

# A credible, effective and efficient organisation



Photo: DECC

*As the lead environment and conservation agency in NSW, DECC ensures staff have the skills to deliver positive outcomes for the environment, and the organisation is managed cost-effectively and efficiently.*

## Context

As the NSW public sector agency responsible for environment protection, conservation and natural resource management, DECC employs nearly 3,700 full-time equivalent staff, with more than 1,650 staff in regional locations. DECC is a leader in environmental sustainability and has developed an action plan to enable the organisation to lead sustainability issues in the NSW Government sector. DECC has already reduced its own overall energy consumption and its greenhouse gas emissions.

To ensure compliance with statutory requirements, government policies and procedures, and continuous improvement practices, DECC regularly reviews and updates its corporate governance strategies and department-wide policies.

DECC continues to encourage a diverse and well-trained workforce, with solid training programs and career development opportunities for staff. The high calibre of DECC staff was reflected in the number of awards won in 2008–09 from international organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and local agencies such as Tourism NSW. DECC continues to attract new staff by running graduate, cadet and trainee work programs.

## Outcomes

DECC aims to be a credible, effective and efficient organisation by:

- having sound corporate governance arrangements
- being a leader in environmental sustainability
- having effective internal and external communications systems and providing excellent customer service
- providing a safe and healthy workplace
- nurturing and training staff and establishing smart systems
- keeping up-to-date with current financial and environmental knowledge and innovation.

## Key drivers

Our drive to be a credible, effective and efficient organisation is informed by:

- *State Plan – A New Direction for NSW* ([www.nsw.gov.au/stateplan/](http://www.nsw.gov.au/stateplan/))
- DECC Corporate Plan 2008–2012 ([www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/plan.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/plan.htm))
- DECC Results and Services Plan
- NSW Government Sustainability Policy ([www.environment.nsw.gov.au/government/policy.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/government/policy.htm)) and the internal DECC Sustainability Action Plan
- NSW Government Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy ([www.environment.nsw.gov.au/warr/WRAPP.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/warr/WRAPP.htm))
- NSW Government's Aboriginal Affairs Plan *Two Ways Together* ([www.daa.nsw.gov.au/policies/policy.html](http://www.daa.nsw.gov.au/policies/policy.html))
- DECC Code of Ethical Conduct ([www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/ethics.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/ethics.htm))
- DECC Guarantee of Service ([www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/gos.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/gos.htm))
- occupational health and safety, equal employment opportunity and ethnic affairs priority strategies and frameworks.

## Performance indicators

DECC measures organisational performance through the following performance indicators:

- Requests handled by DECC's Information Centre
- Visits to DECC websites
- Freedom of information requests
- Accidents and incidents reported and workers compensation claims
- DECC staff representation in equal employment opportunity groups
- Payment of accounts.



Photo: A. Weeraratne, DECC.

# Corporate governance

DECC implements effective corporate governance systems that:

- enhance strategic planning and overall organisational performance
- strengthen risk and asset management
- enhance DECC's credibility and public reputation through transparency and accountability
- prevent and detect fraudulent, dishonest or unethical behaviour
- strengthen budgeting and financial management systems and reporting.

In September 2008, DECC published its *Corporate Plan 2008–2012* which sets out goals, outcomes, objectives and priorities for 2008–2012 – see [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/corppanning.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/corppanning.htm). The corporate plan informs business planning and aligns with the NSW State Plan, and DECC's Results and Services Plan which is agreed to with NSW Treasury.

DECC also monitors a comprehensive set of corporate performance indicators, which performance reports are based on. These reports are provided quarterly to DECC management, the Minister's Office and the EPA Board, and to key central agencies. In early 2009, DECC reviewed its suite of performance indicators to align them with its new corporate plan.

## Management

The Director General is the head of the Department of Environment and Climate Change and works with the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, the DECC executive management team, senior managers and staff to achieve DECC objectives and ensure its resources are used efficiently.

DECC executive members consider corporate and budget performance at regular meetings, to ensure DECC is meeting its responsibilities. Executive subcommittees cover issues such as information technology, science, natural resource management, external funding and legislation. Significant boards and committees advise the Director General and the DECC executive on policy development and meeting corporate objectives, including sound corporate governance. These include the EPA Board, the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council and the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee.

## Risk management

DECC's corporate Risk Management Policy is intended to help ensure risk is managed systematically, efficiently and effectively. New corporate risk management procedures, finalised in November 2008, outline seven key steps in the DECC risk management process, including risk identification, analysis, evaluation and treatment; and various management and staff accountabilities. These documents are supplemented by policies and procedures that deal with specific categories of risk such as occupational health and safety, fire management and tree risk management.

DECC also addresses risk through its insurance arrangements. All DECC's risk management policies and procedures are based on the Australian/New Zealand Risk Management Standard (AS/NZS 4360: 2004), and are consistent in their approach and methodology.

In 2008–09, DECC identified business processes and activities in the agency where there are potential risks of fraud and corruption, to identify existing prevention controls and to assess the adequacy of these controls.

DECC's Fraud and Corruption Control Strategy was also reviewed – see [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoware/fraud.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoware/fraud.htm). It sets out policies, highlights activities that are susceptible to fraud and corruption, and details DECC's approach to preventing, detecting, reporting on and investigating fraud and corruption.

The risk of fraud and corruption is also reduced through a strong Code of Ethical Conduct – see [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoware/ethics.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoware/ethics.htm) – and Statement of Business Ethics – see [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/commercial/businessethics.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/commercial/businessethics.htm) – that guide DECC's relationships with external providers and stakeholders. As part of internal audits, key controls were tested in 2008–09 to ensure they were effective in minimising fraud and corruption.

## Business continuity planning

In 2008–09, DECC completely revised and updated its business continuity management plans. A revised Business Continuity Plan and Pandemic Response Plan were formulated. These plans complement existing regional incident response plans and disaster recovery plans. All planning has been designed to minimise the disruption of services to the public should a catastrophic event or pandemic occur.

## Asset management systems

DECC prepared a Total Asset Management Strategy in February 2009 to guide effective management of its strategic assets. DECC manages a wide range of assets, including land and buildings, water entitlements, plant and equipment and infrastructure systems (see Appendix 19). Many aspects of asset management are undertaken regionally, such as building maintenance and replacement of plant and equipment, while large-scale acquisitions, overall asset management systems and asset financing are managed centrally.

Details of major works in progress are shown in Appendix 18.

## Audit and compliance program

DECC's comprehensive internal audit program helps to ensure DECC programs and processes comply with legislation and best practice management. Conservation compliance is overseen by the Conservation Audit and Compliance Committee (CACC), established under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. Environment protection, finance and administration, risk management and fraud and corruption controls, are overseen by the Internal Audit Committee (IAC). Both committees meet quarterly, and officers from the Audit Office of NSW regularly attend meetings as observers.

The internal auditors submit final reports to the appropriate audit committee and recommendations are monitored to ensure they are fully implemented. DECC's internal auditors for 2008–09 were IAB Services and Walter Turnbull.

In 2008–09 DECC reviewed and updated the IAC Charter and the CACC Terms of Reference to reflect organisational changes. An external chair of the IAC (Mr Arthur Butler) was appointed to strengthen the independence and probity of the committee's work.

Audits completed during 2008–09 which were overseen by the CACC included:

- the fire management framework in parks
- fire fighting preparedness and control equipment
- arrangements for joint management of parks and reserves with Aboriginal people
- compliance with firearms legislation, policies and procedures
- a wildlife licensing review
- weed control programs
- visitor safety systems (hazards)
- environmental and conservation standards relating to easements
- audits of 16 plans of management for:
  - Benambra National Park and Tabletop Nature Reserve
  - Dalrymple–Hay Nature Reserve
  - Dunggir National Park
  - Duval Nature Reserve
  - Eagles Claw Nature Reserve
  - Gamilaroi Nature Reserve
  - Gundabooka National Park and State Conservation Area
  - Killarney Nature Reserve
  - Murramarang Aboriginal Area
  - Nangar National Park
  - Sydney Harbour National Park
  - Tooloom National Park
  - Towra Point Nature Reserve
  - Wambina Nature Reserve
  - Wingham Brush Nature Reserve
  - Wombeyan Karst Conservation Area



Photo: DECC.

*The plan of management for Towra Point Nature Reserve was audited in 2008–09.*

Audits completed during 2008–09 and overseen by the IAC included:

- the Hunter levee maintenance program
- review of The Living Murray project
- administration of Climate Change Fund grant programs
- revenue collection from annual and multi-year park entry passes
- secure back-up of DECC electronic data
- SAP risk controls
- procurement processes
- DECC's financial management responsibilities in relation to catchment management authorities
- RTA DRIVES (Roads and Traffic Authority vehicle registration database)
- World Heritage funding.

The audits of both the operational and administrative processes found that the systems were predominantly sound. There were no areas identified with 'extreme' risk ratings. The areas identified with 'high' risk ratings were all controlled by the acceptance of a range of recommendations.

## External reviews

External reviews provide DECC with an independent assessment of its probity, impact and compliance. During 2008–09, the Audit Office of NSW carried out its annual comprehensive audits of DECC's financial reporting and its accounting and financial systems. There were no specific DECC performance audits carried out during 2008–09.

In May 2009, the Auditor-General released a report on grants administration. The report looked at five government agencies (including DECC) and how grants are defined, where grants are directed and what recipients think of the grant system. The report will be followed by a second report in 2009–10 that examines specific environmental grant programs managed by DECC and the Environmental Trust.

## Ethical behaviour

A range of measures are in place to help DECC resolve ethical dilemmas as they arise and enable DECC to respond to unethical decisions and practices if they are identified.

DECC's ethical framework is detailed in policies and guidelines relating to ethical conduct, managing complaints and allegations, preventing fraud and corruption and making a protected disclosure under the *Protected Disclosures Act 1994*.

The Code of Ethical Conduct applies to everyone engaged by DECC and describes the ethical framework that should guide the actions, decisions and behaviour of employees. DECC amended its code in 2008–09 to address the commencement, in February 2009, of the NSW Government Lobbying Code of Conduct and following the release of the corporate plan and revision of DECC's corporate values.

DECC works to ensure the privacy of staff and clients is protected. DECC's Privacy Management Plan and Guidelines – see [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoware/privacy.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoware/privacy.htm) – provides details about the privacy principles DECC follows when dealing with personal information. During 2008–09, there were no applications received for access to personal information. No complaints were received under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* and the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*.

Corporate governance activities relating to financial management, consumer response and freedom of information are reported elsewhere in this chapter. Other corporate governance activities are reported in the annual report appendices:

- SES performance statements (see Appendix 2)
- significant statutory boards and committees (see Appendix 5)
- legislation and legal changes (see Appendix 7)
- Statement of Affairs (see Appendix 10)
- freedom of information (see Appendix 11)
- overseas visits by staff (see Appendix 15)
- consultancies (see Appendix 16)
- grants to community organisations (see Appendix 17)



## A leader in sustainability and environmental performance

### NSW Government Sustainability Policy

As the lead environment and climate change agency in NSW, DECC is committed to sustainability actions to reach, and wherever possible exceed, targets set out in the NSW Government Sustainability Policy (see [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/government/policy.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/government/policy.htm)).

In August 2008, the DECC Executive endorsed an internal Sustainability Action Plan that details activities to use resources efficiently, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase sustainable purchasing.

DECC also joined the Sustainability Advantage program to build the foundation for sustainability actions, and the focus for 2008–09 was on resource efficiency and staff engagement.

The following sections highlight areas where DECC is working to achieve sustainability outcomes.

### Carbon management

In recent years, DECC has grown in size as responsibilities, staffing and facilities of former agencies have been transferred to it. In 2008–09, DECC continued actions to reduce emissions from its now large inventory of buildings and vehicles.

The reported total energy use for DECC in 2006–07 was 169,718 gigajoules (GJ) with 18,619 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. The full energy use for DECC in 2007–08 was 179,724 GJ with 22,066 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. This is a result of staff numbers increasing by ten percent through amalgamations of Government departments, and additional accounts being identified through more rigorous data collection than in the previous year.

Data for 2008–09 will be compiled and reported on in the 2009–10 annual report, due to the amount of time needed to accurately compile this data across new facilities. During 2009–10, DECC will develop its plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2020. The focus is on achieving emission reductions through energy efficiency.

DECC has a portfolio of more than 2,000 buildings (consisting of buildings in national parks, offices and other facilities) that are either leased or owned. In 2007–08, DECC building use generated approximately 17,000 t CO<sub>2</sub>e as a result of 17.6 million kWh in electricity consumption.

DECC is currently purchasing 10% GreenPower (the minimum standard set out in the NSW Government Sustainability Policy is 6%). Over 2007–08, some DECC sites have increased their GreenPower purchasing to 100%.

In addition, during 2007–08 DECC sites generated at least 57,800 kilowatt hours of green power using solar panels, with more than 11,000 kilowatt hours fed back to the grid, further helping to decrease DECC's electricity-related greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy efficiency initiatives undertaken during 2008–09 include:

- a lighting upgrade of the Goulburn Street head office
- installation of base building energy efficient lighting and energy metering at the Hurstville office
- commissioning of a new energy-efficient office building at Narooma.

DECC participated in Earth Hour in Sydney for the third time on 28 March 2009 and encouraged staff statewide to also take part.

In 2008–09, DECC staff travelled 3.98 million air miles which is a reduction of 2% over 2007–08 travel. DECC piloted internal teleconferencing and video/web-conferencing services over 2008–09, and these services will be phased in over the coming year. It is anticipated that the use of this technology will reduce travel requirements, and this will be monitored to demonstrate the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

## Water

In 2007–08, DECC used 296ML of potable water in its operations.

### Office accommodation

Under the NSW Government Sustainability Policy, office buildings owned or leased by agencies over 1,000m<sup>2</sup> must:

- obtain a NABERS energy and water rating by 31 December 2008
- achieve and maintain a NABERS rating of 4.5 stars for energy and water by 1 July 2011, where cost effective
- where new or refurbished, achieve and maintain 2011 targets for 18 months from the first occupancy, where cost effective.

By working closely with building management in DECC's Goulburn Street head office, DECC helped the building owners to increase their NABERS rating from 3.5 stars to 4.5 stars in 2008–09.

As an organisation, DECC improves on this minimum standard wherever practical, in both metropolitan and regional office accommodation. In previous reporting periods, initiatives promoted by DECC resulted in achieving five-star ratings under the Australian Building Greenhouse Rating (ABGR) system in both the Goulburn Street, Sydney and Bridge Street, Hurstville tenancies. ABGR has been incorporated into the new National Australian Built Environment Rating System (NABERS). DECC is completing NABERS assessments at its rateable sites and the results are expected to be available in the latter half of 2009.

Whenever office accommodation refurbishments are planned, sustainable workplace initiatives, such as energy and water efficiency and recycling systems, are incorporated into the fit-out plans. Where possible, DECC arranges for outmoded fluorescent tubes to be replaced with energy efficient T5/T8 tubes, and wherever practical has old tubes collected so their mercury, alloy, glass and phosphor powder content are separated, refined and recycled. Dedicated fluorescent tube recycling programs are in place in both the Goulburn Street and Hurstville tenancies.

In 2008-09, DECC undertook accommodation fit-outs at Albury, Dubbo, Grafton, and Murwillumbah as well as in parts of the head office. DECC re-used and recycled approximately 90% of the serviceable workstations and furniture at each one of these sites, which greatly reduced waste and overall project costs.

By working closely with the building management of the Hurstville office, DECC has upgraded the male toilets to an automated flushing system that is anticipated to save up to 96% of water used by the urinals. A similar waterless urinal system was installed in the Goulburn Street tenancy in 2007–08.

## ■ CASE STUDY

### Saving water across DECC

Staff across DECC have been working to reduce water consumption in offices, laboratories and national park facilities to bring about environmental benefits and dollar savings, and to demonstrate best practice in water use for visitors and other organisations. Such actions are taking DECC closer to achieving a target set by the NSW Government Sustainability Policy to reduce potable water consumption by 15% by 2010–11.

In August 2008, a new technology grey water recycling system was completed in the Lane Cove River Tourist Park. This system recycles water from showers and hand basins at the eco-amenity block for use in toilet flushing and irrigation. Combined with other initiatives, the Tourist Park saved more than one megalitre of water in 2008.

In the offices, depot and tourist accommodation on the Byron coast, five-star WELS (Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards) rated toilets with integrated hand basins



Lane Cove River Tourist Park's grey water recycling system contributed to water savings of one megalitre in 2008.

have been installed. The grey water from washing hands diverts from the basin straight to the toilet cistern for use in the next flush, saving 70% of water that would normally be used by a regular 11-litre flush toilet and basin.

## Green fleet

DECC's Fleet Improvement Plan contains strategies to achieve the performance targets set by the Cleaner NSW Government Fleet Program. Progress towards these targets is measured by calculating an average environmental performance score for the fleet, using the system adopted for the NSW Clean Car Benchmarks. This score measures greenhouse gas emissions (as CO<sub>2</sub>) and air quality impacts (as noxious emissions).

Under its Fleet Improvement Plan, DECC has improved the environmental performance score for its passenger vehicle fleet from 12 out of 20 in 2007–08 to 12.6 out of 20 as at 30 June 2009. Less efficient V8 vehicles are no longer used and six-cylinder cars are only purchased where essential for specific tasks. For occupational health and safety reasons, DECC uses diesel vehicles for firefighting and associated support, as diesel vehicles are less likely to ignite. The environmental performance score for the diesel operational fleet with a gross vehicle mass of less than 3.5 tonnes improved from 7.29 out of 20 in 2007–08 to 8.1 out of 20 in 2008–09. As a result, the overall score for the DECC fleet improved from 9.3 to 10.1.

In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, in 2008–09 DECC's fleet generated approximately 5,000 CO<sub>2</sub>-e. While DECC continually strives to reduce the physical size of its fleet, the area of reserves managed has increased by 42,664 hectares (now over 8% of NSW). This results in staff being required to travel further to patrol and manage sites.

DECC is also reducing greenhouse gas emissions by using more hybrid vehicles. The number of DECC hybrid vehicles increased from 34 vehicles to 38 in 2008–09, and staff are encouraged to use these wherever possible for business purposes. In addition, a Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV) was introduced into the DECC fleet late in the reporting period. Data on the performance of this vehicle, which has the capacity to return power to the grid, is being closely monitored and will be reported on in 2009–10.

Staff in the Goulburn Street office are encouraged to use the Government's free CBD shuttle bus service rather than departmental vehicles, and bicycle storage space has been further increased. DECC is investigating options to increase bicycle storage space in its head office buildings in Goulburn Street, Sydney and Hurstville, as the current space is fully utilised.

## Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy

DECC is responsible for coordinating the NSW Government's Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy (WRAPP) across other agencies and state-owned corporations. It must also put WRAPP principles into practice internally, and report every two years on its own performance.

WRAPP data is currently being collected by DECC staff for inclusion in the 2007–09 Whole of Government WRAPP Progress Report. DECC's WRAPP performance over this reporting period will be included in the 2009–10 annual report.

In addition, DECC has reviewed waste management practices and begun implementing systems to recycle food waste from office kitchen areas. In 2008, DECC completed a waste audit of its head office in Goulburn Street. The recommendations from this audit led to a revised and improved waste management system being introduced in late 2008, with key results including:

- the waste generated being more than halved (from 140m<sup>3</sup> to 59m<sup>3</sup>)
- the percentage of recycling increasing from 50% to 79% of waste generated, meaning nearly 4m<sup>3</sup> a month of food waste is being recycled.





Photo: S. Cohen, DECC.

## Internal and external connections and customer satisfaction with DECC services

### Environment Line and the DECC Information Centre

The Information Centre is DECC's main information and advice service. Environment Line is the telephone advice and pollution incident reporting line where staff take calls from business, industry and the public who are seeking assistance and advice on environment protection, climate change issues, rebates for water and energy saving initiatives, native plants and animals, visiting national parks and reserves, native vegetation and reporting pollution incidents. The centre also provides over-the-counter services, sells and distributes publications and manages the increasing number of email requests for information.

In 2008–09, the centre received 287,003 requests. Demand was particularly high due to public interest in water and energy saving rebates. Environment Line received 7,085 reports of pollution (a slight increase on last year) and another 8,958 reports relating to noise, littering and smoke from vehicles. Reports of smoky vehicles have been declining steadily for some years, possibly due to the improvement in vehicle maintenance or the age of vehicles on NSW roads, although reports of noisy vehicles have increased by 33%.

### Communication and partnerships

DECC maintains close relationships with many other NSW state agencies, national and international environment agencies, industry groups and businesses, community and environment groups, local councils, Aboriginal land councils, landowners, research and education institutions and many other organisations. Major partnership events and activities held in 2008–09 included:

- a series of climate change forums held around NSW in October–November 2008, involving both invited groups and the wider public, as an important part of the ongoing development of the NSW Climate Change Action Plan
- a number of DECC's firefighting staff joining the contingent of NSW volunteers who travelled to Victoria in February 2009 to help control the bushfires in that State.

DECC continues to issue e-newsletters, which enable DECC's partners, interested groups and the public to keep up-to-date with the latest environmental issues. Newsletters issued in 2008–09 included:

- *Climate of Change* – a popular quarterly publication that highlights the latest environment news and events across a broad range of topics
- *Environmental Trust Connections* – provides information on Environmental Trust programs and showcases some outstanding projects taking place across NSW
- *Explore* – showcases sustainable tourism activities in parks and reserves, profiles successful tourism products and partnerships, and communicates events, visitor trends and general visitor news
- *Living Sustainably* – focuses on how to live sustainably at home and at work, and features *Our environment – it's a living thing* projects that people can get involved with
- *Naturescapes: NSW national parks visitor newsletter* – features visitor activities, events, experiences, places and accommodation around NSW national parks
- *Resort Roundup* – contains general interest articles, updates and key contacts for the ski resorts community in Kosciuszko National Park
- *Working with Local Government* – keeps local councils informed of DECC initiatives, activities and programs.



Photo: S. Cohen, DECC.

DECC works with a wide range of stakeholders on conservation, environmental and natural resource programs.

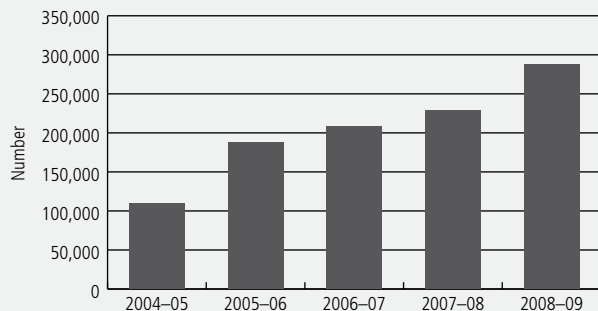
## ■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

### Requests handled by DECC's Information Centre

**Definition:** The Information Centre provides information by telephone via the Environment Line, by email and face-to-face; through reception services and switchboards; and in answer to inquiries received via the website, fax, email and mail. From 2008–09 these statistics include all pollution incident and motor vehicle reports.

Also refer to the performance indicator 'Environment Line – incident reports about air quality, odours or noise from regulated premises' for incident reports, and Appendix 12.

#### Requests handled by DECC's Information Centre



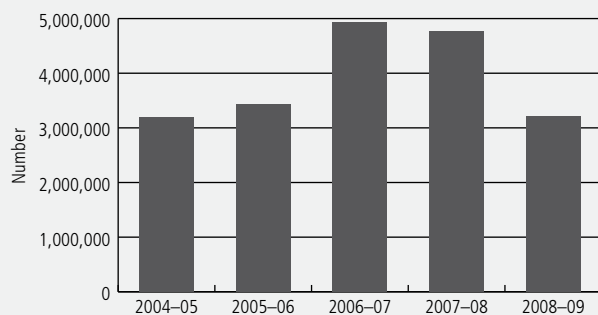
**Interpretation:** DECC public information services were integrated in 2005–06. Since then, requests handled by the Information Centre have risen steadily by approximately 10% each year. However, the number of requests handled jumped from 228,584 in 2007–08 to 287,003 in 2008–09, including 7,085 pollution incidents and 8,958 motor vehicle reports. A major reason for this increase is the Climate Change Fund rebate program for water savings and energy efficiency in residential households. Email inquiries also increased by 145%, due in part to the additional websites now integrated into the DECC website, and the public response to significant issues such as the whale stranding in Pittwater in August 2008.

## ■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

### Visits to DECC websites

**Definition:** This indicator measures the total number of visits to DECC's corporate website. It does not include visits to the Botanic Gardens Trust website or the It's a Living Thing website. A 'visit' consists of one or more page views by a single visitor.

#### Total visits to DECC websites



**Interpretation:** Usage of the DECC website continues to be very strong. In 2007–08, and again in the current year, DECC integrated a large number of DECC-managed websites into a single site. This accounts for the apparent drop in visitor numbers as many visitors need only now access one site and are only counted as a single visit.

DECC also has a statutory responsibility to provide the NSW community with information about the environment, such as information on air quality, bushfires and other emergencies, contaminated land, hazardous materials, and waste and recycling. Throughout 2008–09, DECC continued to enhance community awareness through its website, through targeted community education programs and through the Environment Line telephone information service.

Within DECC, an internal communications program is building stronger relationships across a large and dispersed department. In 2008–09, a monthly *onDECC* staff newsletter was introduced which highlighted news and events, and a quarterly Director General's e-newsletter was introduced which informed staff about the organisation's achievements, individual staff achievements and key directions.

Most work areas also produce their own specialised newsletters, while key parts of DECC, such as those involved in scientific work and park management, hold regular staff forums and presentations. Planning advanced in 2008–09 on a range of new internal communication projects, including the establishment of video conferencing facilities, the use of intranet video-casting, and a new staff awards program.

## Improvements to the website and intranet

The website ([www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)) is one way in which DECC informs the public of its activities and strategies. The website also provides a range of online services, making it easier for people to access publications, apply for licences or record sightings of native species. In February 2008, DECC finished integrating many separate websites into a new integrated site that includes climate change and natural resource information.

Further improvements this year included a significant upgrade of information for visitors to national parks, with new mapping features, additional photographs and expanded information. In particular, information about accommodation offered in national parks was upgraded and new information for and about commercial tour operators in the parks was added to the site. The website search engine was also refined to improve search result relevance and accuracy.

As DECC has a large proportion of staff located outside metropolitan areas, its internal intranet site, known as DECCnet, is an important way to communicate with staff and provide them with tools and resources to for their work. The first stage of the new DECCnet was released in December 2008 and the second stage was completed in June 2009.

## Client response

DECC is committed to handling public feedback and complaints in a courteous, efficient and equitable manner. DECC's policy and guidelines for managing complaints and allegations build on established protocols for dealing with allegations of serious misconduct or corruption ([visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whowere/complaint.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whowere/complaint.htm)).

In 2008–09, DECC received 32 significant complaints. Twenty seven of these, together with nine complaints received but not resolved in 2007–08, were finalised during the year. Evidence of improper conduct was found in six cases and appropriate action was taken in response. Changes to some systems or procedures were also recommended and these have been implemented. Training programs have been completed.

DECC's Guarantee of Service (visit [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoware/gos.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoware/gos.htm)) covers four main service principles all staff commit to when they work for DECC: respect, helpfulness, responsiveness and continuous improvement. The guarantee reinforces DECC's corporate value of acting with integrity and being accessible and accountable to the community and staff.

DECC values its relationships with external stakeholders and recognises their valuable role in supporting environmental initiatives. DECC engages with consumers and gathers performance feedback through:

- the DECC Information Centre
- Environment Line
- national parks information and visitors centres
- public forums and consultations
- stakeholder surveys
- consultation and advisory committees
- other communication channels, including submissions and email correspondence.

## Freedom of information

DECC is committed to transparent and accountable decision making. Members of the public can access many documents held by DECC through its website, on request or by purchasing them. Other documents can be obtained by applying under the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*.

DECC received 91 new freedom of information (FOI) requests this year, four more than in 2007–08, and 103 applications were processed. Many applications were from members of parliament, solicitors, journalists, companies, and community organisations. DECC received only four FOI applications from people seeking information about their personal affairs. Although 33% of the FOI applications were subject to exemptions from release, including part exemptions, approximately 94% of the documents captured by the FOI application were either partly or fully released.

Many DECC applications are complex and involve documents provided by third parties. Most FOI exemptions were made to protect those parties' personal and business affairs (at their request). Except when ongoing investigations and cabinet-related documents were involved, few documents created by DECC were exempted.

There were 12 internal review decisions made during 2008–09. All decisions were affirmed.

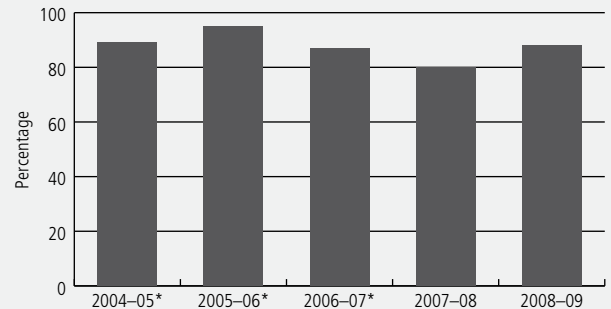
There were two decisions proceeding to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT) and one was pending from the previous financial year. No complaint was made to the Ombudsman's Office about any DECC decision. In one

### ■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

#### Freedom of information requests

**Definition:** This indicator measures the percentage of freedom of information (FOI) applications DECC and the former Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) processed where 80% or more of the requested documents were released.

#### Percentage of FOI requests granted that provide 80% or more of requested information



\*DEC data

**Interpretation:** In 2008–09, for 88% of FOI requests, DECC provided 80% of the requested information. DECC exempts very few of its documents requested under FOI from release, although a small percentage of documents received from third parties are exempted.

Third parties provide information to DECC in confidence or in response to regulatory requirements. The release of information concerning third parties' personal or business affairs may have an adverse effect on them and the Freedom of Information Act 1989 provides protection in these circumstances.

For more information on FOI applications, see Appendix 11.

case, ADT affirmed DECC's decision to exempt documents identifying a complainant's details concerning alleged unlawful logging of trees. Another case was remitted to DECC for a new decision. The DECC reviewer decided to release the documents subject to the appeal to the ADT. Another appeal to the ADT was eventually withdrawn by the applicant.

Due to the large scope and complexity of many FOI applications, two were not completed within the statutory timeframe. Some applications involved hundreds of documents, required accessing documents from a number of regional locations, and involved extensive consultation with many affected third parties.

## Connections with Aboriginal communities

DECC is a partner in Priority F1 of the State Plan which drives improvement of health, education and social outcomes for Aboriginal people. As a result, DECC is working with communities and other government agencies to explore ways of strengthening Aboriginal communities by building on existing strengths and addressing key areas of disadvantage. This work is being undertaken through *Two Ways Together*, the NSW Government's 10-year plan to improve the lives of Aboriginal people and their communities, and in parallel with the Two Ways Together Partnership Community

Program, a statewide community engagement program being led by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

In 2008–09 DECC initiatives included:

- continuing to implement DECC's Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2006–2008, with 8.8% of the workforce being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent in 2008–09
- coordinating a range of successful NAIDOC celebrations (see 'NAIDOC celebrations')
- continuing to progress joint-management and ownership arrangements through the ongoing negotiation of four Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) in the Brigalow Belt and Nandewar Community Conservation Area
- finalising the Gawamabaraay Co-management Committee MoU for Pilliga Nature Reserve, Pilliga East Aboriginal Area and Dandry Gorge Aboriginal Area
- supporting the Aboriginal Staff Network Annual Conference at Nelson Bay
- supporting the reconstitution of the Aboriginal Staff Network Executive, the governing body for the network
- conducting public consultation regarding the discussion paper *Towards an Aboriginal land management framework for NSW*, with workshops held in Parramatta, Newcastle, Wollongong, Bourke, Broken Hill, Buronga, Wagga Wagga, Griffith, Narrabri, Dubbo, Queanbeyan, Glen Innes, and Ulladulla
- conducting pilot clean-up programs on Aboriginal-owned lands in partnership with local Aboriginal communities, local Aboriginal land councils and local councils, with work continuing in Purfleet, Deerubin, Kempsey, Wyong, Eurobodalla and Gilgandra shires
- conducting research and heritage conservation projects with Aboriginal community groups.

In 2008–09, DECC progressed a State Plan initiative to build resilient Aboriginal communities under the banner of 'strengthening community wellbeing'. DECC consulted with peak bodies and engagement groups to test the concepts underpinning this work and ensure greater alignment with *Two Ways Together*.

In June 2009, DECC held a workshop with staff, academics and other stakeholders to develop practical resources to support communities working with the government through the Two Ways Together Partnership Community Program. Outcomes from the think-tank will inform the development of these resources in 2009–10.

## NAIDOC celebrations

In 2008–09, DECC celebrated NAIDOC week on 6–13 July with the theme 'Advance Australia Fair?' The theme encouraged people to reflect on the Australian principle of a 'fair go' and consider the inequalities still experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

DECC was involved in many activities across the State, including:



Photo: M. Cooper, DECC

DECC staff are committed to conserving Aboriginal heritage.

- the Director General hosting a morning tea at the Goulburn Street office, including a Welcome to Country and performance, and the announcement of Kath Schilling, DECC's Manager Aboriginal Heritage Operations, as this year's winner of the Carol Kendall Award
- Hurstville office's NAIDOC committee arranging activities including a Welcome to Country and dance performance, poster competition on the NAIDOC theme, a bush tucker cooking competition, Aboriginal films, and arts and crafts workshops, and acknowledging Hurstville-based officers who have made a significant effort to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and staff together
- information stands being located at Wollondilly Council's community function at the Picton Botanical Garden
- a NAIDOC community day being held at Mungo National Park
- NAIDOC touch football competition and expo being held at Gosford
- the Northern Rivers office organising an Arakwal cultural awareness/family day
- the Hawkesbury office and the Merana Association jointly hosting a NAIDOC celebration day with a live concert and barbecue at Richmond Park
- a *Discovery* activity with bush tucker, and indigenous games, music and dance, being held at Botany Bay National Park, Kurnell.



Photo: DECC.

# A safe and healthy workplace with good knowledge and information to make decisions

## Occupational health and safety

The number of injuries suffered by staff was reduced this year to 7.1 per 100 employees compared with 7.5 per 100 employees in 2007–08. DECC's Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Strategy, and Injury Management Strategy and Improvement Plan 2009–2010 was endorsed and implemented from December 2008, with the following key milestones achieved:

- ongoing implementation of the Manual Tasks Injury Prevention Project, which aims to reduce soft tissue injuries, with positive results being demonstrated through improved risk management and a decreased frequency and costs associated with these types of injuries – the project won the Treasury Management Fund risk management award for leading practice in OH&S risk management
- commencement of the OH&S hazard and incident online management system, which enables instant communication of incidents and hazards in addition to improved record keeping
- further development of online learning packages enabling timely and cost effective delivery of basic modules
- completion of a comprehensive internal audit program to demonstrate good governance of systematic OH&S and injury management across DECC
- review and ongoing refinement of key hazard management policies and guidelines, to ensure industry best practice
- development of a field diary which contains tools to improve OH&S risk management such as pre-start checklists, and incident reporting proformas
- ongoing refinement of the internal OH&S intranet site to ensure easy and timely access of information for all staff across DECC.

Occupational health and safety statistics for 2008–09:

Accidents reported: 620  
 Claims: 263  
 \*Cost of claims: \$1,958,824

\*Allianz data; includes all workplace injuries

## Industrial awards

During 2008–09, DECC finalised and implemented a new Crown Employees (Department of Environment and Climate Change – Parks and Wildlife Group) Field Officers and Skilled Trades Salaries and Conditions 2009 Award, which set out conditions of employment for most national park field officers.

Several other industrial instruments have been reviewed to consolidate entitlements and conditions. These include:

### a. Reviewed

Crown Employees (Royal Botanic Gardens Building and Mechanical Trades Staff) Award.

This award was made a schedule to the Crown Employees (Wages Staff 2009) Award to provide efficiency gains in the administration of the award.

### b. Rescinded

Crown Employees (Department of Environment and Climate Change – Parks and Wildlife Group) Field Officers and Skilled Trades Salaries and Conditions 2007 Award.

### c. Varied

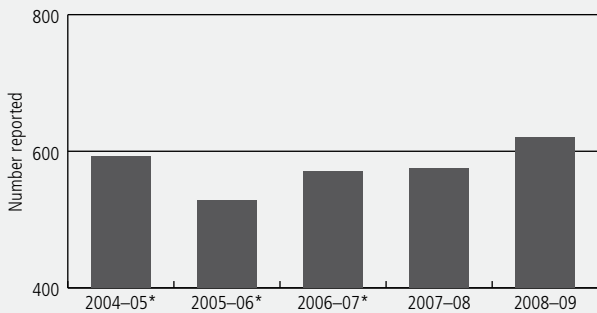
Crown Employees (Department of Environment and Climate Change – Parks and Wildlife Group) Field Officers and Skilled Trades Salaries and Conditions 2007 Award; and Crown Employees (Department of Environment and Climate Change – Parks and Wildlife Group) Conditions of Employment Award were varied to provide for increases to expense-related allowances including the remote areas allowance.

**■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR**

**Accidents and incidents reported and workers compensation claims**

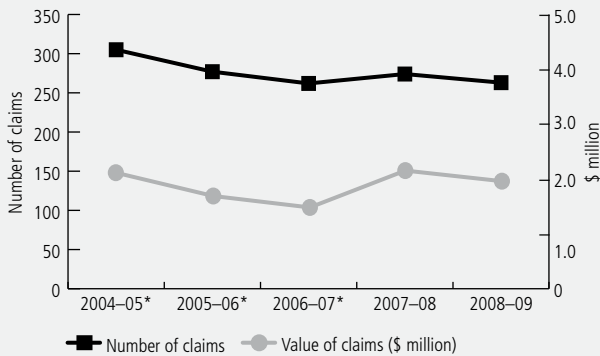
**Definition:** This indicator measures work-related incidents and accidents, and any resulting claim for compensation. The number of reported accidents and incidents indicates staff-reported events that could have led to, or did cause, an injury. The number and dollar value indicators measure the number and cost of injuries for which a claim was made. Claims are usually lodged and recorded immediately after an incident, although claims may be lodged and costs incurred for several years after. These costs and claims are reported in the year in which the incident occurred, so historical trend data may vary from year to year.

**Accidents and incidents reported**



\*Former Department of Environment and Conservation data

**Workers' compensation claims and their value**



\*DEC data

**Interpretation:** Data for years before 2007–08 relates to former Department of Environment and Conservation staff only. This year, the number of incidents reported, including near misses, increased to 620 which relates directly to ongoing programs to increase reporting of safety incidents. An improving total reported incidents to claims ratio generally indicates an improving safety culture. The claims rate decreased to 263 for 2008–09 compared with 274 for the previous year. With a slight increase in full-time equivalent staff numbers, this brings the injury rate per 100 employees to 7.1, down from 7.5 the previous year. Claims costs also decreased for the period compared with the same time last year, with the average cost of claims remaining relatively unchanged.



Photo: John Leys, DECC.

# Skilled people and smart systems

## Work and Development Scheme

DECC developed the Work and Development Scheme to enable DECC staff to align their work with DECC's overall strategic directions and play their part in achieving organisational goals. The system also enables staff to manage workload and professional development as well as increasing motivation and improving job satisfaction.

The roll-out of the new system commenced in June 2008 with an extensive training program for staff and managers during 2008–09.

## Learning and development framework

DECC is committed to developing the skills of its staff and ensuring they have the capabilities needed to carry out their duties. DECC supports a range of staff developmental programs, internal and external management development programs and on-line training courses.

The major training programs coordinated through the learning and development framework were in the areas of policy development, occupational health and safety risk management, people management, communication, project, financial and information management.

Learning and development outcomes are reported as the total number of formal training days and the average number of training days per staff member.

### Summary of formal staff<sup>1</sup> training 2008-09

Total number of formal training days	Average number of formal training days per staff member <sup>2</sup>
9030	2.25

Notes: 1. Includes full time and part time permanent and temporary staff.

2. Does not include inductions and other external studies subsidised by DECC.

Other learning and development activities include in-house training, participation in conferences and on-the-job training and mentoring.

## Fire management training

There was a continued program of professional development for employees involved in fire-related roles in 2008–09, that also covered the health, safety and welfare of staff in operational situations. DECC continues to provide training programs that balance theory, practical exercise, assessment and feedback.

In addition to individual training in prescribed burning, a four-day incident management team course was piloted. The course provides training for specific incident management roles, such as incident controllers and operations and planning officers.

DECC has approximately 800 trained firefighters and hundreds of trained incident management staff. To ensure it is prepared for bushfires in national parks and nearby lands, DECC conducts a Fire Fighter Health and Fitness Program before the start of each fire season. The program



Photo: Fire Management Unit, DECC.

Training ensures DECC firefighters are well-equipped to manage fires.

is based on national and international standards, and consists of an annual medical assessment and fitness test. It improves employee safety and performance and ensures firefighters are only assigned tasks they are medically and physically able to carry out. During the year, 1,176 staff attempted the assessment and 1,162 succeeded.

## Library services

During 2008–09, the DECC library continued to provide online bibliographic databases and journals to staff on their desktops. This has significantly improved access to information for all staff, especially those based outside metropolitan areas. Library officers also trained DECC staff to select appropriately from the wide range of information sources available, and to use the databases effectively.

## Graduate development program

Following the successful completion of the graduate program in 2009, DECC will be commencing a further intake into its two-year graduate program in 2010. It is anticipated that these positions will be advertised in August–September 2009 and that the 2010 intake will consist of 20 graduates who will work across DECC.

## Aboriginal cadetship program

In 2008–09 across NSW, 16 Aboriginal cadet rangers, one Aboriginal cadet project officer, one Aboriginal cadet policy officer and one Aboriginal cadet researcher were employed by DECC. Cadets participated in structured work placements and were provided with a workplace mentor, and while undertaking tertiary studies were paid a weekly study allowance. During 2008–09, four cadet rangers successfully completed their cadetships and were appointed to permanent ranger positions.



Some of the DECC's 2009 Aboriginal Cadetship participants Lachlan Harr, Amanda Applebee, Nadia Ross and Jessica Wegener.

Photo: DECC.

## Aboriginal traineeships

Eight Aboriginal trainee field officers and one Aboriginal trainee interpretive assistant were employed by DECC in 2009 in locations such as Nelson Bay, Nattai, Jindabyne, Queanbeyan, Mutawintji, Gosford and Armidale. Training is currently conducted with TAFE NSW – Western Institute and combines enrolment in a Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management with on- and off-the-job training for 12 months. In 2008, 6 Aboriginal trainee field officers, 2 trainee field officers and 1 Aboriginal trainee interpretive assistant completed the traineeship program.



2009 Aboriginal Trainees back left to right: Bernie O'Donnell, Regan Lilley (Casual Visitor Services Officer), George Munro, Wade Smith, Kevin Williams, Damon Fielding, Derek Davison. Front left to right Shaylee Moore, Kelly Gadd and Corey Dews.

## Equal employment opportunity

Each year, DECC develops strategies to eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment and promote equal employment opportunity in the organisation, including Aboriginal cultural awareness training, employment programs, the Spokeswomen's program and policies on ethical behaviour and conduct.

DECC will continue to focus on improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and access and services for DECC staff and the public with disabilities.

## Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement

DECC's Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement 2006–2010 (visit [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/eaps.htm](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/eaps.htm)) outlines key strategies and actions to assist in achieving the government's ethnic affairs policies and the principles of cultural diversity, as described in the *NSW Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*.

As part of DECC's environmental education programs to improve the community's use of water and energy and encourage waste recycling, DECC works in partnership with the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW and employs 22 bilingual educators to promote awareness, knowledge and understanding of sustainable living. In 2008–09, DECC delivered workshops and field trips in nine community





Photo: DECC

DECC runs workshops on living sustainably with people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

languages to 2,100 participants. Information stalls and interactive activities were featured at 21 community and cultural festivals, reaching a further 3,000 people.

In February 2009, DECC awarded grants under the Climate Change Fund to restaurant owners to replace wok stoves in their kitchens with new 'waterless' wok stoves. Traditional wok stoves account for almost half the daily water use in Asian restaurants because the water jets that clean and cool the woks are often running all day. The Ethnic Communities' Council has developed a multi-lingual education program to promote the economic and environmental benefits of water efficiency, and encourage restaurateurs to switch to the new stoves which have been developed with support from Sydney Water and can save up to 5,500 litres of water per stove per day.

The high profile Save Power energy efficiency campaign, developed during 2008–09, targeted speakers of Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Greek and Italian through radio, the print media and the campaign website.

DECC and the Roads and Traffic Authority jointly produced the brochure *Reducing your heavy vehicle emissions* in a range of languages to help people reduce pollution from diesel trucks and other heavy vehicles, through rebates for diesel retrofit devices, fuel savings measures and tax relief.

DECC produced a brochure on managing dry cleaning waste in English, Chinese and Vietnamese, and distributed it to dry cleaning companies in March 2009.

Examples of ethnic community initiatives in national parks in 2008–09 included the following:

- Key findings from the Georges River parklands research project, which looked at the importance of Georges River National Park to the communities of the region, have begun to be implemented. Key park management changes include greater staff presence to improve visitor information and education, and the installation of multi-lingual signs.
- As part of the development of a conservation management plan for La Perouse Headland in Botany Bay National Park, a social values assessment was commissioned. Consultative workshops were held with the local Aboriginal community and with the local and wider French communities and other migrant groups.

## ■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

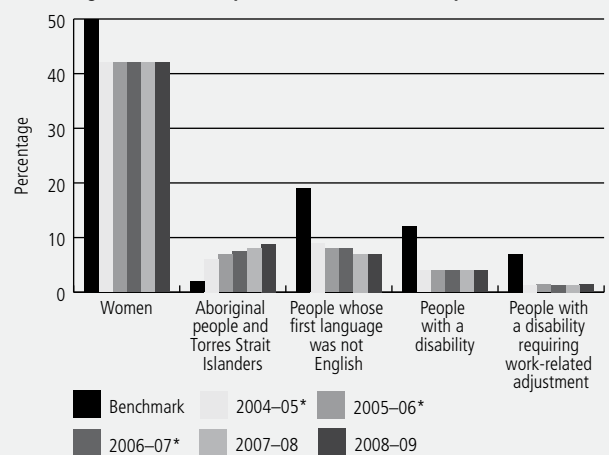
### DECC staff representation in equal employment opportunity groups

**Definition:** DECC tracks its performance in employing people from the equal employment opportunity (EEO) target groups against the NSW Government benchmarks.

This indicator measures staff statistics according to five EEO groups: women, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, people whose first language spoken as a child was not English, people with a disability, and people with a disability requiring work-related adjustment.

The data includes DECC staff but excludes Minister's Office staff, contractors, and board and committee members. The data is based on a headcount of staff, not full-time equivalent figures.

#### Percentage of DEC staff representation for EEO Groups



\*DEC data

**Interpretation:** DECC employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) staff remains significantly higher than the NSW Government benchmark with an increase of 0.8% from last year to 8.8% in 2008–09. DECC continued to administer formal employment initiatives to provide opportunities for ATSI staff to study, increase their skills, gain work experience and secure temporary and permanent employment. DECC did not reach the NSW Government benchmark for employment of people with a disability requiring work-related adjustment, although there has been an increase of 0.1% which is not considered significant.

DECC did not reach the NSW Government benchmarks for employment for women, people whose first language was not English, people with disabilities and people with a disability requiring work-related adjustment. DECC will continue to improve the levels of under-represented EEO groups.

- National park field days were held as part of the Links to Learning program of the Illawarra Ethnic Communities Council.
- A strategic review of park volunteering has strengthened future volunteer management and streamlined the engagement of volunteers. The next step is to achieve greater engagement of volunteers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

DECC has very strong connections with Aboriginal communities across NSW through its responsibilities for protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage, managing Aboriginal Places, jointly managing many parks and reserves with Aboriginal people, and working with Aboriginal groups on cultural and natural resources projects (see also chapter 4). Projects in 2008–09 included:

- creating a CD with Elders and schoolchildren called Indigenous Connect Kids, which contains information on walks in and around the Bundjalung country
- developing Indigenous property management plans with the Jali, Ngulingah, Bogal local Aboriginal land councils and the Wollumbin Knowledge Elders Group
- assisting the Glen Innes and Casino-Bonalbo local Aboriginal land councils to develop fire management plans for community lands and fire training for members.

DECC remains committed to fostering a climate of mutual respect in a cohesive multicultural society, and will ensure that its environmental and organisational policies, programs and partnerships involve and reflect the needs of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. A key initiative for 2009–10 is a final evaluation of DECC's Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement 2006–2010 and the development of a new Multicultural Policies and Services Plan, with input from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

## ■ CASE STUDY

### Sharing the environmental message with Chinese communities

In Rachael Chan's day-to-day work as a DECC Operations Officer, she manages environment protection licences for Sydney Water's activities, including licensing sewage treatment networks in the Sydney Metropolitan Region.

In 2006, Rachael began giving presentations in Mandarin and Cantonese about protecting the environment. According to a 2006 study by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Mandarin is the language spoken by more non-English speaking communities in Sydney than any other.

Rachael's audiences were people in community health centres, migrant centres, nursing homes and local libraries; senior citizens' groups; women's groups and church groups. Audiences mainly consisted of women who spoke limited English and were often isolated from the mainstream environmental messages delivered by governments in Australia. However, these women had a significant role in their homes, and held considerable influence over children and grandchildren. The presentations looked at the value of the environment in relation to Chinese culture, and gave practical hints on how to protect waterways, reduce energy use, and encourage environmental education in families.

## Disability Action Plan

In 2008–09, DECC prepared a new Disability Action Plan 2009–2012, as required under section 9 of the NSW *Disability Services Act 1993*. It brings together for the first time the disability-related achievements and planning of the agencies that were merged to form DECC. As at 30 June 2009, the plan was at an advanced stage and is expected to be formally adopted and released early in 2009–10.

The plan sets out how DECC will continue to adjust both its services and its employment practices to make them more accessible to people with a disability and their carers. The plan examines the accessibility of DECC's services, such as information, environmental education, tourism and recreation in parks and gardens, volunteering opportunities, project grants, residential rebates and DECC's various licensing systems.

Proposed actions in coming years that will enhance DECC's accessibility for people with a disability include:

- completing planned works at a range of popular locations in national parks and botanic gardens, and at various DECC offices
- displaying information on the DECC website about the capability of licensed commercial tour and accommodation providers in national parks to serve customers with a disability
- holding a series of Sustainable Schools workshops for schools with children with special needs



Photo: DECC.

DECC officer Rachael Chan being interviewed by SBS Radio.

Rachael has been interviewed twice by the SBS Cantonese radio program, and won a DECC Outstanding Women's Award in 2008.

- continuing the annual series of talks and activities under the 'Don't DIS-my-ABILITY' campaign held as part of International Day of People with a Disability
- exploring the implementation of a DECC traineeship program under the NSW Traineeships for People With a Disability program.

## Spokeswomen program

The 2008–09 Spokeswomen's strategic plan included the themes 'organisational culture', 'support for Aboriginal people' and 'skilled people in place'. Initiatives of note during the year included:

- the Springboard women's career development program, which continued to be popular during 2008–09 with 30 women from all divisions and regions participating, and DECC's Director General participating as one of the guest speakers
- a pilot career resiliency program for women in management positions, to assist their progression into senior executive positions, will be run in-house during 2009–10
- a career development program for Aboriginal women
- 11 staff from across DECC receiving annual recognition awards, including 'DECC Woman of the Year' and 'Equity Champion – men supporting equity in DECC'.



*Recipients of the DECC Spokeswomen's Recognition Awards 2009. Standing, left to right: Donna Osland, Danyelle Playford, John Siemon, Deputy Premier Carmel Tebbutt, Tracey Starr, Natasha Funke, Ann-Marie Smith, Clarence Slockee (Aboriginal educator and performer), Jo Blackman. Seated, left to right: Director General Lisa Corbyn, Ann Trofa, Genevieve Thompson (DECC Woman of the Year 2009). Absent: Amiette Wakenshaw.*

Each year, DECC Spokeswomen also provide developmental opportunities across the state in support of International Women's Day. Around 200 women and men attended the annual Spokeswomen's workshops around NSW from March to May 2009. The highlight of the program was a day of events at Broken Hill. Around 30 men and women attended a 'Dealing with workplace bullying'. Seven other workshops formed part of the 2009 program, including 'Women in science – growing your career'.

## Public recognition for our staff and programs

This year, a number of DECC staff and programs received awards for their outstanding contributions to public service and environment protection in NSW. These awards are a testament to the high calibre of staff in DECC.

Lennie Anderson, who in 2008–09 worked as an Aboriginal Liaison Officer at DECC's Nelson Bay office, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) as part of the Queen's Birthday 2009 Honours List. Lennie received the honour for his exceptional services to Indigenous communities over many years, and particularly the Worimi people. Among his many roles, Lennie was a member of the National Parks and Wildlife Hunter Region Advisory Committee from 2004–08.

Joe Woodward, Deputy Director General, Environment Protection and Regulation, received the Public Service Medal on Australia Day 2009 for his outstanding work in protecting the NSW environment for more than 30 years. Joe has contributed substantially to the regulatory credibility of environmental agencies, achieving innovative environment protection regulation in NSW. In particular, he has worked with community groups, councils and industry in the Illawarra region to achieve tangible environmental improvements.

John Dengate, who retired as DECC's Director Public Affairs in 2009, received the Public Service Medal as part of the Queen's Birthday 2009 Honours List after a distinguished career. John was an instrumental voice and a public face of environment protection for more than 30 years, excelling in the fields of public communication and education, both in the NSW Public Sector and at the national level. His work earned him a media profile as a respected environmental expert.

Pat Hall, who manages Education Information and Tourism in DECC's Nowra and Fitzroy Falls offices, received the Public Service Medal as part of the Queen's Birthday 2009 Honours List for her outstanding service to South Coast and Southern Highlands communities over more than 29 years. Pat coordinates educational and tourist programs for South Coast parks and reserves, which involves delivering activities and services that enhance public appreciation of their natural, cultural and recreational values. Pat has pioneered programs that benefit many people, particularly the regional Indigenous community, and her outstanding commitment and unwavering dedication to local communities, environmental education and national parks tourism have been a great inspiration to staff and her peers throughout NSW.

A successful effort in combating the impact of bitou bush on native plant communities was recognised with an international award from the *Ecological Management and Restoration* journal and the Society for Ecological Restoration International as part of its Global Restoration Network. The award recognises the significant on-ground benefits to biodiversity that the project has achieved since 2006, and its promise of even more impressive results in the future.

The outstanding restoration work on the National Pass walking track at Wentworth Falls in the Blue Mountains received an international award of distinction in September 2008 from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. The extraordinary work on the 2.5-kilometre track exemplifies how a manufactured element can be successfully blended into the natural landscape.

The conservation management plan for the Meeting Place Precinct in Botany Bay National Park at Kurnell won a heritage planning award from the Planning Institute of Australia (NSW). The Meeting Place Precinct is a symbolic meeting place of cultures, from the first meeting between Lieutenant James Cook and indigenous Australians, to later meetings involving people of differing nationalities. The conservation management plan ensured the long-term protection of the heritage values of the area as the construction works were completed.

The restored Sugarloaf Point Lighthouse Cottages in Myall Lakes National Park, north of Newcastle, received a 'high commendation' in the Office of the Valuer General heritage award category at the Australian Property Institute NSW Excellence in Property Awards in October 2008. The award recognised DECC's commitment to protecting and conserving the historical character of the lighthouse while providing for a unique holiday experience.

The Lane Cove River Tourist Park, managed as a business unit within DECC, was the only Australian finalist in the prestigious World Travel and Tourism Council *Tourism Tomorrow* Awards. Situated in Lane Cove National Park, the tourist park was in the running for the best environmental accommodation.

Montague Island Conservation Tours entered the NSW Tourism Awards 'Hall of Fame' in November 2008 (with program partner Conservation Volunteers Australia) after winning in the same category for three consecutive years. Tour participants help regenerate the environment and the visitor fees they pay help to fund additional conservation initiatives. The 80-hectare island five nautical miles off Narooma is home to 2,000 fur seals, 8,000 penguins and thousands of other seabirds, as well as a historic lighthouse and keepers' complex.

## Financial management

Financial policies and systems were significantly enhanced across DECC during 2008–09. Key financial projects and activities during the year included:

- developing and implementing an executive dashboard for access to and management of financial information
- implementing divisional program forecasting via financial management software (SAP) and the executive dashboard
- financially supporting catchment management authorities in close liaison with NSW Treasury
- completing unqualified statutory financial statements for 19 entities, including DECC, the Environmental Trust, the Environment Protection Authority, the Marine Parks Authority, the Lake Illawarra Authority, the Chipping Norton Lakes Authority and 13 catchment management authorities
- implementing an enhanced cash forecasting (incentive) system in conjunction with NSW Treasury
- enhancing financial systems, including further roll-out of the SAP asset maintenance system, SAP travel enhancements, new SAP online tutorials and continued review and enhancement of financial reporting and analysis systems
- developing an integrated DECC finance manual and updated policies and procedures including delegations, the treatment of goods and services tax and fringe benefits tax, depreciation rates, the credit card policy and financial risk
- providing financial training across DECC with courses in the use of the financial system (SAP).

During 2008–09, DECC actively participated in the NSW Government's mini-budget process and developed and implemented plans for achieving required efficiency dividends offset savings for the 4% wage increases. An enhanced strategic budget process for 2009–10 was also developed. Financial improvement initiatives planned for 2009–10 include:

- transition actions associated with the NSW Government's super agency reform program
- continued contribution to DECC's business intelligence capabilities with initial implementation of the strategic road map for enhancement of the executive dashboard
- implementation of the SAP upgrade and further development of the SAP business warehouse to improve data analysis and report generation.

## Insurance cover

As part of its approach to risk management, in 2008-09 DECC obtained insurance cover through the NSW Treasury Managed Fund, which uses service providers Allianz Australia Pty Ltd for workers' compensation and GIO General Ltd for other risk areas.

### Areas of risk and related insurance costs

	2007-08 (\$'000)	2008-09 (\$'000)
Workers compensation*	6,033	5,722
Public liability	3,393	3,477
Property	2,136	2,124
Motor vehicles*	1,160	1,258
Miscellaneous (Fire Fighting Fund)	10,417	10,339
Miscellaneous (Other) *	42	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,181</b>	<b>22,952</b>

\* Includes hindsight adjustments paid and received by DECC relating to prior year premiums.

Premiums are based on claims history and reflect DECC's risk management approach to managing claims.

### Employee liabilities

Liability as at 30 June 2009	\$'000
Long service leave*	78,984
On-cost long service leave	10,651
Recreation leave	38,003
On-cost recreation leave	1,822

\* DECC liabilities for long service leave are assumed by the Crown Entity. Long service leave is measured using the present value basis.

## Information management and communications technology

During the year, DECC continued to implement the 2007-2010 Information Management and Communications Technology Strategic Plan. Significant achievements during the year included:

- implementing the DECC Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure Replacement Program. During the year, approximately 800 desktop computers and 150 laptops were replaced, giving staff the necessary technology to do their jobs. Significant progress was also achieved in implementing new technology to support the upgrade of DECC's financial and human resource applications.
- upgrading the DECC core email environment and implementing virtualisation technology, which will provide enhanced disaster recovery capability and significantly reduce ongoing energy costs.
- upgrading the DECC IT telecommunications network including implementing a dark fibre network connecting DECC's major offices and data centres, and rolling out wireless technology to DECC remote sites in regional NSW.

## ■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

### Payment of accounts

**Definition:** The following table shows DECC's performance on paying trade creditor accounts on time.

**Trade creditor 'accounts payable' balances at the end of each quarter for the financial year 2008-09**

Quarter	Current (i.e. within due date) \$	Fewer than 30 days \$	Between 30 and 60 days \$	Between 60 and 90 days \$	More than 90 days \$
September	1,217,919	129,074	13,180	15,193	0
December	7,391,768	4,140,172	0	1,056	0
March	6,969,019	331,778	59,277	31,383	36,392
June	656,765	68,717	6,172	0	4,369

The main reasons for accounts being paid outside the due date period were:

- invoices raised for large capital works are only paid on satisfactory review of the work
- invoices raised for large capital purchases may include items not yet received but expected to be received in the near future
- some short payment terms are not necessarily appropriate in more remote settings where the documentation may take time to be collected and matched for payment.

### Value of accounts paid on time

Quarter	Target %	Actual %	\$	Total amount paid \$
September	85	87.23	54,499,068	62,477,363
December	85	76.74	36,715,432	47,841,667
March	85	73.15	42,055,476	57,495,708
June	85	85.81	96,339,722	112,270,999

### Interpretation:

#### Late payment of accounts

DECC was not required to pay interest to creditors due to the late payment of accounts during the year.

#### Credit card certification

In accordance with Treasurer's Direction 205.01, it was certified that credit card usage by officers of the NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change had been in accordance with the appropriate government policy, Premier's Memoranda and Treasurer's Directions.

- piloting video conferencing technology including establishing facilities at offices across NSW and providing a desktop video conferencing capability.
- providing IT support for various business initiatives including rolling out an asset tracking system for parks management; implementing a new website for the DECC intranet; implementing a common system for littering and smoky vehicle online reporting; and supporting enhancements to an application used by the catchment management authorities in managing property vegetation plans.

## Natural Resources and Environment Information Management

DECC has approved the implementation of an Information Management Framework to improve the quality, consistency and accessibility of DECC data regarding natural resources.

Significant progress has been made on consolidating DECC's spatial data and systems across the organisation.

DECC has been a major contributor to the development of the NSW Remote Sensing Strategy, developed in collaboration with other agencies. The strategy is being implemented under the Common Spatial Information Initiative and guided by the NSW Spatial Council.

### ■ CASE STUDY

#### The Atlas of NSW Wildlife

The Atlas of NSW Wildlife is DECC's database of flora and fauna sightings, which is used routinely in conservation planning and environmental decision making.

As at January 2009, the atlas contained 4.25 million records of sightings for which DECC is custodian or which DECC is authorised to distribute (up from 1.6 million records in 2007).

Significant data were recently added to the atlas including:

- CSIRO's Australian bird and bat banding scheme data
- the Royal Botanic Gardens' specimen register
- results of aerial waterbird surveys by the University of New South Wales
- data from Forests NSW.

The public can access information about these sightings from [www.wildlifeatlas.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wildlifeatlas.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au). The atlas contains a further 3.65 million records from other stakeholders who have provided data for internal departmental use only.



Photo: A. Jelinek.

People can search for records of threatened species, such as the broad-toothed rat, on the Atlas of NSW Wildlife.

Access to information in the atlas is governed by DECC's Threatened Species Information Disclosure Policy. This policy is the basis for a chapter in the *Guide to best practices for generalising sensitive species occurrence data*, which was published in 2008 by the international Global Biodiversity Information Facility as a world's best practice framework for making records available through the internet.