

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Program 1.7

Question No. 98

Senator Humphries asked the following question at the hearing on 26 May 2011:

The Attorney-General's Department annual report 2008-09 notes (page 149): "Significant goals for next year include preparing for commissioning of the national crisis coordination capability. This improved capability will provide a centralised coordination and information sharing facility to enhance whole-of-government decision making during crises. The changes to national crisis coordination during 2009-10 will represent the most significant advances in national crisis coordination over the last decade."

- What are these "most significant advances"?
- Can you provide examples of what has been funded under this line item?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

In 2008, Ric Smith AO conducted a Review of Homeland and Border Security. This review identified that while crisis management had generally been done well 'on the day', the absence of centralised and well understood arrangements for all hazards national crisis management was an area of risk for the Australian Government.

The "most significant advances" that address the vulnerabilities identified in the Review are:

- In 2009, the Government introduced the Australian Government Crisis Management Arrangements - A Guide for Ministers, which assists ministers and their staff during a crisis by providing a high level overview of the Australian Government's crisis management arrangements
- In 2010, the Government introduced the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework which supports the Australian Government Crisis Management Arrangements and set out how officials support their ministers in the discharge of their responsibilities. It links ministerial actions and considerations with the work of key officials, committees and facilities under portfolio-driven and whole of government circumstances.
- In 2010, the Parliament House Briefing Room (PHBR) was established. This facility was designed to support Executive decision-making during large scale emergencies and provide improved technologies for providing whole-of-government information from national security, emergency and other authorities in a more coordinated way during crises.
- In September 2011, the new enhanced Australian Government Crisis Coordination Centre (CCC) facility is scheduled to be established. The facility will connect relevant Australian Government and jurisdictional agencies to centralise Australian Government response arrangements during national crisis in order to develop a single, timely and consistent understanding of a crisis incident, its implications and the national capacity to respond.

Some examples of what has been funded under this line item include:

- Design and construction of the PHBR
- Enhanced Information, Communications and Technologies (ICT) to support the PHBR including Secure Video Teleconferencing
- Design and construction of the CCC
- Enhanced ICT to support CCC including Secure Video Teleconferencing and an Information Management System, all of which support the executive decision making within the PHBR.