

Department of Finance and Deregulation

# Review of the Administration of Parliamentary Entitlements

Implementation of the Williams' Report

## Summary

As at 21 April 2012 44 of the 47 elements of the recommendations had been completed. This equals 93.6 percent of the total. 52 percent of those completed were finalised before the expected implementation date.

21 April 2012

## Implementation Update 21 April 2012

### Recommendations of the Review of Administration of Ministerial and Parliamentary Services

#### Alternative Service Delivery Models

Recommendation Number	Recommendation Detail from the Report	Implementation Date
1 (i)	A recommendation be prepared for the Minister's consideration to transfer the administration of the payment of additional salary to Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries to the Chamber Departments, with the Minister, or the Prime Minister taking over the responsibility for making any regulations under the Ministers of State Act.	Completed.
1 (ii)	M&PS give priority to working with AGIMO and the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) to negotiate the transfer of responsibility for electorate office IT equipment and facilities to DPS.	Completed
1 (iii)	The transfer of electorate IT equipment and facilities be accompanied by the transfer of the IT policy function currently residing in M&PS.	Completed
1 (iv)	The remainder of the M&PS function remain in Finance at this stage.	Completed
1 (v)	M&PS continue discussions with the Human Services portfolio about options to take advantage of the Portfolio's experience in service delivery across a range of areas and short or medium term staff exchanges to help improve service to clients.	Completed

#### Written Guidance on Entitlements

Recommendation Number	Recommendation Detail from the Report	Implementation Date
2 (i)	Priority be given to ongoing review of the Entitlements handbooks as the primary advisory documents, taking guidance from queries to the call centres on where further clarity should be provided to assist understanding.	Completed
2 (ii)	Those references in the text of the Entitlements handbooks to source documents whose provisions have already been taken up in the text and the source footnoted, be dropped; where further detail is available in the source document that has not been included, the particular omission be noted, together with a reference to the relevant paragraph in the source document, for information where required.	Completed
2 (iii)	As experience pinpoints areas where a lack of specificity in the eligibility for the entitlement causes difficulties in interpretation for Senators and Members, a note be included in the handbooks that additional care should be taken in assessing eligibility for this entitlement.	Completed
2 (iv)	The purpose and content of the Guide to the Entitlements of Senators and members be reassessed, including directing users to the handbooks as the primary advisory document on entitlements.	Completed

<b>2 (v)</b>	The Guide and How to Get Started Kit be reviewed to align the terminology, order, title headings and colour coding with that used in the handbooks to facilitate navigation across the suite of advisory documents.	Completed
<b>2 (vi)</b>	The review of the Guide be completed in time for the changes to be reflected in the next printed edition.	Completed
<b>2 (vii)</b>	A reference to the relevant paragraphs of the handbooks where the information on the entitlements can be found be added to the How to Get Started Kit, together with a notation that the online version of the handbooks should be consulted for most current source of advice on entitlements.	Completed

### Communication and Advice

<b>Recommendation Number</b>	<b>Recommendation Detail from the Report</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>
<b>3 (i)</b>	Review the content of the orientation sessions for new MOP(S) Act staff to focus on priority information, and add the relevant Entitlements handbook references to the handouts (as well as using the same colour coding) to facilitate cross reference for more detailed explanation at a later date.	Completed
<b>3 (ii)</b>	Develop a flag procedure to identify calls received where the answer given may be breaking new ground, to assist the preparation of a united response.	Completed
<b>3 (iii)</b>	Progressively develop a portfolio of scripted responses, including frequently asked questions, for use on the Staff Help Desk to facilitate consistent advice.	Completed
<b>3 (iv)</b>	Consider the feasibility of encouraging a greater number of requests for advice to come via the email channel, as a cheaper alternative to call.	Completed
<b>3 (v)</b>	In view of the operational difficulties of the Call Register and early indications that the cost of a replacement off the shelf system would be modest, assess the cost and operational ability of a replacement call system.	Completed
<b>3 (vi)</b>	Continue to dedicate resources wherever possible to the development of the Entitlements Histories, designating Entitlements Policy Branch responsible for retaining their currency, once finalised, in parallel with updating the Entitlements Handbooks.	Completed
<b>3 (vii)</b>	Review the policy of access to the Entitlements Histories with a view to increasing the numbers of M&PS staff that have access.	Completed
<b>3 (viii)</b>	Continue discussions with the People Advisory Centre of the Human Services Portfolio to benefit from its expertise in assessing the value of alternative pathways in providing advice to clients.	Ongoing

### Improving Accessibility

Recommendation Number	Recommendation Detail from the Report	Implementation Date
4 (i)	M&PS work to improve the design of the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services intranet site, introducing processes to ensure that the design of new forms and circulars takes account of the provisions needed to make them web accessible and increase search capacity.	Completed
4 (ii)	M&PS use the Human Services Tuggeranong Concept Laboratory to redesign two of the most complex forms, using that process as a model to review other forms used to access entitlements.	Ongoing
4 (iii)	At the same time as M&PS approaches the market to refresh the panel of providers of development programs for parliamentarians and their staff, it canvass the ability of the providers to provide an online booking facility.	Ongoing
4 (iv)	A suggestion box be included on the redesigned Ministerial and Parliamentary Services intranet site, to provide the ability for both parliamentarians and their staff to provide feedback on issues of concern or ideas for improvement.	Completed
4 (v)	M&PS consult the Minister's office, and other offices in Parliament House, if the Minister agrees, as part of any re-design of the user interfaces to systems or facilities that would be used in office management or entitlement access.	Completed

### Reporting for Management and Accountability

Recommendation Number	Recommendation Detail from the Report	Implementation Date
5 (i)	The Monthly Management Report (MMR) be restructured into three parts by separating the current Part B into staff costs and office operating costs.	30 July 2012
5 (ii)	Within the staff costs section of the MMR, all costs relating to each particular staff member be listed together to simplify verification of details.	30 July 2012
5 (iii)	High level summaries of transaction costs and budget usage be provided at the front of the report to assist monitoring of overall expenditure.	Completed
5 (iv)	Greater emphasis be given to easy identification of the usage of capped entitlements, including adding a figure for the percentage used, together with graphical representation of it and other relevant areas, to assist management of budget and entitlement use.	Completed
5 (v)	Changes to be made to align the structure, format and wording of the MMRs with the six monthly reports to be tabled, enabling direct checking of details from one to another.	Completed
5 (vi)	The requirement for certification that entitlements use is in accordance with the legislation be moved from the MMR to the six-monthly report, instead asking parliamentarians and their staff to focus on the identification of any errors or anomalies in the MMR by a certain date so that they may be corrected for speedy inclusion in the following report.	Completed
5 (vii)	The current requirement for parliamentarians to confirm the expenditure details in the six-monthly report, in addition to the certification of legal entitlement use, be retained.	Completed

<b>5 (viii)</b>	The usage of staff salaries and travel, which are not included in the tabled report, be certified separately at the same time as certification of the six-monthly report, by the parliamentarian or a staff member authorised to do so.	Due: 30 December 2011. This activity will come into effect at the Tabling of July 2012.
<b>5 (ix)</b>	Consideration be given to discussing the revised format and content of the MMRs with selected parliamentarians and their offices if the Minister agrees.	Completed

#### Balancing Facilitation and Control in Administration

<b>Recommendation Number</b>	<b>Recommendation Detail from the Report</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>
<b>6 (i)</b>	For the payment of parliamentarians Travel Allowance for travel to Canberra, move to a system whereby a claim can be paid promptly without the necessary documentary evidence, on the assurance that the evidence will be made available on request, with a post-payment checking process on a percentage of randomly selected claims.	Completed
<b>6 (ii)</b>	For official travel overseas by parliamentarians and their staff, require the Certification of Official Travel form to be returned only where the travel itinerary was changed after allowances were paid, or reimbursement of additional expenses is being sought.	Completed
<b>6 (iii)</b>	For employment contracts for MOP(S) Act staff, streamline the contracts so that, for staff previously employed under the MOPS(S) Act, only those forms where particulars have changed need to be downloaded and completed, with the forms themselves being simplified for easier use. As the process is bedded down, consideration should be given to whether the change should be limited to those staff previously employed under the MOPS(S) Act within the previous year.	Completed
<b>6 (iv)</b>	In respect to the requirement to provide the original employment documentation with original signatures before the employment is approved, move to accept faxed or emailed documents in order to increase the timeliness of approvals, with the relevant parliamentary offices retaining copies of the original documents for a specified period to allow auditing.	Completed
<b>6 (v)</b>	For electorate staff travel, amend the current determination to allow electorate employees to travel anywhere in Australia on official business, subject to the existing ESTB funding cap, extending the funding cap to the electorate employees of Office Holders who were not previously subject to it.	Completed

### System Improvements

Recommendation Number	Recommendation Detail from the Report	Implementation Date
7 (i)	Priority be given to finalising implementation of the EMS upgrade.	Completed. Upgrade underway.
7(ii)	A decision be made to move promptly to implement the online HR21 functionality.	Completed.
7 (iii)	Following completion of these priorities, work be put in train to define the system requirements for a fully integrated online system.	Work has commenced. Completed.

### Other Process Improvements

Recommendation Number	Recommendation Detail from the Report	Implementation Date
8 (i)	Seek the Minister's views on the authorization of senior officers in M&PS to exercise his decision making power in a number of less sensitive areas.	Completed
8 (ii)	Consider opportunities for moving, through suppliers' systems, to online ordering, with consequent efficiency gains.	Completed
8 (iii)	Give priority to finalising the State Office Guidelines and to ongoing work to maintain their currency.	Completed
8 (iv)	Consider further opportunities for Australia-wide procurement contracts, particularly in the area of office machines.	Completed
8 (v)	Continue work underway in COMCAR to a) finalise the MOU with the Chamber Departments for the Shuttle; and, in particular, b) implement trip recording on the Shuttle in line with normal COMCAR practice.	Completed