



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

**PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SENATE  
FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO THE  
PERFORMANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES**

**INTERIM REPORT (JUNE 2012)**

***Recommendation 1: The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government provide the Department of Parliamentary Services a one-off additional appropriation of \$100,000 to be used, together with the existing Department of Parliamentary Services allocation of funds, for the completion of the document, The Architect's Design Intent for Parliament House, Canberra: Central Reference Document, by Ms Pamille Berg. (5.24)***

The Central Reference Document (CRD) is a research document commissioned by the former Joint House Department and comprises a series of detailed descriptions of each space drawing on the original Architect's own words and responses to the building's design brief. It does not include conservation policies and strategies, or management guidelines. While it was originally felt that the CRD could be used as a management document, its structure and narrative style is not suited for this purpose.

The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) has engaged heritage expertise to prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP). The CMP will be based on the *Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 1999* and will apply heritage best practice principles to the management of the heritage values of Parliament House (which include the design values of the building). A CMP is the recognised industry best-practice tool to manage the heritage values of a place. The CMP will help deliver a holistic and integrated approach to the medium and long term management and conservation of Parliament House. The principal architect of Parliament House, Mr Romaldo Giurgola AO, is being consulted during this process.

The development of the CMP is considered the highest priority for managing the heritage of Parliament House. DPS has allocated funds to the development of the CMP, rather than completion of the CRD, as the CMP will provide clear management guidance. DPS does not intend to complete the CRD at this stage. However, the CRD will be one of the primary source documents used to develop the CMP, as well as remaining as a valuable resource document.

DPS has also engaged recognised expertise to develop a set of Design Principles for Parliament House. The Design Principles are to be generated from the work of, and discussions with Mr Giurgola. These Principles will central in informing CMP policies and recommendations; and will provide a concise, permanent reference source of the vision and key concepts in the design of Parliament House.

The CMP and Design Principles documents will provide a source of reference material and guidance that will allow streamlined decision-making and enable greater efficiencies in managing maintenance and capital works activities while appropriately managing heritage values of Parliament House. The CMP will also provide recommendations on how to manage changes to the building as work practices of the Parliament of Australia evolve.

## **FINAL REPORT (NOVEMBER 2012)**

***Recommendation 1: The committee recommends that the funding and administration of the Department of Parliamentary Services be overseen by the Senate Appropriations and Staffing Committee and the House Appropriations and Administration Committee meeting jointly for that purpose, and that standing orders be amended as necessary. (10.12)***

Implementation of this recommendation through the proposed amendment of standing orders is a matter for the Senate and House of Representatives to determine.

In our February 2013 response to the recommendations of the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee (the Committee)<sup>1</sup>, we referred to the four layers of external accountability for DPS. With regard to parliamentary committee oversight, senior officers continue to appear regularly before the Committee, the Joint House Committee, as well as the Senate House Committee. Although standing orders have not been amended, senior DPS officers have attended meetings of the Senate Appropriations and Staffing Committee, in addition to our regular appearances before the House Appropriations and Administration Committee. In addition, the Parliamentary Library is overseen by the Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library.

DPS has also strengthened its internal governance processes, including establishing a new Audit and Risk Committee with two external members.

***Recommendation 2: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services implements appropriate training programs for managers in relation to bullying and harassment and ensures that adequate processes are in place so that all employees are confident in reporting bullying and harassment. (10.19)***

DPS has previously outlined to the Committee training and awareness raising action taken and planned actions to reduce the incidence of bullying and harassment and to increase the level of reporting. DPS is pleased that incidences of bullying and harassment are reducing as a result of these actions.

In 2012-13, the Department received sixteen complaints about bullying and harassment, all of which have been resolved. Of the sixteen complaints, the largest number was in the Security Branch (five complaints). The majority of complaints (ten complaints) were resolved through management resolution. Two complaints resulted in code of conduct investigations. In one case the allegations were shown to be unproven and in the other, a sanction of one pay point was determined.

In 2013-14 there were four complaints about bullying and harassment. Of these, one resulted in the resignation of a staff member, two were subject to management resolution, and one is in progress. One of the complaints led to a code of conduct review, which found the allegations to be unproven.

DPS has taken the opportunity through the introduction of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013* (the PID Act) and the insertion of anti-bullying amendments into the *Fair Work Act 2009* to provide additional training to all staff about the requirements and provisions under the Acts, and to review and update internal procedures. Three Senior Executive Service (SES) officers have undergone training and are 'authorised officers' under the PID Act.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Parliamentary Services, *Response to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee report: The performance of the Department of Parliamentary Services*, February 2013.

DPS, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Ombudsman, has developed a range of information for staff and managers. An intranet page has been established containing DPS procedures for Public Interest Disclosure, FAQs, a process flow chart, and guidance for supervisors and managers in handling a disclosure. In particular, DPS has ensured that its guidance material on the PID Act highlights the protections afforded to disclosers under the Act, as one mechanism for ensuring that staff are confident to report matters of concern.

***Recommendation 3: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services develop a bullying register to record information about bullying such as details of the incident, where it happened and what action that has been taken so that any trends can be quickly and easily identified. (10.20)***

DPS continues to use its Human Resources register to record workplace issues, including complaints of bullying and harassment and code of conduct investigations. Separately, DPS also maintains a register of disclosures made and investigations undertaken under the PID Act.

The Human Resources register is used for assessing trends and reporting to the DPS Executive in relation to workplace issues. Data relating to the number and status of code of conduct investigations, as well as Public Interest Disclosure investigations are reported to the Executive Committee meeting and to the Audit and Risk Committee.

In 2013-14, twelve code of conduct investigations were commenced and all have been finalised. Currently, there are two cases open with the investigation underway. In addition there is one preliminary assessment being conducted to determine whether formal code of conduct investigation should be pursued.

Where issues are identified they are taken up with the appropriate SES officer for action.

***Recommendation 4: The committee recommends that if areas with systemic bullying issues are identified, that the Department of Parliamentary Services undertake a pre-emptive investigation of the area rather than wait until formal complaints are received. (10.21)***

Of the twenty incidents of bullying and harassment reported in the last two financial years, complaints came from several business areas. The highest number was in Security Branch (six complaints). Of these six complaints:

- one case related to alleged bullying by colleagues and a preliminary investigation is in progress;
- one case related to alleged abuse by a Senator's staffer, and the matter was managed directly with the Senator;
- one case related to alleged abuse by a delivery driver, and was referred to the service provider for action, and an apology was received; and
- three cases related to officers being requested to perform duties within the requirements of the roles. In each of these cases, the matter was resolved through intervention by management.

There are presently nineteen trained Harassment Contact Officers (HCOs); eighteen are available (one is on long term leave). These staff attended a two day training program in February 2013, and were provided with updated information on the PID Act. Four further staff have registered to become HCOs; they will receive training shortly.

The role of the HCOs is to provide support, guidance and information on processes and options open to individuals to assist with the resolution of complaints. Contact details for the HCOs are published on the DPS intranet and provided to all new starters. HCOs have an important role in helping DPS identify trends or problems in work areas, although to date no significant issues have been identified at this level.

***Recommendation 5: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services approach Comcare to undertake a further audit, including a survey of all staff, before the end of 2013 to measure improvements, if any, in the management of bullying and inappropriate workplace behaviour in the Department of Parliamentary Services. (10.22)***

DPS is pleased to report that Comcare revisited the Department in October 2013 to review progress against the original eleven recommendations from the 2011 Bullying Prevention Audit. Comcare inspectors indicated they were pleased with DPS' progress and that 'DPS is tracking well'. Importantly, Comcare made no further recommendations, nor did they exercise any formal powers under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

DPS continues to work closely with Comcare and remains accredited against the SafetyMAP Work Health and Safety Management System Audit Tool to Joint Accreditation Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) standards.

***Recommendation 6: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services ensure that all recruitment processes are open, transparent and based on merit. (10.26)***

In 2013-14, there were 160 recruitment actions of which 124 were through an advertised, open, merit-based process.

Thirty-six recruitment actions were via *Section 26* transfers: fifteen of these transfers were staff from the chamber departments and the Department of Finance, as a direct result of the transfer of functions into DPS. A number of functions such as Parliament House ICT, Electorate Office ICT, DPS Payroll and AUSPIC photographic services have been transferred to DPS. The remaining twenty-one were recruited to specific positions in accordance with the Department's recruitment policy as well as Commonwealth procedures.

In addition, twenty internal promotions were awarded in 2013-14.

***Recommendation 7: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services ensures that all staff involved in the conduct of selection processes receive adequate training and that a review of recruitment processes and tools be undertaken to ensure that they are relevant and appropriate. (10.27)***

DPS has undertaken a review of all recruitment policies, guidelines, processes and templates to ensure that they comply with the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* changes that took effect on 1 July 2013, and broader Australian Public Service (APS) best practice. In addition, updates have been undertaken as a result of the implementation of the Department's e-recruitment system in July 2014. This review has resulted in:

- All employment letters being revised and streamlined;
- A revised Recruitment Policy using plain English has been developed and is under consideration by stakeholders for comment, for release by the end of this month; and
- New recruitment fact sheets to assist selection panels and revised staff selection and selection advisory committee guidelines to reflect the new recruitment policy and e-

recruitment implementation. These factsheets and guidelines have been developed and are under consideration for release.

To ensure all panel chairs are appropriately trained, one-to-one training for chairs of selection panels is offered by the recruitment team within HR Services. An e-learning package will be developed by the end of 2014. DPS will also continue to support staff and managers through a recruitment helpdesk.

In December 2014, the new DPS Learning Management System will be released which will enable many e-learning modules to be delivered easily to DPS staff.

***Recommendation 8: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services investigate the use of systems, including electronic recruitment, to better manage recruitment and ensure efficient processes. (10.28)***

DPS is undertaking a significant program of work into its corporate systems to improve the operational efficiency, transparency and effectiveness of the management and maintenance of Parliament House, its occupants and the services for which DPS is accountable. This activity commenced with an assessment and business case that focussed on areas within DPS, including Human Resources where efficiencies and benefits could be ascertained by the introduction of streamlined business processes delivered through the corporate SAP systems.

The e-recruitment system went live in July 2014 providing the Department transparency, accountability and a greater level of efficiency and reporting capability within the revised DPS recruitment processes.

***Recommendation 9: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services approaches the Merit Protection Commissioner to establish independent selection advisory committees for forthcoming recruitment processes. (10.29)***

In March 2013, DPS negotiated an agreement with the Merit Protection Commissioner to establish a pilot independent selection advisory committee for a bulk recruitment round of Security officers. The cost to DPS was \$14,780. An evaluation of this pilot concluded the use of independent selection advisory committees is best suited to bulk recruitment rounds, as for small scale recruitment it would not be cost effective or timely. It will therefore be considered whenever DPS is conducting bulk recruitment exercises.

***Recommendation 10: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services review rates of personal leave in order to identify any underlying causes of the high levels of personal leave taken in the department. (10.32)***

DPS has worked actively with staff and union representatives across the organisation to better analyse the extent and causes of unplanned leave. This has included the establishment in August 2013 of a Workplace Absenteeism Review Group representing all key areas of DPS. It was established to operate until June 2014. The terms of reference of the Group were to:

- examine all leave data and identify the overall rate of workplace absence in DPS and identify any patterns of workplace absence including hot-spots;
- identify, if possible, the causes of workplace absence in DPS;
- recommend actions for addressing those causes and the issue of presenteeism; and
- develop departmental guidelines to ensure more effective management of workplace absence.

The Group's analysis of unscheduled leave included findings about the impact of the nature of work on leave taking. For example, while 45% of DPS staff work in shifts, they accounted for 59% of unscheduled leave. This has now been referred to Divisions and Branches where common occupations are clustered, so we can better understand the impact of such factors as manual labour and shift work on leave patterns.

In addition, DPS has developed an Absenteeism Toolkit, available on the intranet, to assist managers in managing unplanned leave within their teams.

***Recommendation 11: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services undertake a work health and safety audit within Hansard services to identify any factors contributing to overuse injuries. (10.33)***

No physical workplace health and safety injuries have been reported in Hansard since early 2012. All eight Hansard staff working with long-term workplace restrictions since 2011 have successfully returned to full time duties.

DPS now takes a proactive and preemptive approach to workplace health and safety. All new Hansard staff are provided with advice and assistance regarding departmental and personal obligations. New staff also receive workstation health and safety assessments and consequent recommended aids, such as ergonomic keyboards and chairs.

Of the seven recommendations arising from the 2012 workplace health and safety review of Hansard, five recommendations have been implemented, one recommendation (around Hansard staff being trained to undertake basic workstation assessments) was not accepted, and one (reviewing the duration of time Hansard staff spend in committee room booths) will be considered in the context of a 2014-15 workplace health and safety review of Hansard.

The focus of the 2014-15 review will be on examining the workplace to identify inherent risks, suggest mitigation strategies, and assist management to determine what constitutes reasonable productivity from a workplace health and safety perspective. This review will examine and report on:

- workplace set up, including offices and workstations;
- resources and methods of production;
- rostering and hours of work;
- workload and productivity requirements in sitting and non-sitting weeks; and
- inherent risks and mitigation strategies.

The reviewer will be required to take into account several reports relating to Hansard, including the 2007 and 2012 workplace health and safety reports, the June 2013 trial of not having editors in the chambers, and the 2006 Hansard Continuous Improvement report. The reviewer will also be asked to conduct focus groups with staff.

In the meantime, Hansard management is actively supporting staff with their personal workplace health and safety obligations, especially in relation to taking computer breaks.

***Recommendation 12: The committee recommends that the Presiding Officers arrange for the installation of a plaque within the Parliamentary Precincts, during the building's 25th anniversary, commemorating the contribution made by Mr Romaldo Giurgola, as well as all those who worked on the planning, design and construction of Parliament House. (10.41)***

As the original architects were satisfied with the level of recognition already present in the Marble Foyer it was decided not to proceed with this recommendation in its original form. Instead, after consultation with Mr Giurgola, a certificate of appreciation was awarded to him

as principal architect by the former Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard MP, at a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event in June 2013.

***Recommendation 13: The committee recommends that the Presiding Officers table in both Houses, on a biennial basis, a report devoted specifically to the building and its contents including information on the condition of the building and its contents, costs of upkeep of the building, heritage concerns and any other related matter so as to fully inform the Parliament and the public about the building. (10.49)***

DPS received funding in 2014-15 to conduct a full Building Condition Assessment Report which will provide a point-in-time assessment of the condition of the building. This assessment will enable us to develop a Strategic Asset Management Plan to outline the best methods to maintain and enhance the condition of the building for the next twenty-five years.

This assessment of the current state of the building will provide a robust basis for developing detailed ten and twenty-five year maintenance and refurbishment plans. It will form the basis of seeking appropriate funding for this iconic building, as a working Parliament, into the future. The reports and data collected will also enable DPS to establish regular, robust mechanics for reporting on the standard of the building against heritage and other standards.

***Recommendation 14: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services undertake capability reviews in relation to design integrity, project management and technical areas including fire safety and engineering services. (10.53)***

DPS has reviewed its project management and procurement areas. Thanks to the availability of new funding, we are now in the process of restructuring those business areas to best meet current and future needs. The skills and qualifications required by DPS employees are being reflected in revised duty statements for relevant positions, new recruitment exercises and individual learning and development plans.

We have also commissioned a series of capability reviews focussed on the areas of design integrity, project management and technical services, including fire safety and engineering. As individual reviews are completed, recommendations have been considered and implemented where practical, affordable and appropriate. This has included the short term engagement of technical specialists (in the fire safety and engineering fields), and project management specialists to fill capability and skills gaps.

The Department has established an Expert Advisory Panel of leading heritage and design experts. The Panel is supporting the two major pieces of work related to the design integrity of Parliament House referred to earlier: the Design Principles document, which will detail the concepts and ideas behind the original design of Parliament House; and the CMP, which will outline how the heritage values of the building are managed into the future.

***Recommendation 15: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services undertake an audit of fire safety in Parliament House and consider reviewing the standard of building documentation. (10.55)***

The program of works to upgrade and replace old and ageing fire infrastructure continues, with priority work to be completed by September 2014. To date DPS has spent just over \$1 million on fire safety, with a further \$5 million scheduled on fire upgrades and enhancements.

A component of the Building Condition Assessment is a point-in-time audit of the condition of the building's fire services. The Strategic Asset Management Plan will outline the most

appropriate methods to upgrade, enhance and maintain the building, including fire services, for the next twenty-five years.

DPS continues to review and update its building documentation. Significant progress has been made to ensure that information is current and accurate. New or improved building documentation systems have been scoped and documented, and are being considered as part of the CMP and Strategic Asset Management Plan work. Funding has been set aside for works to commence in 2014-15.

***Recommendation 16: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services provide more accurate, meaningful and transparent information, including information about costs and construction projects undertaken in Parliament House, in its annual report. (10.58)***

The structure of the forthcoming DPS annual report will be more closely aligned to the *Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Requirements for Annual Reports*. It will also take into account the Committee's recent assessment of the 2012-13 annual report. There will be a clear read between the report and the Department's Portfolio Budget Statements and Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements. Business areas will provide performance information and data supported by a comprehensive narrative encompassing interpretation of results, trends over time, achievements, challenges and—where relevant—an outline of future directions.

Data and the interpretation of results will be interpolated such that the reader will be provided with a clear view of areas where the department has achieved and where it has been challenged to meet targets. Particular attention will be paid to:

- providing a more comprehensive discussion and analysis of DPS' financial performance;
- checking data for accuracy and consistency;
- providing sufficient detail about major capital works projects and building maintenance; and
- providing sufficient explanation where results vary markedly from performance targets.

A review of all aspects of the Department's project management methodologies, including financial reporting and project governance was undertaken in the first half of 2013. As part of this process, a move towards improved information collection and reporting is progressively being implemented and will be reflected in the forthcoming annual report.

To support its goal of improving the report, DPS commissioned an independent consultant to review its annual reporting process, taking account of best practice approaches to annual report writing as well as the Committee's feedback. This will provide an additional layer of rigour to the production of the forthcoming annual report.

***Recommendation 17: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services undertake a full audit of the Parliament House status A and B furniture with particular regard to condition, conservation measures, use of furniture, and past disposal practices. (10.63)***

DPS pro-actively commenced a full audit of Status A and B furniture in Parliament House, including assets owned by the chamber departments. The audit was completed on 14 August 2014. Work was delayed following the 2013 federal election and commencement of the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, as DPS staff were not afforded ready access to items under the management of the chamber departments. We believe that all Status A and B furniture should be assets owned and retained by DPS, in line with other assets of Parliament House.



Meanwhile, ready access should be afforded by the chamber departments so that DPS can meet its existing responsibilities for maintaining those assets.

***Recommendation 18: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services ensures that all staff involved in contract development and management have relevant skills and receive appropriate training where necessary. (10.66)***

As mentioned previously, we have undertaken a number of capability reviews across the Department, prioritising procurement and project management. These reviews were a combination of internally driven and external consultant reviews. With the additional funding received in the Budget, the Department is now in a position to accelerate the changes this financial year, with the building project area currently being recruited to.

***Recommendation 19: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services review the way in which it develops and manages contracts. (10.68)***

DPS manages some 400 contracts; approximately twenty to thirty of which are long-term, others are short term. Whilst DPS is locked into some arrangements that cannot be changed for many years, we have held senior level meetings with the catering contractor – IHG – and developed strengthened reporting requirements. We are actively managing the cleaning contract, despite the limited number of performance criteria. We have also achieved efficiencies by renegotiating some existing contracts. For example, in the ICT area, DPS currently has approximately 150 vendor relationships, which are covered by contract or panel arrangements. We have saved approximately \$722,000 over the past two financial years; comprising \$432,000 in 2012-13, and \$290,000 in 2013-14. We will have the opportunity to further review and re-negotiate around seventy of these contracts in 2014-15.

We are also applying a more rigorous approach as contracts expire. The appointment of a new Director, Contracts and Licences in mid-September 2014 will enable us to accelerate this process with regard to retail and press gallery licences.

DPS will also work with the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) to continue this work once we have the results of the current audit, expected by late February 2015.

***Recommendation 20: The committee recommends that the Department of Parliamentary Services consider approaching the Auditor-General to undertake an audit by arrangement of DPS contract development and management. (10.69)***

The ANAO is currently conducting an audit and reviewing contract management arrangements. It is expected that this review will be completed by late February 2015. DPS will consider any recommendations to further improve its capability and processes.

***Recommendation 21: The committee recommends that the Security Management Board review the criteria for the issue of photographic security passes for Parliament House. (10.72)***

DPS commissioned a review of the security pass policy and related procedures in 2013-14, which included reviewing the criteria for the issue of photographic passes. The findings of the review were represented to the Security Management Board (SMB) by the consultant in early 2014. There were ten recommendations, with detailed sub-parts. The SMB has since held discussions about the report and the recommendations have been categorised into stages; some require significant financial investment and others require consultation with stakeholders before recommendations are made to the Presiding Officers. The low impact,

procedural based recommendations that do not require external approval are being progressed.

***Recommendation 22: The committee recommends that, as a matter of priority, arrangements should be completed for the transfer of responsibility for mobile and multifunction devices to the Department of Parliamentary Services. (10.74)***

DPS and the Department of Finance completed the transfer of responsibility for mobile and multifunctional devices to DPS on 1 July 2013. This transfer was cost neutral to the previous model. The administration of items approved by the Presiding Officers is now the responsibility of DPS. The provision of any further services will be subject to business cases to the Department of Finance.

***Recommendation 23: The committee recommends that the Commonwealth exempt the Department of Parliamentary Services from any future one-off, additional efficiency dividends. (10.77)***

DPS was grateful for the Government's allocation of significant additional funds in the Budget, totalling \$60 million over the forward estimates. This budget allocation demonstrates strong recognition of the essential work done by the DPS, as well as confidence in the Department. These funds provide us with certainty and a level of support to continue our services and accelerate our change program. However, ongoing efficiency dividends will continue to impact on the Department's operations in the longer term.

Department of Parliamentary Services  
5 September 2014