of a team though, and there is some flexibility with different shifts operating”.*



Further information

Having read this booklet, you may want to know more about DPS. The following links may assist you.

The DPS Annual Report can be found here

<http://www.aph.gov.au/dps/publications/anrep2008/DPSAnnualReport2007-08.docx> (Microsoft Word format)

http://www.aph.gov.au/dps/publications/anrep2008/Annual_report_final.pdf (.pdf format)

The DPS Strategic Plan can be found here

http://www.aph.gov.au/DPS/publications/DPS_StrategicPlan_2007_2010.pdf

Further information about Library Services can be found here

<http://www.aph.gov.au/Library/Index.htm>

Further information on what happens at Parliament House can be found at <http://www.aph.gov.au/visitors/index.htm>

Further information about working in DPS is available through our employment page at <http://www.aph.gov.au/dps/employment.htm>

More specific information on employment conditions is available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/dps/recruitment/employmentconditions.htm>

To speak to a DPS officer about a specific recruitment opportunity, the contact officer listed in the advertisement would be pleased to assist.

