

PAEC 2023–24 Financial and Performance Outcomes Hearing

18 November 2024 - Parliament of Victoria

Response to Questions Taken on Notice

Question 1

\$8.52 million was provided over four years to support DPS to implement the Watts recommendations.

Can you tell us how much has been spent in the year to date?

Watts Recommendation funding of \$8.52m comprises funding for four financial years: 2022-23 to 2025-26.

For the years 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years, \$2.272m of these funds have been spent.

Question 2

In terms of the report referenced before that will be given to IBAC, what is the date of DPS' next progress update due to IBAC and the Victorian Ombudsman?

The Department of Parliamentary Services has provided two progress updates to IBAC and the Victorian Ombudsman (VO) on the implementation of the recommendations in the Operation Watts report relevant to DPS, on 23 March 2023 and 1 August 2023. No further Operation Watts progress update remains outstanding by DPS to IBAC and VO. IBAC and VO tabled the Operation Watts progress report in parliament on 14 September 2023.

Question 3

Do you know what the cost has been to date for the East Wing Project?

The cost of the East Wing project (up until 30 June 2024) is \$44,236,783. This comprises \$32,553,370 for the current project phase (stage 3 up until 30 June 2024) and \$11,683,413 for all previous project phases.

Question 4

What about the air conditioning in the Annexe?

The air conditioning (AC) system in the Parliament House Members' Annexe is a 5-star energy rated system, using chilled water for cooling and hot water for heating. The AC system comprises a number of separate AC units, with each of these units servicing approximately eight offices.

To gain the efficiencies from the AC system, each separate unit can set itself to heating or cooling, depending on the prevailing weather and required temperature. The system is designed to enable an office occupant to set their individual office temperature, which occurs through the dampers in the ceiling vents allowing either more or less airflow, rather than cooling or heating the air to the office.

As a result, it can take some time to change the air temperature. When the office windows are open, the dampers will close the air supply, thus reducing the airflow.

Question 5

There has been an 84 per cent year-on-year reduction in hazard inspections, from 57 to nine. Do you know what that figure reflects or why that figure is the case?

The reduction in the completed number of hazard inspections is due to the slight delay in the scheduled Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) hazard inspection activities. Whilst historically conducted during Q3/Q4 of the financial year, the hazard inspections took place across July/Aug 2024 (i.e. next financial year). This was due to changes of the established Designated Work Groups, the subsequent Health and Safety Representative nomination and election process as well as the provision of required training. During July/August 2024, a total of 77 inspections were undertaken.

As a result of timing, the data will be reflected in the 2024-25 annual report. Despite the inspections being delayed (to the following financial year), safety conditions were continuously monitored to ensure compliance with standards, including the reporting of hazards through the Incident Management System which were addressed and actioned accordingly.

Question 6

Onto the tours, do you keep records on the languages that people speak who are undertaking those tours of Parliament?

The Department of the Legislative Assembly (DLA) does not keep data on the specific languages spoken by tour participants. Public tour visitors are invited to complete a survey which gathers data on where they normally reside, which provides some guidance on languages to provide tours material in, but it's not as specific as seeking data on languages spoken.

DLA recently began tracking data on the groups who attend booked tours (as distinct from public tours).

In 2023–24, there were six English as an Additional Language (EAL) groups, and in 2024–25 to date, there have been six more.

The EAL groups do not use the audio guides, as their tours are conducted in English.

Provide any data on the amount of times audio guides are requested for the tours and perhaps aggregate that by each requested language.

The DLA does not maintain data on the number of times the QR code audio guides are used or requested on public tours.

What is the most common out of the requested languages?

The DLA does not have this data, see answer above.

If there is any sort of overlap of languages that are requested that you cannot currently provide audit guides for, it would be great to know if that is the case and what they are.

The DLA does not maintain this data.

Question 7

Do we have a percentage of electorate offices that do not meet the security overlay as set subsequent to the electorate office standards?

All permanent electorate offices have a security overlay which comprises the office alarm system, electronic access control, CCTV cameras (internal and external) and built-in security interface between the office reception and the public foyer. The security overlays were implemented into the electorate offices over four separate phases, commencing in 2017.

Two temporary offices (or 1.5 per cent of the portfolio) do not have a full security overlay. These offices are interim arrangements while property searches are being conducted for appropriate offices which will meet the electorate office standards and framework.