

Sustainable consumption, production, resource use and waste management

Strategic focus area	Outcomes
Sustainability reflected in government and business decisions and operations	Government is a recognised leader in sustainable management of its processes, operations and public assets Business adopts sustainability as a core value
Resource conservation improved	Individuals and businesses minimise resource use and environmental impacts, recover resources and appropriately dispose of harmful waste

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4.1 Sustainability reflected in government and business decisions and operations

4.1.1 Corporate plan priorities 2004–06

Promoting sustainability in government planning

Actively contribute to the Government's metropolitan and regional planning strategies to promote sustainability principles and environmental protection

DEC contributed to *City of cities: a plan for Sydney's future*, the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy, which was released in December 2005. DEC contributed in areas including transport, recycled water, planning for new release areas and the building sustainability index (BASIX). DEC also participated in the development of coastal regional strategies (page 75).

DEC provided input to the NSW State Infrastructure Strategy, released in May 2006, which promotes sustainability and environment protection principles. DEC also assisted the Department of Planning (DoP) with commencement of the planning reforms (page 36).

During 2005–06, the NSW Government launched the City and Country Environment Restoration Program (page 6) that will promote local government sustainability strategies from 2007.

Promoting sustainability in the public sector

Guide purchasing and resource use by government agencies towards more sustainable practices

During 2005–06, DEC collated reports from 122 agencies on their recycling and purchasing activities under the NSW Government Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy (WRAPP) during 2003–05 (pages 75–76).

DEC continued to work with other government agencies to improve government procurement, including through the Smartbuy online procurement system and through sustainability requirements built into computer equipment supply contracts. Key partnerships for DEC included working with the RTA to increase markets for recycled materials, and working with local government to improve the sustainability of council operations and promote community awareness of sustainability (page 76).

Promoting sustainability in business

Work with businesses to move them towards sustainable practices

DEC's successful Industry Partnership Program concluded after four years, having provided a total of \$2.7 million in matched funding to 460 NSW businesses to undertake cleaner production projects.

During 2005–06, DEC began developing voluntary agreements, called NSW Sustainability Compacts, with leading companies in NSW. Hewlett Packard and Sensis have both made commitments to promote sustainability and undertake key improvement programs (page 77).

DEC published the second *Extended producer responsibility priority statement* and DEC's Executive Director Sustainability became the chair of the National Packaging Covenant Council (page 78).

Minimising DEC's own environmental impact

Minimise DEC's own environmental impact in terms of energy, water and paper consumption

DEC continued to monitor and review operations to minimise its environmental impact. During 2005–06, DEC implemented its Fleet Environmental Improvement Plan, conducted water audits of some significant buildings and reserves, and began developing a Park Facilities Manual and the DEC Sustainability Framework. For further details of DEC's environmental performance, see pages 87–88.

4.1.2 Promoting sustainability

DEC works with other NSW Government agencies to ensure that development and planning for future urban expansion integrates sustainable principles, and that new developments do not threaten biodiversity and the environment.

In December 2005, the Government and the Minister for Planning released the **Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney, City of cities: a plan for Sydney's future**, providing the framework for managing Sydney's growth over the next 25 years.

DEC provided submissions and comments to DoP during the strategy's development, and will help implement the strategy by:

- providing advice to assist planning and infrastructure decisions to be consistent with Action for Air (see page 23)
- helping local government to develop local environmental plans that achieve biodiversity certification (see page 44)
- developing Aboriginal Heritage Assessment Protocols, in consultation with the Aboriginal community, and developing heritage permits under the Aboriginal Heritage Reforms Package
- promoting investment in alternative waste technologies and infrastructure
- promoting integration of sustainable living principles into the urban design guidelines being developed for local government by DoP.

In November 2004, the NSW Government approved the provision of approximately 90,000 dwellings in south-west Sydney and 60,000 dwellings in north-west Sydney over the next 30 years. DEC advised on urban sustainability, biodiversity, and Aboriginal heritage identification, assessment and conservation. DEC also commented on the draft state environmental planning policy, proposing the incorporation of suitable land use and development controls into environmental planning and assessment regulations, to enable neighbourhoods to be sustainable, and natural and cultural heritage to be protected and enhanced.

DEC has worked to ensure that, where appropriate, environmental targets are incorporated into the draft **regional strategies for coastal regions** prepared by DoP. These regional strategies, for the Far North Coast, Lower Hunter, Illawarra and South Coast, have been prepared to ensure that development is located to meet the regions' projected housing, employment and environmental needs over the next 25 years. In the Lower Hunter, DEC will continue to raise issues associated with air quality and noise from mining and development.

DEC is also preparing **regional conservation plans** to maintain or improve biodiversity as the coastal strategies are implemented (see page 44).

■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Percentage of products with recycled content purchased by NSW agencies as reported under WRAPP

Definition: WRAPP plans were developed in 1998 and progress is reported biennially. The first report was submitted in May 2001, the second in August 2003 and the third in August 2005. This indicator measures changes in the percentage of paper and construction products with recycled content purchased by NSW agencies.

Products with recycled content purchased by NSW agencies as reported under WRAPP



Interpretation: NSW Government agencies continue to improve their performance in purchasing products with recycled content. The purchase of office photocopying paper with recycled content rose, but can improve further. Strong growth was seen in the purchase of recycled construction materials, representing a massive improvement on the 2001 figure of 4%. This is in part due to the availability of new products that contain recycled content. DEC continues its long-term work with business and government to open new markets, particularly in the high volume construction sector.

4.1.3 Sustainability in the public sector

State government agencies and state-owned corporations buy various goods and services for their operations and capital works. DEC advises these organisations on buying goods and using resources in accordance with the **NSW Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy (WRAPP)**. This policy requires each agency to implement its own waste reduction and purchasing plans and to report to DEC on progress every two years.

In 2005, DEC received detailed progress reports from 122 agencies (95% of agencies covered by the WRAPP). DEC analysed these reports, and prepared a **WRAPP Progress Report 2006** that will be released in September 2006. The reports showed that good progress was made by government between 2003 and 2005:

- the paper recycling rate increased by 9% to 82%
- 454,000 tonnes of waste were recovered for recycling, cutting 118,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions

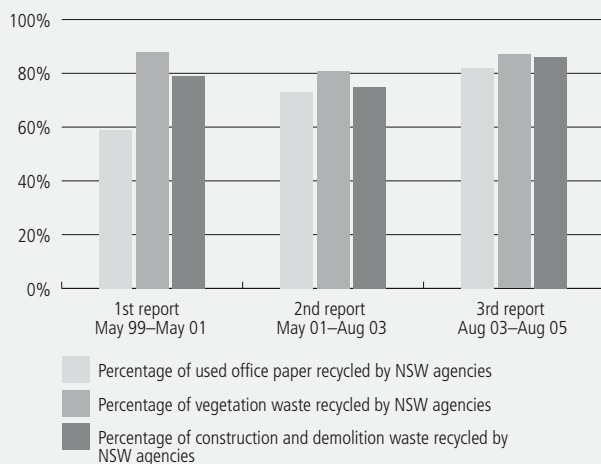
■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Percentage of waste recycled by NSW agencies as reported under WRAPP

Definition: NSW agencies are required to report biennially to DEC on the amounts of paper, and vegetation, construction and demolition waste they recycle. This indicator measures the proportion of these materials recycled by NSW agencies.

The first WRAPP report was submitted in May 2001. The second report was submitted in August 2003 and the third in August 2005.

Paper and vegetation construction and demolition waste recycled by NSW agencies as reported under WRAPP



Interpretation: The increased percentage of used paper recycled, up from 73% in 2003 to 82% in 2005, reflects a continuing steady rise in efforts by NSW agencies in response to WRAPP. The recycling rates for vegetation, construction and demolition waste have increased since 2003. Increased rates of recycling were reported in 2005 for most materials, with strong improvement in the recycling of vegetation (up 6%), asphalt (up 11%) and plasterboard (up 4%). With the exception of bricks and tiles (34%), glass (38%) and plasterboard (11%), all other materials achieved a recycling rate above 50% in 2005. The recycling rates for steel and non-ferrous metals remained very high at 95% and 99% respectively.

- the purchase of recycled content copy paper increased by 5% to 905,641 reams, or 44% of total paper purchased
- the recycling rate for construction and demolition waste rose from 75% to 89%
- there was a 42% improvement in the purchase of construction products with recycled content, including landscaping materials.

More opportunities have been identified to recycle large quantities of material, such as timber, bricks and tiles. Purchase of recycled toner cartridges, currently just 19%, could be improved. The report is available on www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/spd_wrapp.htm.

DEC continues to work with government agencies, particularly the Department of Commerce, to incorporate sustainable practices into contracts for the supply of goods and services to government. For example, a contract to supply computer equipment, due to be tendered shortly, has presented a good opportunity to build in waste minimisation, recycling and extended producer responsibility requirements. Work also continued on improving the government's online procurement system, Smartbuy, to help buyers identify environmentally sustainable products.

Use of recycled materials

DEC continues to work with the Roads and Traffic Authority NSW (RTA) to increase **markets for recycled materials** by using them in road-making. Recycled materials can be used in concrete and asphalt, which reduces the demand for virgin materials. DEC and the RTA are trialling crushed glass as a partial cement and sand replacement in concrete used for road pavements and related works. It is estimated that 100,000 tonnes of crushed glass is sent to landfill every year in the greater Sydney region. This year, laboratory trials demonstrated that crushed glass may be used in concrete without affecting performance. Trials will continue, with the intent of developing a new industry standard for using crushed glass in road-making concrete.

In 2004–05, the RTA trialled the use of scrap rubber tyres in asphalt. Field trials were conducted in 2005–06 which demonstrated that scrap rubber asphalt not only extends road life and enables thinner pavements to be built, but can also reduce traffic tyre noise. The RTA is now refining its specifications for asphalt to incorporate scrap rubber.

Alliances with local government

In partnership with Local Government Managers Australia, DEC has helped councils to determine which aspects of their organisational systems are sustainable and which parts need development. Councils developed and piloted the **NSW Local Government Sustainability Health Check**, which covers asset management, protection and management of the natural environment, and the range of community and cultural services that councils offer ratepayers and residents. Training workshops for council officers on implementing the health check will be run in late 2006.

This partnership will improve sustainability outcomes for councils, and enhance their role in building and engaging community awareness and as caretakers for future generations.

4.1.4 Sustainability in business

DEC's **Industry Partnership Program** has concluded after four successful years. A total of \$2.7 million in matched funding was provided to 460 businesses for projects to reduce resource use (raw materials, water and energy) and to lower the volume and toxicity of waste and other emissions. Participating companies saved \$11.17 million per annum and delivered impressive environmental gains. In total, CO₂ emissions are being reduced by 37,000 tonnes per year (equivalent to taking 8000 cars off the road), 9800 tonnes of raw materials are being reused or recycled per year, and 7900 tonnes of materials are being diverted from landfill.

Business alliances

Building on the success of previous initiatives, DEC has worked with businesses in geographic or sector-based clusters to achieve more efficient resource recovery and sustainability. For example, DEC brought together a group comprising leading companies in commercial property management. The group changed its waste contracting arrangements and its systems relating to water and energy. Group members have also set targets to lower energy and water use, and reduce waste being sent to landfill.

The number of business alliances with DEC is expected to increase. In addition, DEC continues to work with businesses through its licensing and compliance activities.

Sustainability compacts

NSW **Sustainability Compacts** have been initiated by DEC. These are voluntary agreements, signed at Ministerial and CEO level, for three to five-year partnerships with leading companies in NSW. They aim to accelerate environmental improvements in operations and supply chains, while committing the company to work towards improving its industry sector. Compacts are facilitated by DEC but may also involve other NSW agencies. In some cases companies may sign a joint NSW compact and a Victorian sustainability covenant.

Compacts focus on environmental improvement in four key areas:

- sustainability leadership – integrating sustainability principles into the company's operations and key performance indicators
- sustainable products and services – enhancing the sustainability of goods and services including redesigning them, developing innovative new products and services, and product stewardship

■ CASE STUDY

DEC works with Hewlett Packard and Sensis on sustainability initiatives

In November 2005, the first sustainability compact was signed with Hewlett Packard (HP). HP has agreed to implement far-reaching initiatives including:

- developing a computer take-back program for all HP computers
- increasing printer cartridge return and recycling
- reducing water and energy use and waste generation at HP facilities in NSW
- publishing the inaugural HP *Australian sustainability report*
- conducting environmental education for staff and suppliers
- advocating for improved sustainability in the IT industry.

In March 2006, a sustainability compact was signed with Sensis, a major information provider. Sensis is committed to:

- improving the ability to search for recycling services through the Yellow Pages website and other search engines
- helping suppliers to become more environmentally sustainable
- promoting sustainability to its 590,000 Sydney customers



Bruce Akhurst – CEO Sensis, Alison Megarity – Parliamentary Secretary and Member for Menai and Lisa Corby – Director General DEC (standing at back) at the signing of the Sensis sustainability compact.

- educating the community and business on recycling its directories
- expanding its own Green Office Program
- producing the first *Sensis sustainability report*
- advocating for sustainability in the advertising and media sector.

- efficient production and service delivery – achieving resource recovery and other efficiencies in operations, facilities, and product and service delivery
- environmental responsibility – ensuring all aspects of the business and, where appropriate, its suppliers comply with environmental legislation.

Extended producer responsibility

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) requires producers to be physically and financially responsible for the environmental impacts of their products throughout their lifecycle. This includes their choice of materials and the manufacturing processes they use, and the use and disposal of products. EPR is generally applied to post-consumer and other difficult to manage wastes.

DEC incorporated recommendations from a review of EPR progress into the *NSW Extended producer responsibility priority statement 2005–06*, which was subsequently put out for public consultation. The wastes listed for action in the statement are:

- seven top priority wastes – computers; mobile phones; office paper; paint; plastic bags; televisions; and tyres
- ten wastes of concern – agricultural and veterinary (Agvet) chemicals; Agvet chemical containers; batteries; cigarette litter; end of life vehicle residuals; other electrical products; packaging; polyvinyl chloride (PVC); treated timber; and used oil and lubricants.

DEC continues to work with each industry involved with these wastes at a state and national level, to ensure that where possible there is a coordinated effort across governments and industry. The Environment Protection and Heritage Council is focusing on waste from televisions and computers, tyres, plastic bags and packaging at the national level. NSW, through DEC, is taking the lead in developing initiatives with industry on electrical products. DEC is also leading the development of a **National Environment Protection Measure for Product Stewardship** that will provide the legislative blueprint for each state and territory. Product stewardship recognises that all stakeholders have a responsibility to manage wastes, from designers and manufacturers through to consumers.

National Packaging Covenant

A new **National Packaging Covenant (NPC)** commenced on 1 July 2005 and will expire in 2010. The covenant is a voluntary agreement between Australian governments, including NSW, and businesses at all levels of the packaging supply chain, to minimise the environmental impacts of disposing of used packaging by re-using or recycling it. The new covenant sets a target of boosting national recycling rates for packaging from 48% to 65% by 2010, and not increasing the amount of packaging sent to landfill by that same date. Signatories must develop and abide by action plans, and report on standard key performance indicators.

Strong community support continues for **action on plastic bags** to reduce the litter they cause and the damage they do, particularly to marine mammals. The community is participating by using reusable bags. The National Environment Protection Council has recently reaffirmed its resolution to phase out lightweight plastic bags by the end of 2008. Work is progressing on nationally consistent regulatory options to support this resolution. The council called for retailers to continue to work to reduce the number of plastic bags used, and to become signatories of the National Packaging Covenant.



Plastic bag use is reduced by sustainable shopping practices.



4.2 Improving resource conservation

4.2.1 Corporate plan priorities 2004–06

Waste avoidance and resource recovery

Implement the NSW Waste Avoidance and Recovery Strategy focusing on avoiding and preventing waste, increasing use of renewable and recoverable materials, and reducing roadside and railway litter and illegal dumping

During 2005–06, DEC worked within the framework of the NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2003, and focused on four areas for action: avoiding waste (page 80); increasing re-use and recycling (pages 80–81); reducing litter and illegal dumping (page 23); and reducing the use of toxic substances in products (page 78).

Improving resource conservation through land-use planning

Contribute early in the planning process to improve conservation and efficiency in resource use in urban and rural areas e.g. for water

DEC contributes to land-use planning at a number of levels. During 2005–06, DEC provided environment protection input into general terms of approval for 99 individual developments through the integrated development process, and further policy advice to the Department of Planning on major developments (page 36). DEC also contributed to the NSW State Infrastructure Strategy and *City of cities: a plan for Sydney's future*, the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy, both released in 2006.

DEC has made significant contributions to development of the draft NSW Waste Strategy 2006, due for public consultation in late 2006. By supporting regional waste groups, based on regional organisations of councils, DEC also contributed to the work of local government in improving resource conservation in urban and rural areas (page 81).

Developing a sustainability framework

Develop a sustainability framework for a more integrated approach to managing environmental issues

DEC provided support, guidance and encouragement to the public, government and the business community to adopt sustainable practices through the programs outlined in this chapter.

DEC also focused on the sustainability of its own operations, starting with the development of a Water Savings Plan, which will feed into the development of the DEC Sustainability Framework. For details of DEC's environmental performance, including improvements to the sustainability of its building accommodation and vehicle fleet, see pages 87–88.

4.2.2 Resource conservation

DEC improves resource conservation in NSW by working with government, industry and the community on waste recovery and reuse.

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2006

DEC reviewed the NSW Waste Strategy, developing a progress report and the **draft Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2006**, scheduled for public exhibition in September 2006. The strategy:

- provides a framework for cutting waste, increasing recycling and reuse of materials, reducing toxicity in products, and stamping out illegal dumping and littering
- analyses efforts to manage waste, and sets priorities for achieving NSW's 2014 recycling targets
- provides results from the waste data system, which allows for more reliable and extensive monitoring of waste habits in the Greater Sydney Region (Sydney, the Hunter, Central Coast and Illawarra). This system, established in 2004, enables facilities to enter their data online.

Data from the new electronic waste data system shows:

- per capita, people in Sydney sent 7.2% less waste to landfill in 2004–05 compared with 2000, while people in the Central Coast, Hunter and Illawarra regions sent 1.2% more waste to landfill
- Sydney recycled 49% of its total waste in 2004–05 compared with 48% in 2002–03, while the Central Coast, Hunter and Illawarra regions recycled 50% of their total waste in 2004 compared to 47% in 2002–03
- tonnage of recyclables collected at kerbsides in Sydney increased from 125 kg per capita in 2000 to 137 kg per capita in 2004–05, with 283 kg now recovered each year per household

- 109 councils now provide kerbside recycling – a 7% increase since 2000
- Sydney households each recycle 94 kg of garden wastes through council collection systems
- Sydney's population is growing, and while as a city it is creating more total waste than in 2002–03, individuals are disposing of 94 kg less waste per capita than they did six years ago.

Information on the contribution of government agencies to recycling is on page 76.

For more details on the strategy, visit www.environment.nsw.gov.au/education/spd_warr2006.htm.

The quantity of **waste disposal in the Greater Sydney Region** has remained fairly stable in recent years. In 2005–06, there was a slight rise of 0.5% in waste disposal in the Greater Sydney Region from the previous year. Since 2000, the Greater Sydney Region has achieved a 1.1% reduction in waste disposed of to landfill, but due to population growth this represents a reduction of 5.8% on a per capita basis. The reported figures do not include tonnages of virgin excavated natural material disposed of.

To inform industry about waste, and design effective programs to reduce waste, DEC needs to know about the amount of waste generated, the movement of waste through the economy and to landfill, and the amount of waste ending up as litter. Accordingly, during 2005–06, DEC:

- conducted its annual survey of **local council recycling** – the 2004–05 results show that NSW councils are continuing to collect increasing amounts of recyclable material from the kerbside with a 12% improvement on the previous year (2005–06 data is not available until the end of October 2006)
- conducted its annual survey of packaging placed out for recycling, which identified that most brand owners were signatories to the National Packaging Covenant; non-signatories made up 13% of the items in the audit
- analysed annual returns from landfill operators who pay the waste levy.

■ CASE STUDY

Research partnerships for recycled organic material

The Greater Sydney Region currently recycles 48% of garden organic material – over 600,000 tonnes per year. DEC is researching markets for organic material, both to reduce the waste sent to landfill and to benefit the environment by using quality compost.

In partnership with the NSW Department of Primary Industries, DEC has established research plots in vegetable and wine-grape growing areas to determine the long-term cost-benefit of using recycled organic material in agriculture.

Trials and demonstration sites have been established in partnership with the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority to test the effectiveness of compost in catchment management and land rehabilitation.



Tony Hodgkins, DEC

Players at Kiama golf course will benefit from improved turf quality due to top-dressing with organic compost.

A partnership has also been established with the NSW Golf Course Superintendents Association, and four golf course trials across Sydney and the Illawarra have resulted in improved turf health.

In March 2006, DEC released a **resource recovery guide for local councils** in the Sydney metropolitan area and regional centres, to guide councils on preferred systems for kerbside recycling. The guide is based on studies that compared alternative resource recovery systems and their performance. It sets out preferred service characteristics councils should request from collecting and reprocessing suppliers when they review existing services, or enter into new contracts. These service characteristics include:

- bin-based recovery systems for dry recyclables, garden organics and garbage
- a colour standard for mobile bin lids and bodies
- a standard set of dry recyclables to be collected from the kerbside
- suggested performance outcomes
- clear guidance on when and how councils should collect garden organics.

The **benefits of recycling study**, released by DEC in April 2006, found recycling is improving the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, delivering significant energy and water savings, and conserving non-renewable virgin resources. Virgin product systems were directly compared to recycled products to show the environmental benefits associated with recycling different materials. Across NSW each year, through recycling, households are saving the equivalent of 2654 Olympic-sized swimming pools of water, saving the electricity used by almost 334,000 households, and taking 55,000 cars off the road.

Together with this study, DEC has developed a **calculator** that shows at the touch of a button the amount of water and energy saved, and greenhouse gases reduced by recycling. Industry and council response has been positive and, as a result of feedback, the calculator was updated in March 2006 to show the amount of landfill space saved by recycling.

Improving recycling by local government

DEC has been working to improve recycling in regional NSW, where local councils are responsible for waste management and may be considering new facilities. In response to the needs of regional councils, DEC has developed a **transfer station guide**. The guide covers good practice in design and operation of resource recovery facilities, occupational health and safety requirements, and local community education and engagement. With the cooperation of councils, the guide draws on a number of case studies in regional NSW.

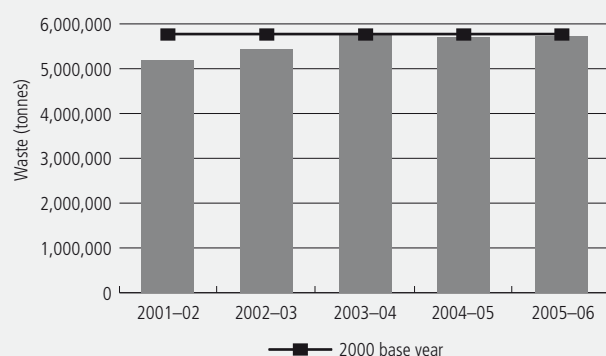
DEC's **model waste contract for councils**, released in July 2005, is a complete tendering package that allows councils to focus on the outcomes they want to achieve with less time spent in developing documents. DEC has provided full-day training packages which have ensured a positive response to the contract. It has been requested Australia-wide as well as by New Zealand. So far, 86 councils have requested the model contract, including 85% of councils in the Greater Sydney Region.

■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Change in waste disposed of to landfill in the Greater Sydney Region under the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy

Definition: This indicator measures the tonnages of waste disposed of to landfill from the Greater Sydney Region (from Port Stephens to the Shoalhaven and including the Sydney Metropolitan Area). The NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy, which began in 2003 and is managed by DEC, provides a major driver for reducing waste and improving disposal practices. Achievements under the strategy rely on industry, councils and the community working to reduce targeted waste areas.

Waste disposed of to landfill in the Greater Sydney Region



Interpretation: Since 2003, the measurement of waste disposal tonnages has been greatly improved through a new electronic reporting system introduced by DEC. The system enables more accurate capture, analysis and verification of data. The increase in reported disposal tonnages reflects the inclusion of waste that was disposed of but not levied (waste used in landfills for approved operational purposes and waste that is approved as exempted from the levy, for example through community activities such as Clean Up Australia).

The refinement of the new waste data system has enabled the data to be updated from 2000 to 2005–06. The updating of the system has increased the reporting of total waste disposal by approximately 250,000 tonnes per annum.

DEC supports seven **regional waste groups** in NSW through forums, staff support and advice. This year saw the establishment of an eighth group, the South East Resource Recovery Regional Organisation of Councils. Funding from the Environmental Trust helps the groups deliver plans that address the outcomes of the NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy. The groups have calculated that, since their formation in 2002, their activities have enabled the diversion from landfill of:

- 47,000 tonnes of scrap metal
- 320,000 cubic metres of garden waste
- 1.2 million plastic bags
- 155,000 kg of household chemical waste
- 18,000 kg of farm chemicals
- 44,700 tonnes of construction and demolition waste
- 233,000 tonnes of commercial and industrial waste
- 8000 tyres.

4.2.3 Community education and support

Community education

DEC plays a leading role in the community education sector. This is underpinned by conducting vital research into what the community thinks about the environment, and using the results to design the education initiatives that DEC and others carry out.

In July 2005, DEC published ***The environment and NSW ethnic communities in 2004***. The major finding was that more people from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) rated the environment as being very important to their lives than in a comparable community-wide survey, *Who cares about the environment 2003?* In NSW, one in five residents – almost 1.2 million people – speak a language other than English at home and the new research shows that these people care greatly about the environment. The study is available on www.environment.nsw.gov.au/ethnic_community/ethniccom.htm.

Educating the community about litter: changing knowledge, attitudes and behaviour 2000 to 2003 was made available on DEC's website in late 2005 (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/litterreport_05608.pdf). This publication contains the results of research and evaluation undertaken as part of litter public awareness campaigns in NSW from 2000 to 2003. It found there were changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour over that period, including a trend to connect litter to wider environmental issues of waste management, illegal dumping and recycling.

This year DEC carried out research and focus testing for **'Who cares about the environment 2006?'** This survey measures people's attitudes to, knowledge of, and skills and behaviour regarding the environment. The surveys have been conducted every three years since 1994. The report will be published later in 2006.

DEC also supports and services the **NSW Council on Environmental Education**, which during 2005–06 reviewed and developed the next NSW Environmental Education Plan for consideration by Government.

Sustainable schools

Since 2003, DEC and the Department of Education and Training have been working together on a program for long-term **sustainability in schools**. Part of this involves developing a school environmental management plan. This has led to school environmental audits, staff training on sustainable purchasing, and new learning activities for students on reducing waste. The program is now under way in over 200 government and non-government schools.

In 2006, the Catholic school system agreed to become involved. DEC also reached agreement with the Local Government and Shires Associations to help council education officers work with schools to improve their environmental outcomes.

Our Environment – It's a Living Thing

The **Our Environment – It's a Living Thing** (OEILT) community environmental education campaign entered its fifth year in 2006 and continues to increase environmental awareness by promoting positive behaviour in the business sector, communities, local governments and individuals.

The program encourages communities to adopt environmentally sustainable lifestyles. DEC is working with the Total Environment Centre, Australian Conservation Foundation, NSW Nature Conservation Council, NSW Council of Social Service and the Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability on the program.

OEILT partners have developed a number of projects, including the **GreenHome project** launched in December 2005, which has recorded great results among participating households. Collectively these households are saving 11 million litres of water, 380 tonnes of greenhouse emissions and 70,000 litres of landfill waste per year.

The **Local Council Partnership Program** is another OEILT project. This program supports councils in developing projects that track environmental outcomes, and monitor and report on behavioural change in their communities. Following the 2005–06 programs, another \$522,939 was provided for nine councils and five groups to take on 62 projects over two years.

Preliminary findings from the first year of the program indicate many projects have resulted in changes in community behaviour and environmental outcomes. These included:

- 805 kilolitres of water saved through the use of retrofitting appliances like AAA showerheads in the St George council area
- an additional 86 tonnes of material recycled and 30 tonnes less sent to landfill in Cowra.

Hurstville, Rockdale, Kogarah, Hastings, Newcastle City and Sydney City councils all reported increased use of retrofitting appliances among participating householders, and Newcastle City Council plans to implement the project in the commercial sector.

In February 2006, a **redeveloped OEILT website** went live, featuring a comprehensive update on actions people can take at home, work and play to live more sustainably. The website received over 36,000 visits in the first six months. The most popular areas were water, chemicals, energy, recycling and volunteering. The website also promotes the program's successful projects and provides resources and tools to enable the community and stakeholders to access sustainable living information.

A credible, efficient and effective organisation

Strategic focus area	Outcomes
One integrated DEC	<p>The Department completes the transformation of constituent agencies into DEC</p> <p>DEC values and develops staff and provides a safe and healthy workplace</p> <p>The Department is recognised for the quality of its communication, service delivery and corporate governance</p>

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5.1 One integrated DEC

5.1.1 Corporate plan priorities 2004–06

Build staff knowledge and capacity

Build staff knowledge and accountabilities and the capacity to deliver services across the Department, emphasising conservation, environmental and cultural heritage concepts, values and practices

During 2005–06, DEC undertook a range of training initiatives for staff, within a new Learning and Development Framework (page 85). DEC experts shared skills with other staff in historic heritage maintenance and information management, fire management and environmental auditing.

Cultural heritage change program

Review and implement the Cultural Heritage Change Program and the government's 'Two Ways Together' plan

During 2005–06, DEC adopted the Aboriginal People, Environment and Conservation Principles (APEC), to improve our business practices so DEC can interact with Aboriginal people in culturally appropriate ways and recognise their interests in the land and its resources.

Effective cross-divisional links

Establish effective cross-divisional links within DEC

During 2005–06, DEC continued inter-divisional collaboration on a number of environmental and conservation programs, including the City and Country Environment Restoration Program (page 6), wetlands recovery (page 50), the NSW Biodiversity Strategy (page 42), the Science Investment Management Plan (page 32), and reserve establishment (pages 60–62). DEC also enabled staff to work across divisions on issues affecting DEC's work, including water, sustainability, and occupational health and safety. During 2005–06, the Aboriginal Network and the Spokeswoman Program (page 90) continued to build strong networks across DEC.

New industrial award

Develop and implement new industrial awards for the Department

During the year DEC continued to work with unions to develop an appropriate award framework expected to be implemented in late 2006. Three separate awards, incorporating common conditions, will cover DEC staff; one each for staff working in:

- Cultural Heritage; Corporate Services; Environment Protection and Regulation; Policy and Science; Strategy, Communication and Governance; and Sustainability Programs divisions
- Parks and Wildlife Division
- Botanic Gardens Trust.

Integrating corporate support services

Establish and implement effective integrated corporate support services across the Department, including policies, procedures, systems and infrastructure

DEC has continued to achieve efficiencies through the ongoing development of streamlined recruitment, payroll and accounts processes through a single service centre. During 2005–06, DEC further developed a common information technology platform and extended the reach of the wide area network, allowing DEC staff to work together with greater speed and efficiency.

During 2005–06, DEC also commenced implementing employee self-service for some human resources functions and trained more than 260 staff in procurement management, to coincide with the release of a new Procurement Tool Kit (page 88).

Occupational health and safety

Set and achieve challenging targets for occupational health and safety

During 2005–06, DEC developed new procedures and guidelines on OHS risk management and injury management, and released a department-wide Occupational Health and Safety Policy (page 91). Both the number (277) and the value (\$1.7 million) of injury and illness claims declined from previous years.

Achieving budget savings targets

Review work priorities to achieve the Department's two-year budget savings targets while also ensuring manageable workloads for staff

DEC achieved budget savings and implemented its revenue strategies to contribute to Government efficiencies (page 92). During 2005–06, DEC incorporated efficiency improvements into its strategic plans, including the DEC Corporate Plan 2006–2010 released in May 2006 (page 86).

5.1.2 Organisational development

Based on a review of its workforce profile conducted during 2005–06, DEC determined the following priorities for workforce management for 2006–08:

- increasing Aboriginal employment
- succession planning
- developing leadership/management capabilities
- attracting and retaining staff.

DEC is extending its employment programs to include a **Graduate Program** to address key attraction and retention areas. Work has also commenced on reviewing structures for progression and succession planning.

Learning and development

A new DEC-wide **Learning and Development Framework** has been developed to enhance opportunities for cross-divisional training and the ability of divisions to meet specialist training requirements. The new framework will be implemented in 2006–07.

Key learning and development initiatives in 2005–06 included:

- conducting a training needs assessment with Swinburne University which has provided the basis for a comprehensive Aboriginal Cultural Awareness program across DEC. At June 2006, DEC was negotiating a partnership with TAFE NSW to deliver the core Aboriginal Cultural Education program
- developing new training modules for high level roles in DEC fire management, to support DEC's commitment to better protect parks and the community from fire
- developing a training package to implement new DEC grievance, bullying and harassment policies, with advice from the Anti-Discrimination Board
- piloting a Management Development Program involving 45 staff from Executive, managerial and supervisory levels. The program is being evaluated and, if successful, will be implemented across DEC in 2006–07

- conducting regional workshops for field staff who manage projects funded by the Heritage Assets Maintenance Program (HAMP) (see page 67). These workshops focused on effectively implementing the program and historic heritage management best practice
- conducting regional training sessions on the effective use of the Historic Heritage Information Management System (HHIMS) database.

In addition, 24 DEC officers were certified as provisional environmental auditors through competency-based training.

Many rangers work in remote locations and have had difficulty accessing up-to-date information and journal articles. The new **ranger alert service** introduced in 2005–06 delivers information to their desktop, so they can more easily improve their knowledge on the many aspects of their work.

Improving DEC's website and intranet

During the year DEC commenced a major corporate project to rationalise and integrate the four former agency websites and create a single intranet for all staff. This has involved extensive consultation with users, designing new information structures, and testing and installing new software. More than 40,000 pages of information, and a number of databases, will be transferred to the new website, which will give users easier access to environmental information and DEC services. The common intranet will ensure all staff can access policies and procedures. The website and intranet are due for completion in the first half of 2007.

Business continuity planning

DEC worked on minimising disruption of services to the public in the event of an emergency, through business continuity planning. A business impact analysis for information and communication services was used to produce a **Disaster Recovery Kit for Information Management and Communications Technology**, which can be used by emergency response coordinators. An off-site disaster recovery site, Classic Blue, has also been established. Some operational areas of DEC also have their own disaster recovery frameworks. For example, Environment Protection and Regulation Operations follows the procedures established in the NSW Government emergency response management framework, *Enviroplan*, to guide staff and allocate resources to respond to state emergencies requiring environmental clean-up.

5.1.3 Corporate governance

During 2005–06, DEC continued to develop its corporate governance framework. This work included establishing a three-year audit and compliance program, revising DEC's **Fraud and Corruption Prevention Strategy** and training DEC staff.

In June 2006, 48 DEC managers received corporate governance training, presented by the Independent Commission Against Corruption. This training built on DEC's Ethics Package, providing managers with practical guidance on how to prevent corruption and undertake fact-finding investigations.

Corporate planning

In May 2006, the NSW Premier, Morris Iemma, launched DEC's **Corporate Plan 2006–2010**. The plan guides wider planning and decision-making across DEC, informing strategic, operational and functional plans in each division. The new plan will form the basis for DEC's annual report over the next four years.

Corporate reporting

During the year, DEC continued to monitor corporate performance measures, which provide the basis of performance reports that are provided regularly to DEC management and key external stakeholders.

DEC submitted all financial statements to the Audit Office by the statutory deadline in August 2005. All content of the annual report for 2004–05, except the final Environment Protection Authority (EPA) financial statements, was prepared by the statutory deadline of 31 October 2005.

Tabling of DEC's *Annual Report 2004–05* was delayed pending receipt of an audit opinion on its financial statements. This opinion was qualified in relation to the EPA financial statements. The audit opinion related to how DEC's financial statements were presented, not to how DEC managed its finances, and it was not a reflection of financial exposure.

Audit and review

DEC's comprehensive **internal audit program** helps to ensure the compliance, efficiency and effectiveness of DEC programs and processes. The program comprises a conservation compliance stream overseen by the Conservation Audit and Compliance Committee established under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, and environment protection, and finance and administration streams, overseen by the Internal Audit Committee.

DEC has appointed independent auditors, the Internal Audit Bureau, to conduct its internal audits. Audits completed during 2005–06 were:

- protection of historic heritage values
- review of environmental factors
- visitor safety (management of dangerous trees)
- management of payments to creditors

- management of payroll systems and controls
- printing and publishing processes
- travel allowance payments
- management of the Environmental Trust Fund
- Ministerial information systems
- RTA Drives
- forestry regulation
- environmental licensing (after-hours incidents service).

Implementation of endorsed audit recommendations is monitored by the relevant audit committee.

External reviews provide DEC with an independent assessment of our probity, impact and compliance. During 2005–06, The Audit Office of NSW carried out comprehensive audits of our annual financial statements and associated accounting and financial systems.

DEC takes complaints and other performance feedback seriously, to improve service delivery and prevent problems recurring. In 2005–06, DEC received 14 significant complaints. Ten of these, together with seven complaints received but not resolved in 2004–05, were finalised during the year. Evidence of improper conduct was found in relation to three of the complaints. As a result, one person was dismissed and one matter was referred to the police. No evidence of improper conduct was found in relation to any of the remaining complaints. Some changes to systems or procedures were recommended in three matters, and these are being implemented.

Freedom of information

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

Freedom of information (FOI) statistics for 2005–06 are shown in Appendix 11. DEC received 142 new FOI requests this year, a 42% increase from 2004–05, and 134 applications were processed. (See performance indicator on page 87.)

Many applications were from members of parliament, solicitors, companies, and community and political organisations. DEC received very few FOI applications from people seeking information about their personal affairs. While 26% of the FOI applications were subject to exemptions from release, in most cases these exemptions covered very few documents. Many DEC applications are complex and frequently involve documents provided by third parties such as individuals, organisations and businesses. Most FOI exemptions were made to protect those parties' personal and business affairs. Very few documents created by DEC were exempted.

There were 13 internal review decisions made during 2005–06. In three cases, the original FOI decision was varied. The other ten decisions were affirmed. Five review requests were received from third parties attempting to prevent DEC from releasing documents.

One FOI decision proceeded to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal (ADT). A third party objected to DEC's decision to release a number of documents. The applicant eventually withdrew their FOI application and the case did not proceed to a hearing.

One complaint was made to the Ombudsman's Office about a DEC decision to release a document which contained an allegation concerning the conduct of DEC officers. A third party who made these allegations objected to the release of the document. The Ombudsman's Office affirmed DEC's decision to release the document.

Due to the large scope and complexity of many FOI applications, 16 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.

DEC's FOI statement of affairs, which describes ways in which the public can access or amend documents held by DEC, is on www.environment.nsw.gov.au/about/information.htm.

Privacy

DEC works to ensure the privacy of both staff and clients is protected. During 2005–06, DEC received no applications for access to personal information or complaints under either the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* or the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*.

5.1.4 Environmental performance

In 2005–06 DEC continued to improve the environmental performance of its operations.

Reducing our energy consumption

DEC is committed to buying Green Power and during 2005–06 DEC purchased 100% Green Power at eligible sites in its Northern Directorate and 25% Green Power at its Goulburn Street office and Lidcombe laboratories.

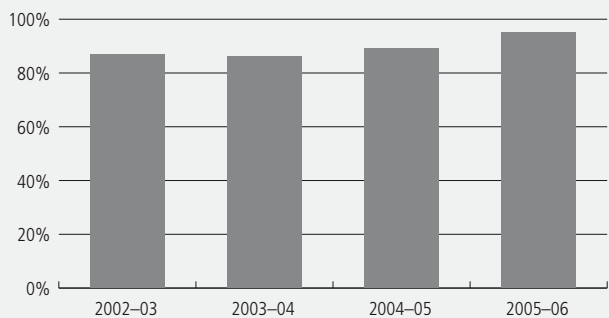
During the year DEC also **reduced energy use** in its office accommodation, transport and other areas. For its head office in Goulburn Street, Sydney, and its Hurstville office, DEC achieved the maximum 5-star rating for Greenhouse Performance of Government Office Buildings and Rental Properties. Through good building management, and changes to its vehicle fleet and usage, DEC reduced overall energy consumption by 37% from the previous year to 139,049 gigajoules for 2004–05, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 55% over the same period, to 16,561 tonnes CO₂ equivalent. Data for 2005–06 has not yet been compiled and will be reported in 2007.

■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Percentage of freedom of information requests granted by DEC that provide 80% or more of requested information

Definition: This indicator measures the percentage of freedom of information (FOI) applications DEC processed where 80% or more of the requested documents were released.

FOI requests granted by DEC that provide 80% or more of requested information



Interpretation: DEC exempts very few of its documents requested under FOI from release. However, it is reasonable and proper that a small percentage of documents received from third parties are exempted. Third parties provide information to DEC 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 those parties. The *Freedom of Information Act 1989* provides protection in these circumstances.

Green fleet

DEC's **Fleet Environmental Improvement Plan** contains performance strategies to achieve the targets set by the NSW Government. These targets state that each agency must achieve an 'average environment performance score' for all vehicles with a gross vehicle mass below 3.5 tonnes of:

- 10 out of 20 by 30 June 2006
- 11 out of 20 by 30 June 2007
- 12 out of 20 by 30 June 2008.

The average environment performance score is calculated through the system adopted for the NSW Clean Car Benchmarks, which measures vehicles' greenhouse gas emissions (measured as CO₂) and air quality impacts (noxious emissions).

By implementing the improvement plan, DEC achieved an average score of 10 out of 20 for its commercial and passenger vehicle fleet as at 30 June 2006.

Diesel is a safer fuel to use in fire fighting activities, so many of the 950 vehicles in DEC's fleet are diesel powered. These have a much lower environmental score than equivalent vehicles using petrol.

In September 2005, DEC issued staff with 12 'top tips' to encourage the economic use of vehicles and fuel efficient driving. Tips ranged from walking or cycling or using public transport rather than the car for short trips, to better driving habits such as avoiding heavy acceleration and braking, and correct tyre pressure. Staff were also encouraged to use one of DEC's 17 hybrid vehicles when they needed to use a departmental vehicle for their work.

Sustainable procurement

DEC staff consider energy efficiency and recycled content when buying goods, services and construction materials. DEC has developed a **Procurement Tool Kit** which includes standard forms and templates, standard DEC tender documents, and staff training material made available on DEC's intranet, and has links to all government websites dealing with sustainable procurement policy and procedures. To date, 267 staff have been trained in sustainable procurement relating to contracts and tendering. Other initiatives in 2005–06 included:

- incorporating sustainability principles into design and construction manuals
- incorporating sustainability requirements into DEC supply contracts
- trialling low-toxic chemical alternatives in DEC-managed park amenities and workshops. For example, citrus-based cleaners are being trialled in DEC's north coast parks and a lanolin-based waterproofing agent for timber in coastal parks is under development.

Waste reduction and recycling

In August 2005, DEC prepared a **Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy (WRAPP)** report for DEC's efforts for the preceding two years. For the 2003–05 WRAPP reporting period, DEC:

- purchased 92% of office paper containing recycled content, and recycled 61% of used office paper
- recycled 91% of vegetation waste
- purchased 67% of construction products with recycled content, and recycled 61% of construction and demolition waste.

The NSW state agency averages are reported on pages 75–76.

Water savings

In May 2006, DEC completed a **water audit** of major buildings and some national parks in Sydney. The audit identified relatively simple and cost-effective opportunities to make valuable water savings estimated at 175 kilolitres per day as well as identifying significant damage to one water pipe.

Water savings strategies are being incorporated into all new fitouts of office accommodation wherever possible. This is a challenging task considering the age and location of many of the leased offices. DEC replaced the old plumbing at the new Hay Area Office, installing low flow valves and dual flush toilets.

■ CASE STUDY

DEC's award-winning firefighters

On 29 May 2006, 29 DEC firefighters were awarded the National Medal to acknowledge more than 400 years of combined service to the community in protecting life and property. The National Medal is awarded to those who have served for 15 years, with additional clasps awarded for each additional ten-year period.

The officers receiving the awards included:

- 29 recipients for the National Medal which recognises 15 years of service
- four recipients of the 1st Clasp to the National Medal which recognises an additional 10 years of service
- one recipient of the 2nd Clasp which recognises another 10 years of service – totalling 35 years of service in the area of bushfire management.

Recipients of the medals now join the 161 DEC officers who have previously received this award.



National Medal winners with Rural Fire Services Commissioner Phil Koperberg and DEC's Director General Lisa Corbyn at the award ceremony at the Quarantine Station, Manly, on 29 May 2006.

M Edmunds, DEC

Sustainability in parks

The **Park Facilities Manual** is being prepared to guide park managers in selecting building materials, setting consistent standards, determining access requirements, and improving building lifecycle efficiencies. The manual will help to create a consistent, recognisable DEC image for visitor infrastructure such as shelters, amenity blocks and tracks, while ensuring flexibility for particular settings. Sustainability criteria are incorporated into all stages of the lifecycle of facilities, from design to decommissioning. The new manual is planned to be launched by December 2006.

5.1.5 Social performance

During 2005–06, DEC worked to be credible, efficient and effective, working in and with the NSW community and valuing and developing its staff.

Aboriginal affairs

During 2005–06 DEC adopted the **Aboriginal People, Environment and Conservation Principles (APEC)**. The principles will help DEC to adapt its business practices to work with Aboriginal people in culturally appropriate ways and to recognise their interests in the land and resources that DEC manages.

During 2005–06, DEC's Aboriginal Affairs Reference Group coordinated the implementation of **Two Ways Together** across DEC, to increase the agency's capacity to work with Aboriginal people on their environment and conservation priorities and to deliver DEC's broad responsibilities under the program. These include:

- developing committed partnerships between Aboriginal people and DEC
- improving the social, economic, cultural and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people in NSW
- supporting Aboriginal people in the protection, practice and promotion of their cultural heritage.

Significant achievements during 2005–06 included:

- increased representation of Aboriginal people in DEC's workforce to 6.9%, which significantly exceeds the government's target of 2% representation
- constitution of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee (ACHAC) in March 2006 (page 55)
- increased Aboriginal representation on DEC statutory boards and committees through the appointment of 10 Aboriginal members to ACHAC, appointment of an Aboriginal member to a National Parks Regional Advisory Committee, and appointment of an Aboriginal member to the Environment Protection Authority Board
- four partnership agreements with Aboriginal communities and a contribution of \$200,000 to address illegal dumping on sites owned by Aboriginal Land Councils

■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Percentage of DEC staff represented in equal employment opportunity groups

Definition: DEC tracks its performance in employing people from the equal employment opportunity (EEO) 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 is not English, people with a disability and people with a disability requiring work-related adjustment. It also provides a comparison with NSW Government benchmarks.

The data includes staff in DEC and associated entities, 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.

DEC staff representation for EEO groups



Interpretation: DEC substantially outperforms the Government benchmark for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and their overall percentage has increased slightly from 2003–04. DEC is now working to increase the number of Aboriginal people employed in professional positions, through formal employment program initiatives. DEC has also developed an Aboriginal Employment Strategy, which focuses on skills acquisition and career development.

DEC has increased the number of women employed but has not reached the Government benchmark. DEC remains below the benchmarks for people whose first language is not English, and people with disabilities.

DEC will continue to implement its Equity and Diversity Framework, with a focus on improving the levels of under-represented EEO groups, and maintaining and improving the levels of women and Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in the workforce.

- ongoing development of a Stolen Generations Memorial at Mount Annan Botanic Garden in partnership with Link Up New South Wales, the NSW Stolen Generations Committee, Gandangarra Local Aboriginal Land Council, and government agencies and private bodies
- an Aboriginal cultural awareness training needs analysis for a staff training program in 2006–07.

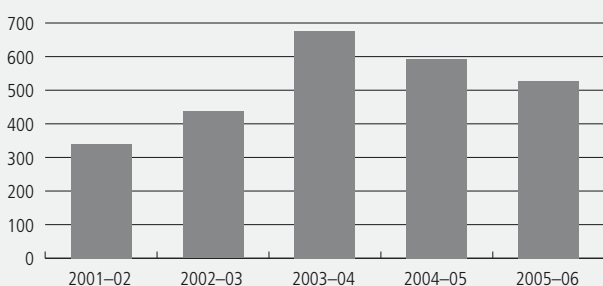
■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Number and value of reported DEC staff accidents and workers' compensation claims

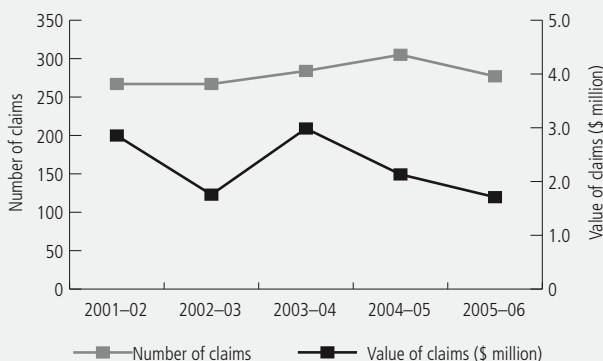
Definition: This indicator measures DEC work-related incidents or accidents and any resulting claim for compensation.

The number of reported accidents/incidents measures 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 as occurring in the year in which the incident occurred, so historical trend data may vary from year to year.

Accidents/incidents reported



Workers' compensation claims and their value



Interpretation: The total number of incidents reported has grown over most of the five-year period reflecting a growing staff awareness of incident reporting protocols. However, overall claim costs remain relatively similar. This is a good result against a trend of escalating medical costs, and the disruption of restructuring. Contemporary preventative and case management initiatives continue to be implemented across DEC to prevent incidents and contain claims costs.

Spokeswomen attended induction training and the NSW Spokeswoman Conference. They held celebrations on International Women's Day and conducted Women's Development Program events across the state, which covered topics such as confidence building, superannuation, career planning, public speaking skills, emotional intelligence and assertiveness.

Other events were supported or sponsored throughout the state, building strong networks between staff. Staff from DEC attended the Women in Science event at the Australian Museum and the Australasian Women in Fire Fighting Conference 2006. Staff from remote areas attended DEC's International Women's Day Breakfast.

DEC's Spokeswomen conducted surveys to establish the key issues facing women in DEC and provided this information to relevant DEC staff. Such issues included gender inequities in fire fighting and aviation roles, and the importance of flexible work practices.

The program is now featured on DEC's intranet home page with a link to comprehensive information. A brochure and posters on the program have been developed with these materials to be launched later in 2006. The Spokeswomen are currently finalising the strategic plan for 2006–09.

Disability action planning

DEC is developing a department-wide Disability Action Plan which will build on former agency plans. DEC continues to improve access and services for staff and members of the public with disabilities. For example, during 2005–06 DEC moved offices in Dapto and Broadmeadow into other government office buildings with better access and services.

Park and reserve facilities for visitors with disabilities were also upgraded during the year, including:

- making the 1.8 kilometre Fairfax Heritage Walking Track at Govett's Leap Lookout, Blue Mountains National Park (NP), fully accessible
- improving toilet facilities at Bonnie Vale (Royal NP), Mulligans Hut (Gibraltar Range NP) and Pines Picnic Area (Yarriabinni NP)
- improved car parking at Garie Beach (Royal NP) and the Visitor Centre and Commemoration Flat car parks in Botany Bay NP.

Many national parks in NSW offer wheelchair-accessible campgrounds, tracks, picnic areas, lookouts and visitor centres. DEC provides information on these facilities at www.environment.nsw.gov.au.

DEC Spokeswomen's Program

DEC's **Spokeswomen's Program** in 2005–06 provided opportunities for improving equity in the workplace. A newly elected committee, comprising 15 women who represented each division and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island women, took office in July 2005. This committee met in Sydney each quarter.

Ethnic affairs priorities statement (EAPS)

DEC places a high priority on multiculturalism. Due to the pressures of the DEC restructure and the amalgamation of four former agencies, DEC did not separately outline department-wide ethnic affairs priorities for 2005–06, but delivered the programs referred to in this report within the framework of the DEC Corporate Plan 2004–06 and departmental planning and priorities statements prepared by former agencies. These included the Environment Protection

Authority's EAPS and the National Parks and Wildlife Service's cultural diversity statement.

During 2005–06, DEC continued to deliver programs that recognise the diversity of the NSW public, for example by:

- employing bilingual liaison field officers to advise on pesticides and chemical use (see page 29)
- researching the ways in which visitors from non-English speaking backgrounds use sites in Georges River National Park (see page 72)
- conducting research into ethnic communities (see page 82)
- encouraging community garden projects with Department of Housing residents and other disadvantaged communities (Botanic Gardens Trust Community Greening program).

DEC is reviewing the detailed planning of key programs implementing the principles of multiculturalism and will prepare an ethnic affairs priorities statement for the current corporate planning cycle. In the coming year, DEC expects to implement the findings of the Georges River parklands use research (see above), and consider the needs of visitors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in its conservation volunteers program and visitor safety policy review. DEC will also tailor quality education materials relating to littering and waste as part of its ethnic communities multi-unit dwelling project.

Occupational health and safety

DEC continued to focus on staff and public safety. In July 2005 DEC released a department-wide **Occupational Health and Safety Policy**. The policy was developed to express DEC's commitment to, and the future direction of, occupational health and safety (OHS) across the organisation.

In 2005–06 DEC assessed its divisions against the Premier's Occupational Health and Safety Standard with results indicating much improved implementation of OHS management systems. The results will be used to review DEC's OHS Plan.

New procedures and guidelines on OHS risk management and injury management were developed during 2005–06 to support consistency across DEC. Specific projects, including body-stressing injury prevention and management, dangerous goods management and traffic control, have commenced. Approximately 100 priority workplaces were visited by an OHS specialist as part of a site inspection program.

An improved OHS data management system will be implemented in early 2007.

See page 66 for the task-based assessment program for DEC's firefighters, which aims to improve employee safety.

DEC in the wider community

In February 2006, DEC was asked by the World Archaeological Congress to participate in the **Global Libraries Project** by donating publications to help expand the archaeological literary collections of libraries in developing countries. Multiple copies of six different publications were donated by DEC including the *Scarred trees manual*; *Aboriginal women's heritage – Port Stephens*; *Mapping attachment – a spatial approach to Aboriginal post-contact heritage*, and *Living land, living culture – Aboriginal heritage and salinity*. The donated publications were distributed to 50 public and university libraries in 37 countries including Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Ethiopia, India and Nigeria.

In August 2005, a documentary about Kosciuszko National Park – *Kosciuszko Reflections* – received a **bronze award at the 38th WorldFest in Houston**, one of the largest and longest-running film festivals in the world.

■ CASE STUDY

Making a Place for Herself: women's experiences of landscapes and national parks

The Spokeswoman Program coordinated and supported this highly engaging and informative travelling exhibition, which was officially opened by the Director General at the Royal Botanic Gardens in November 2005. The exhibition examines how women have made places for themselves and their families in NSW landscapes, enduring hardships, loneliness and isolation, but also experiencing the freedom, joy, pleasure and exhilaration of being in particular landscapes and places.

Making a Place for Herself was awarded an Energy Australia National Trust Heritage Award in April 2006, which recognises excellence in heritage conservation projects in NSW. The exhibition is travelling through national park visitor centres including many of the places featured in the exhibition.



Stakeholder representatives at the Making a Place for Herself exhibition. Left to right: Jason Ardler – DEC, Miss Emily Walker – Aboriginal Elder from Nambucca Valley who is featured in the exhibition, Lisa Corbyn – Director General DEC and Jean Rice – National Parks Advisory Council.

Produced in 2001, *Kosciuszko Reflections* was funded and project managed by the then National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and produced by Canberra filmmakers Images Online and Fine Films. The 12-minute documentary features stunning images and interviews with people who have a close association with Kosciuszko National Park. The production was fully funded by NPWS to promote the park's natural and cultural heritage values, educate the community and encourage visitors to the park.

5.1.6 Economic performance

Financial management

In 2005–06, DEC's financial management strategy centred on strong budgetary management and consolidating the gains achieved in the initial stages of the restructure. DEC also maintained and improved the systems, policies and tools that ensure it can meet its statutory obligations and manage its finances and assets.

Significant projects and activities that were concluded during the period included:

- implementation of the **Australian Equivalent International Financial Reporting Standards (AEIFRS)** in DEC in accordance with the Treasury and standard setters' timetable
- development of improved strategies and protocols to deal with GST
- development of the external funds database in SAP software to replace the previous stand-alone version and address audit concerns, improve access to data and eliminate duplication.

In line with **DEC's continuous improvement strategy**, activities undertaken or commenced during the year to ensure robust financial systems and policies are in place included:

- continuous update and improvement of DEC's Financial and Budget Management Framework
- resolution of system support issues at the Botanic Gardens Trust site
- development of the SAP tutor module to provide improved training for SAP users
- update of DEC's purchasing card policy
- strengthening of DEC's cash handling policies
- continuation of scheduled financial training courses (some 450 SAP users were trained in 2005–06)
- a further review of the agency's financial delegations as part of ongoing refinements to meet changing business needs.

Risk management

DEC's insurance cover is obtained through the Treasury Managed Fund supplied by Allianz for workers' compensation and GIO for other risk areas.

Areas of risk and relevant insurance premiums

	2004–05 \$000	2005–06 \$000
Workers' compensation	2,409	4,317
Property	2,086	2,158
Motor vehicles	827	1,187
Public liability	3,849	2,854
Fire	28,306	24,294
Miscellaneous	50	52
TOTAL	37,527	34,862

DEC actively manages risk through a number of coordinated programs, including those on:

- occupational health and safety (page 91)
- park visitation (page 69)
- fire management (page 66)
- audit and compliance (pages 16–18).

Efficiency improvements

DEC has continued to improve efficiency of recruitment, payroll and accounts processes through a **single service centre**. In the coming year, the SAP travel module will be introduced, and recruitment and leave processing through employee self-service will be enhanced.

During 2005–06, **employee self service** (ESS) commenced. More than 2800 DEC staff can now directly access their human resources information through a web-based application. Some online processing has also been introduced, which should further improve productivity, allowing more effort to be directed to core activities. For example, employees can now update personal address information and change their net pay and bank deduction details online. Online processing will be extended over the next year to include leave processing.

During 2005–06, DEC established **Preferred Supplier Agreements** (PSAs). To date, two PSAs have been established for the procurement of stationery and photocopiers. With the release of the new DEC style guide a range of corporate stationery is available through the stationery PSA. These PSAs have saved DEC more than \$300,000 during 2005–06. Two more PSAs are being negotiated, one for outsourcing the uniform store and the other for security services. Market research is continuing on developing PSAs for park maintenance and to supply standard equipment identified in the new facilities manual.