

A credible, efficient and effective organisation



Photo: DECCW

As the leading environment, conservation and water management agency in NSW, DECCW ensures staff have the skills to deliver positive outcomes for the environment, and the organisation is managed cost-effectively and efficiently.

Context

As at 30 June 2010 DECCW employs more than 4,321 staff (full-time equivalent), with more than 2,000 in regional locations. DECCW is a leader in environmental sustainability and has established an action plan to enable the organisation to lead sustainability issues across the NSW Government sector. DECCW is continuing to reduce its own overall energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

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

DECCW continues to encourage a diverse and well-trained workforce, with solid training programs and career development opportunities for staff. The high calibre of DECCW staff was reflected in the number of awards won in 2009–10. DECCW continues to attract new staff by running graduate, cadet and trainee work programs.

Outcomes

- Having sound corporate governance arrangements
- Being a leader in environmental sustainability
- Having effective external communications and excellent customer service
- Having healthy, trained staff and a safe and productive workplace
- Having the best available knowledge and information, and effective work systems for sound decision-making.

Key drivers

- State Plan – *Investing in a Better Future*
www.nsw.gov.au/stateplan/
- DECCW Corporate Plan (2010 update)
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/plan.htm
- NSW Government Sustainability Policy
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/government/policy.htm
and the internal DECCW Sustainability Action Plan
- NSW Government Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/wrapp/index.htm
- NSW Government's Aboriginal Affairs Plan *Two Ways Together*
www.daa.nsw.gov.au/policies/policy.html
- DECCW Code of Ethical Conduct
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/ethics.htm
- DECCW Guarantee of Service
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/gos.htm
- DECCW occupational health and safety, equal employment opportunity and ethnic affairs priority strategies and frameworks.

Performance indicators

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



Photo: A. Weeraratne, DECCW

Corporate governance

DECCW implements effective corporate governance systems that:

- enhance strategic planning and overall organisational performance
- strengthen risk and asset management
- enhance DECCW'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 April 2010, DECCW published a *Corporate Plan 2010 update* to take account of the incorporation of the NSW Office of Water, and the release of a revised NSW State Plan. The corporate plan (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/corpplanning.htm) sets out DECCW's goals, outcomes, objectives and priorities.

DECCW monitors a comprehensive set of corporate performance indicators, on which performance reports are based. These reports are provided quarterly to DECCW management and the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, and half-yearly to the EPA Board. The NSW Office of Water monitors a suite of performance indicators monthly and quarterly, and meets weekly with the Minister of Water to provide reports and updates on corporate and financial performance.

Management

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

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

Risk management

DECCW follows an internal corporate Risk Management Policy and guidelines that help ensure risk is managed systematically, efficiently and effectively. Corporate risk management procedures incorporate risk identification, analysis, evaluation and treatment, as well as management and staff accountabilities. The policy and guidelines are supplemented by occupational health and safety, fire management and tree risk management policies and procedures. DECCW also addresses risk through its insurance arrangements.

DECCW's updated Fraud and Corruption Control Strategy was released in August 2009 (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/fraud.htm). It sets out policies, highlights activities that are susceptible to fraud and corruption, and details DECCW's approach to preventing, detecting, reporting on and investigating fraud and corruption.

As part of DECCW's internal audit program, key controls were tested in 2009–10 to ensure they were effective in minimising fraud and corruption.

The risk of fraud and corruption is also reduced through the Code of Ethical Conduct (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/ethics.htm) and a Statement of Business Ethics (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/commercial/businessethics.htm). These guide DECCW's relationships with external providers and stakeholders.

Business continuity planning

In 2009–10, DECCW revised its Business Continuity Plan and Pandemic Response Plan to complement regional incident response plans and disaster recovery plans. These plans aim to minimise the disruption of services to the public should a catastrophic event or pandemic occur. Training in and testing on the Business Continuity Plan were conducted in 2010 and ongoing refinements are continually being made to maintain its effectiveness.

Asset management systems

DECCW has an asset strategy in place as part of NSW Government total asset management and budgetary reporting processes. DECCW manages land and buildings, water entitlements, plant and equipment, visitor facilities in parks and infrastructure systems such as roads, pipelines and flood mitigation structures (see Appendix 19).

DECCW's Parks and Wildlife Group, which manages most of DECCW's physical assets, introduced a new asset maintenance system, known as the AMS, during the year. The AMS enables a comprehensive inventory of assets to be maintained, facilitates scheduling of asset maintenance and provides reports of local or state-wide maintenance activities and costs. (For more information, see Chapter 4, 'Park asset maintenance' under 'Conserve natural and cultural values through an integrated system of public and private lands').

Major works are in progress to improve the condition of DECCW assets. These are shown in Appendix 18.



DECCW's assets include the heritage property Davidson Whaling Station in Eden.

Photo: S Cohen, DECCW

Audit and compliance program

DECCW's comprehensive internal audit program helps to ensure its programs and processes comply with legislation and best practice management.

In 2009–10, DECCW reviewed and updated its Internal Audit Committee Charter and Internal Audit functions to align them with the core requirements set out in NSW Treasury Circular TC09/08 *Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy*. The Director General's Internal Audit and Risk Management Statement attesting to compliance with the Treasury Circular is provided at the end of this section.

As a result of the review, DECCW established a new Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), the membership of which is outlined in Appendix 5. The ARC oversees DECCW's environment protection, finance and administration, risk management and fraud and corruption controls.

Conservation compliance is overseen by the separate Conservation Audit and Compliance Committee (CACC), established under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

Both the ARC and CACC meet quarterly, and officers from the Audit Office of NSW regularly attend meetings as observers.

DECCW's internal auditors submit final reports to the appropriate audit committee, and report recommendations are monitored to ensure they are fully implemented. DECCW's internal auditors for 2009–10 were IAB Services and Walter Turnbull.

Audit reports completed during 2009–10 and presented to the ARC covered:

- back-up procedures (for electronic data)
- decision making and accountability processes in the Environment Protection and Regulation Group
- financial management of catchment management authorities
- native vegetation
- the NSW Climate Change Fund grants program
- procurement practices
- RTA DRIVES compliance (Roads and Traffic Authority vehicle registration database)
- the World Heritage management and upkeep program.

Audit reports completed during 2009–10 and presented to the CACC were:

- park visitation and recreational opportunities
- the regulation of Aboriginal cultural heritage
- the repatriation of Aboriginal remains and collections of cultural materials of Aboriginal communities.

The CACC also receives regular updates on the progress of the three-year Plan of Management Program for national parks and reserves that commenced in 2009–10, to ensure statutory plans of management are being implemented.

The above audits found that operational and administrative systems were largely sound. There were no areas identified with 'extreme' risk ratings. Some areas identified as having 'high risk' ratings were controlled by the acceptance of a range of recommendations.

The NSW Office of Water conducts auditing activities under a separate program, also overseen by the ARC. Significant audit engagements completed during the year included:

- a review of the Murray River Works Program and the Tumut and Upper Murray Rivers Works Program
- a review of the tender procedures for equipment hire.

These reviews indicate satisfactory compliance with internal controls.

Consistent with recommendations made by the NSW Ombudsman, the NSW Office of Water developed a control self-assessment template for water compliance officers' record keeping activities, and a Corruption Prevention Strategy.

During the year, the Office's internal audit staff helped operational managers identify and evaluate risks, and also provided probity advice on governance issues.

External reviews

During 2009–10, the Audit Office of NSW carried out its annual program of comprehensive audits of DECCW's program performance, financial reporting, and accounting and financial systems.

In August 2009, the Auditor-General released a report on environmental grants administration. The report examined ten environmental grant programs managed by the Environmental Trust and DECCW, which together granted around \$200 million between 2002–03 and 2006–07 and will grant a further \$300 million over the next five years. The Auditor-General's report found many aspects of sound grants management. All programs investigated clearly aligned with the Government's objective to improve environmental outcomes, and many of the grants delivered tangible outcomes such as homes protected from floods, degraded waterways restored and endangered habitats protected. The audit recommended strategies to reduce red tape and delays, and improve transparency, objectivity, the monitoring of grants and the evaluation of funding programs.

In response to the report, DECCW reviewed the strategic direction, financial management and administration of its coastal, estuary and floodplain programs that provide grants to local councils (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grantsandfunding/CoastalEstuaryFloodplainManagementGrants.htm).

Improvements being implemented include:

- releasing funds to councils earlier in the year
- piloting a proposal to bring forward the submission and assessment of grant applications to better align with councils' funding cycles and project planning
- including independent experts in technical assessments of grant applications
- implementing extra systems for monitoring and evaluation
- introducing new grant guidelines and formal funding agreements, in line with the Premier's guidelines on grants administration
- carrying out an audit of all outstanding grant projects
- making better use of electronic technology and council distribution networks to promote grants.

The Audit Office of NSW is carrying out an audit to assess how well DECCW manages pollution incidents. This audit report is expected to be completed in 2010–11.

**Internal Audit and Risk Management Statement for the 2009-2010
Financial Year
for the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water
and the Environment Protection Authority**

I, Lisa Corbyn am of the opinion that the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, and the Environment Protection Authority has internal audit and risk management processes in place that are, in all material respects, compliant with the core requirements set out in Treasury Circular NSW TC 09/08 *Internal Audit and Risk Management Policy*.

I, Lisa Corbyn am of the opinion that the Audit and Risk Committee for the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) [which has responsibility for oversight of DECCW programs including the Environment Protection Authority] is constituted and operates in accordance with the independence and governance requirements of Treasury Circular NSW TC 09-08. The Chair and Members of the Audit and Risk Committee are:

- Arthur Butler - Chair (appointment term - January 2010 to December 2014)
- Geradine Brus - Independent Member (appointment term - April 2010 to March 2014)
- Joan Wilcox - Independent Member (appointment term - April 2010 to March 2014)
- Simon Smith - Non-independent Member (appointment term - calendar year 2010, after which appointment will be reviewed and rotated, if necessary)
- David Harris - Non-independent Member (appointment term - calendar year 2010, after which appointment will be reviewed and rotated, if necessary)

I, Lisa Corbyn declare that this Internal Audit and Risk Management Statement is made on behalf of the following controlled entities (or subsidiaries):

- Marine Parks Authority.

These processes provide a level of assurance that enables the senior management of the the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, and the Environment Protection Authority to understand, manage and satisfactorily control risk exposures.

Lisa Corbyn
LISA CORBYN
Director General
Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water
(Sign and Date)

DECCW's internal audit risk statement 2009–10.

Ethical behaviour

DECCW'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 (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/ethics.htm) applies to everyone employed or engaged by DECCW and describes the ethical framework that should guide actions, decisions and behaviour.

DECCW works to ensure the privacy of staff and clients is protected. DECCW's Privacy Management Plan and Guidelines (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/privacy.htm) detail the privacy principles DECCW follows when dealing with personal information. During 2009–10, three applications for access to personal information were received. One complaint was received under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* and no complaints were received under the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002*.

Separately in 2009–10, the NSW Office of Water received one privacy application to amend a personal record, which was declined. On request, this decision is being reviewed, with the outcome expected in early 2010–11.

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

- Senior Executive Service staff performance statements (see Appendix 2)
- 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).



Photo: DECCW

A leader in sustainability and environmental performance

Sustainability policy

As the leading environmental agency in NSW, DECCW is committed to meeting, and wherever possible exceeding, the targets set out for government agencies in the NSW Government Sustainability Policy (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/government/policy.htm).

Since 2008, DECCW has had in place an internal Sustainability Action Plan that details activities to ensure it uses resources efficiently, minimises greenhouse gas emissions and increases sustainable purchasing. During 2009–10, DECCW commenced a review of the plan and its key sustainability performance indicators that assess and monitor progress. In addition, a staff sustainability engagement plan was prepared.

In 2008, DECCW also joined the Sustainability Advantage program and, in June 2010, was formally recognised as a Bronze Partner. DECCW's activities under the program continue to focus on resource efficiency and staff engagement.

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



Photo: DECCW

DECCW is the first government agency to be recognised as a Bronze Partner under the Sustainability Advantage program.

Carbon management

In recent years, DECCW has grown in size as various responsibilities, staff and facilities of former agencies have been transferred to it. The focus for action is energy efficiency to reduce emissions from its expanded portfolio of buildings and vehicles. Electricity and diesel fuel are the principle sources of emissions.

Total energy use for DECCW in 2008–09 (the latest year for which figures are available) was 179,723 gigajoules, with 25,641 tonnes of greenhouse gas emitted (net of GreenPower purchased). Compared to the previous year, this represented a 4% decrease in energy consumption and a 6% decrease in tonnes of greenhouse gas emitted, an excellent result given staff numbers increased by 3%. Data for 2009–10 will be reported in the 2010–11 annual report.

DECCW has more than 2,000 premises, some leased and some owned, comprising offices, laboratories, equipment depots and buildings in national parks. In 2008–09, DECCW's building use generated around 16,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions as a result of 16.7 million kilowatt hours of electricity consumed. More than 11% of the electricity purchased by DECCW was GreenPower (this is better than the minimum standard of 6% set out in the NSW Government Sustainability Policy).

During 2008–09, DECCW sites also generated at least 62,700 kilowatt hours of green power using solar panels, which allowed more than 11,000 kilowatt hours to be fed back to the grid, thereby further decreasing electricity-related greenhouse gas emissions.

DECCW's Far West Solar Project, under which solar power has been installed at six national park buildings in western NSW – including the Tibooburra Visitor Centre, Mungo Visitor Centre and Broken Hill office – won the 'Leading Change' category in the 2009 Premier's Public Sector Awards. In 2010–2011, this project will generate approximately \$96,072 of energy, covering all current energy costs plus generating revenue.

In 2009–10, DECCW continued its energy efficiency initiatives, including:

- a program of staff engagement (e.g. a computer desktop reminder to switch off monitors)
- upgrading various facilities and leased tenancies to energy efficient lighting
- reducing the number of items of IT equipment and reviewing the energy efficiency of existing equipment and ways in which it is used (e.g. stand-by times, power saving modes).

DECCW participated in Earth Hour in Sydney for the fourth time on 27 March 2010.

During 2009–10, DECCW staff travelled 3.91 million air miles, which is a reduction of about 2% over the previous year.



Photo: DECCW

The Shearer's Quarters at Mungo have been fitted with solar panels, helping national parks in the far west of NSW to cover energy costs and generate revenue.

Water use

In 2008–09 (the latest year for which figures are available), DECCW used around 321 megalitres of potable water in its operations, an increase of 7% from 2007–08. This increase was mainly due to greater consumption at the botanic gardens due to a lack of rainfall over the growing season (see the separate annual report of the Botanic Gardens Trust). Work is continuing to improve water efficiency in gardens and across DECCW.

Sustainable DECCW buildings

Under the NSW Government Sustainability Policy, office buildings over 1000 m² owned or leased by agencies 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 from 18 months of the first occupancy, where cost effective.

By working closely with building management in DECCW's Sydney head office, DECCW helped to increase the building's NABERS rating from 3.5 stars to 4.5 stars in 2009–10. In the same period, DECCW achieved a 4.5 star rating for its tenancies at Hurstville and Parramatta (both Fitzwilliam Street and Valentine Avenue), and a 5-star rating for its tenancies at Coffs Harbour (Moonee Street) and Jindabyne.

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, DECCW arranges for outmoded fluorescent tubes to be replaced with energy efficient 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 Sydney head office and Hurstville tenancies.

■ CASE STUDY

Recycling of office chairs

Over several years of staff relocations and office refurbishments, DECCW had accumulated almost 150 office chairs that were no longer serviceable. These chairs were taking up valuable office and storage space in both the Hurstville and Sydney offices. DECCW negotiated with Corrective Services Industries (CSI), administered by the Department of Corrective Services at Long Bay Correctional Centre at Malabar, to dismantle the chairs into their recyclable components.

All metal and plastic components were sent to facilities for re-use or recycling, while a number of chairs were rebuilt using parts from other chairs, and are being used at the prison.

The Malabar Special Programs Centre appreciated the opportunity for inmates to engage in this work, and for incorporating best practice techniques to help the environment.

In 2009–10, DECCW undertook accommodation fit-outs at offices at Parramatta, Nelson Bay, Newcastle, Hurstville and Wollongong, as well as in parts of the Sydney head office. DECCW reused and recycled the serviceable workstations and furniture at each site, which greatly reduced both waste and overall project costs.

Wherever possible, DECCW either recycles existing office furniture or selects new furniture that has positive environmental attributes and meets international environmental labelling standards.

By working closely with the building management of the Hurstville tenancy, DECCW has upgraded the car park lighting to LED light tube technology. It is anticipated that savings of up to 50% of electricity costs will be achieved. Lighting in the lift foyer and toilets in the Sydney head office have also been upgraded to include movement sensors, with new energy efficient lights switching on and off automatically when needed.

The NSW Office of Water undertook accommodation fit-outs at its Wollongong, Bega and Dubbo offices, and relocated staff in other offices to improve the efficiency of the layout. Surplus furniture and equipment are being relocated, recycled or removed. The result is improved utilisation of office space, cost savings by reallocating surplus equipment to other offices and reducing waste.

Vehicle fleet

DECCW's Fleet Improvement Plan is helping DECCW meet performance targets set by the Cleaner NSW Government Fleet Program. Progress is measured by calculating an average 'environmental performance score' for the fleet, which measures greenhouse gas emissions (as CO₂) and air quality impacts (as noxious emissions). The June 2011 targets are 13.5 out of 20 for passenger vehicles, and 9.0 for light commercial vehicles.

As at June 2010, DECCW operated 889 vehicles that are subject to environmental performance reporting, with trucks and specialist vehicles over 3.5 tonnes, such as those used for fire management, being exempt. DECCW's fleet of 478 passenger vehicles recorded an environmental performance score of 12.2 as at June 2010. The score for DECCW's fleet of 411 light commercial vehicles was 8.4.

In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, DECCW's fleet generated about 6,600 tonnes CO₂-equivalent in 2009–10. DECCW is reducing greenhouse gas emissions through its increasing use of hybrid vehicles. The number of hybrid vehicles increased from 38 to 49 during 2009–10.

DECCW also trialled a Mitsubishi iMiEV, an innovative electric vehicle with zero-emissions technology, with a view to being one of the first NSW Government agencies to include this technology in its fleet. The iMiEV is expected to become available in the second half of 2010.

DECCW faces challenges in limiting the size of its overall fleet. Almost 60% of DECCW vehicles are used in park management, and with an expanding area of parks and reserves to be managed – the area increased in 2009–10 by a further 38,500 hectares – staff must travel further to patrol and manage these lands. Parks staff also undertook a record number of bushfire hazard reduction burns over a record number of hectares in 2009–10, and attended more wildfires than in the previous year. As most park vehicles need to be available for fire fighting and associated support, occupational health and safety considerations mean diesel fuel must be used in these vehicles as it is less likely to ignite.

In 2009–10, 32% of all unleaded fuel purchased across the agency was E10, which is better than the government target of 20%.

Staff in the Sydney metropolitan area are strongly encouraged to use public transport rather than departmental vehicles, and among head office staff the Government's free CBD shuttle bus service has been popular. Staff are also encouraged to cycle to work. DECCW provides secure bicycle storage space in its head office building in Sydney, as well as the metropolitan offices in Hurstville and Parramatta.

Video conferencing

DECCW is continuing to expand and improve video conferencing and other in-house communication technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise be produced by travelling for meetings, training and other activities. In the first six months since establishing five video conferencing rooms in August 2009, it is estimated that the combined participants' saving in travel distance was more than 300,000 kilometres.

As at June 2010, DECCW had eight video conference rooms established across the state and more than 200 staff had access to desk-based audio and video conferencing. During 2010–11, DECCW intends to introduce video conferencing facilities at five more locations, focusing on regional offices.



Carol Lee, Public Affairs Officer, tries out DECCW's video conferencing facilities.

Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy

Since 1997 (and 1999 for state-owned corporations), the NSW Government's Waste Reduction and Purchasing Policy (WRAPP) has required all state government agencies to have a plan to reduce waste in paper products, office equipment, vegetation material and construction and demolition material. WRAPP also requires that materials with recycled content are bought when they are cost and performance competitive. DECCW is responsible for coordinating WRAPP, and publishing the results in a whole-of-government report every two years. During 2009–10, DECCW commenced collecting and compiling WRAPP data from all NSW agencies for inclusion in the WRAPP Progress Report 2007–2009.

DECCW must also report every two years on its own performance against WRAPP. In 2008–09 (the latest year for which figures are available), DECCW continued to improve its waste management practices. Achievements included recycling:

- 100% of computer central processing units, laptops, computer monitors and used toner cartridges
- 97.3% of copy paper and all other office paper
- 94.5% of cardboard
- 75% of co-mingled containers.

A comprehensive waste management system that was introduced into DECCW's Sydney head office in 2008 has been extended to tenancies at Parramatta (Fitzwilliam Street) and Queanbeyan. In the Sydney head office, this system halved the overall amount of waste being generated, improved recycling by 30% and introduced organic waste recycling for the first time. It is expected to produce similar results in the Parramatta and Queanbeyan tenancies.

Other highlights in 2009–10 included:

- establishing worm farms at the Blue Mountains (Kanangra) office, the Lane Cove Tourist Park and the Queanbeyan office to recycle organic material
- recarpeting parts of the Hurstville and Parramatta (Valentine Avenue) tenancies with carpet tiles made from recycled car tyres.



Photo: S. Cohen, DECCW

External connections and customer satisfaction with DECCW services

Client response

DECCW continues to meet State Plan objectives by measuring customer satisfaction and using the results to improve its services. Throughout 2009–10, DECCW continued to enhance community awareness through its websites, targeted community education programs and the Environment Line telephone information service.

DECCW values its relationships with external organisations and individuals, and recognises their valuable role in supporting environmental initiatives. DECCW's Guarantee of Service (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/gos.htm) covers four main service principles: respect, helpfulness, responsiveness and continuous improvement. The guarantee reinforces DECCW's corporate values about acting with integrity and being accessible and accountable to the community and other staff.

DECCW seeks feedback from stakeholders and customers through:

- the DECCW Information Centre and Environment Line (and other telephone information services)
- national parks information and visitor centres
- public forums and consultations
- stakeholder surveys
- consultation and advisory committees
- submissions and email correspondence.

The Information Centre is DECCW's main information and advice service. It includes Environment Line, where staff receive calls from business, industry and the public when they 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 or reporting pollution incidents. The centre also provides over-the-counter services, sells and distributes publications and manages an increasing number of email requests for information.

In 2009–10, the centre received 306,942 requests. Demand was particularly high this year due to public interest in household and business rebates for water and energy saving measures, which accounted for 35% of information requests. More details about requests made to the Information Centre are provided in Appendix 12.

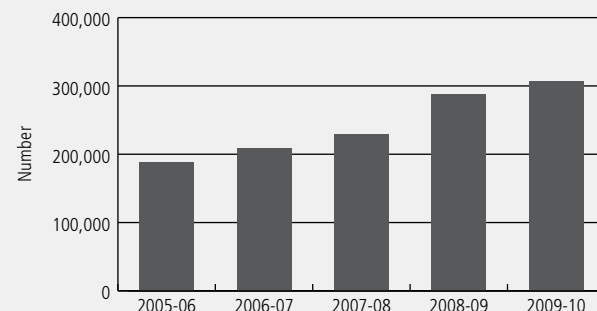
■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Requests handled by DECCW's Information Centre

Definition: The Information Centre provides information through the Environment Line telephone service and switchboards, by email, face-to-face through reception services, and through websites, fax and mail. From 2008–09, these statistics include all pollution incident and motor vehicle reports. (See also details about incident reports in the Performance indicator 'Environment Line – incident reports about air quality, odours or noise from regulated premises' in Chapter 3, and more detailed statistics on the Information Centre and Environment Line in Appendix 12.)

This indicator does not include details from NSW Office of Water, which has a separate information line.

Requests handled by DECCW's Information Centre



Interpretation: Since 2005–06, requests handled by the Information Centre have risen steadily by about 10% each year. This trend has continued in 2009–10, with the number of requests handled increasing to 306,942. These include 7,475 pollution incidents and 9,507 motor vehicle-related reports. The Climate Change Fund Home Saver rebate program for water savings and energy efficiency in residential households continues to attract a high volume of enquiries and applicants. Email enquiries account for almost 13% of all enquiries received, due in part to additional websites being established and an expanding range of topics being integrated into the DECCW website.

This year there were 7,475 reports of pollution (up by 5% on the previous year) and another 9,507 reports about noise, littering and smoke from vehicles, which represented an increase of 6% from the previous year, mainly comprising an increase in reports of littering from vehicles. Reports of smoky vehicles, by comparison, have been declining steadily for some years, possibly due to improvements in vehicle maintenance, the age of vehicles on NSW roads and the NSW Diesel Retrofit Program which has helped

reduce emissions from trucks (see the performance indicator 'Environment Line – incident reports about air quality, odours or noise from regulated premises' in Chapter 3).

The NSW Office of Water's Licensing Information Line assisted with more than 3,800 queries in 2009–10, mainly relating to water licensing requirements and basic landowner rights. There was also an increase in calls about water sharing plans.

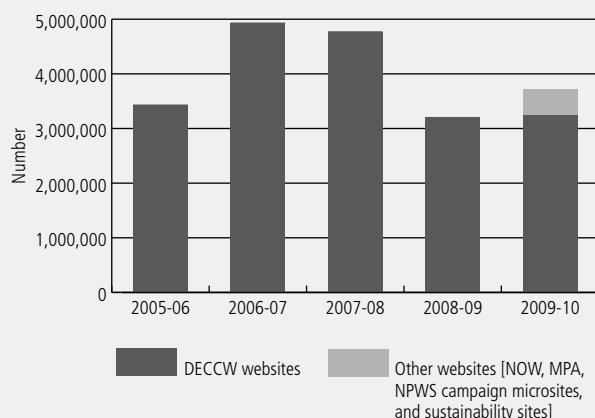
■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Visits to DECCW websites

Definition: This indicator measures the total number of visits to DECCW's corporate website. From 2009–10, it also shows numbers of visits to other websites managed by DECCW, including those for the NSW Office of Water (www.water.nsw.gov.au), the Marine Parks Authority (www.mpa.nsw.gov.au) and various campaigns associated with parks, conservation, air quality and sustainability. It does not include visits to the Botanic Gardens Trust website (which is reported in the trust's own annual report). A 'visit' consists of one or more page views by a single visitor.

Use related to campaign newsletters, subscriptions and other online user engagement is not included in these statistics.

Visits to DECCW websites



Interpretation: Use of the DECCW corporate website (www.environment.nsw.gov.au) continues to be strong with more than 3.2 million visits in 2009–10. This website consistently features in the top 15 NSW Government websites as measured by numbers of visits. The noticeable drop in visits after 2006–07 followed a project to integrate a number of websites into the corporate website, meaning that visits to multiple DECCW websites were subsequently counted only once.

Campaign sites represented in the figure for 'other' sites managed by DECCW on behalf of the NSW government include *Our environment – it's a living thing* (www.livingthing.net.au), the *Save Power* energy efficiency program (www.savepower.nsw.gov.au) 'Clear the Air' (www.cleartheair.com.au), 'Love Food Hate Waste' (www.lovefoodhatewaste.com.au), 'Wild about Whales' (www.wildaboutwhales.com.au) and 'Wild Wild World' (www.wildwildworld.com.au). In 2009–10, a combined 416,638 visits were made to these websites. Some of these sites operated for only part of the financial year.

Various reporting tools have been used to assess web usage – these will be standardised in 2010–11.

Dealing with complaints

DECCW is committed to handling public feedback and complaints courteously, efficiently and equitably (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/complaint.htm).

In 2009–10, DECCW (excluding the NSW Office of Water) received 33 significant complaints. These included allegations of unethical conduct, corrupt conduct and other complaints referred by the NSW Ombudsman's office. Twenty-nine of the 33 complaints were finalised during the year, together with six additional complaints that had been received in 2008–09 and had not been finalised by the end of that year. Evidence of improper conduct was found in eight cases and appropriate action was taken. In dealing with complaints, changes to some management systems, procedures and programs were implemented.

The NSW Office of Water commenced central recording of service delivery complaints (and compliments) in September 2009. Its complaints handling procedure aims to resolve customer dissatisfaction by identifying problems and changing procedures to improve service delivery. Informal complaints are defined as those that are received verbally and can be dealt with within five days. All others are regarded as formal. Allegations of serious misconduct or corruption are dealt with separately. During 2009–10, 15 informal and 5 formal complaints were received. At 30 June, 19 complaints had been resolved, and action to resolve the remaining complaint was under way.

Improvements to the DECCW website

DECCW informs the public of its activities through the DECCW website (www.environment.nsw.gov.au). The website increasingly provides online services that make it easier for people to access publications, apply and pay for licences, find accommodation in a national park, or record sightings of native species.

Developments in 2009–10 included:

- a publicly accessible image library – DECCW holds a large collection of environmental photographs and images, but to date finding an image has only been possible through manual searching. Images have now been catalogued, subject tagged and organised, which will result in more than 5,000 of them being made available to the public online in the fourth quarter of 2010.
- improved information for park visitors – the website is heavily used by people planning visits to national parks.
- social media – the website now includes social media features for sharing content, such as media releases which are available as an RSS feed and on Twitter.
- Dustwatch – a new website that reports on dust conditions and wind erosion (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/dustwatch/index.htm).

DECCW manages other websites, some of which are listed in the performance indicator on this page.

Many staff are located outside metropolitan areas, which means the internal (intranet) site, known as DECCWnet, is an important way to communicate and provide staff with

tools and resources for their work. DECCWnet continues to grow, and now hosts audio and video files on topics of internal interest.

Communication and partnerships

DECCW continues to issue e-newsletters to organisations, interested groups and the public to keep them up-to-date with the latest environmental issues. Newsletters issued in 2009–10 included:

- *Climate of Change*, which highlights the latest environmental news and events
- *Environmental Trust Connections*, which provides information on Environmental Trust programs and showcases some projects
- *Explore*, which showcases sustainable tourism and conservation activities in parks, profiles successful experiences and partnerships, and communicates events, visitor trends and tourism industry news
- *Living Sustainably*, which is the e-newsletter for *Our environment – it's a living thing* and aims to help NSW residents live more sustainably at home, work and play
- *Naturescapes*, which features visitor activities, events, experiences, destinations and accommodation around NSW national parks
- *Resort Roundup*, which contains general interest articles for the ski resorts community in Kosciuszko National Park
- *Working with Local Government*, which keeps local councils informed of DECCW initiatives, activities and programs.

DECCW produced a large number of publications during the year, including corporate publications, guidelines and other advisory documents, research and technical reports, discussion papers, plans, brochures and environmental campaign material. The three-yearly *New South Wales State of the Environment 2009* report was released in December 2009 (see 'State of the Environment' section in Chapter 1).

Many publications comprised draft papers or plans for the purposes of public consultation, including 18 draft plans of management for national parks and reserves. Other major documents released for public comment during 2009–10 included:

- draft codes of practice, such as the one for archaeological investigations
- draft floodplain management plans, such as the one for the Edward and Wakool rivers
- draft environmental management plans, such as the plan for the Gwydir Wetlands
- draft regional conservation plans, such as the plans for the south coast and far north coast
- draft policies, such as the NSW Road Noise Policy
- draft regulations, such as the Fisheries Management (Aquatic Reserve) Regulation 2009 for Cabbage Tree Bay Aquatic Reserve.

The NSW Office of Water produces an extensive range of publications, including fact sheets, project reports, and water science and policy papers, which are available via its website (www.water.nsw.gov.au). The Office actively participated in targeted conferences, events and field days to interact with stakeholders and the community.

The NSW Office of Water has conducted a customer satisfaction survey for each of the past three years, web usability research and an irrigators' survey. As a result of the survey, various changes have been made to payment options, administrative procedures and resource management.

During 2009–10, the NSW Office of Water consulted with the community on a range of policy and planning matters, such as water sharing plans, a draft floodplain harvesting policy and reform of the *Water Industry Competition Act 2006*. Consultation involved targeted advertising, public meetings and the website.

A detailed list of DECCW publications produced during the year is provided in Appendix 13.

Freedom of information

DECCW is committed to transparent and accountable decision making. Members of the public can access many documents held by DECCW through its website, on request or by purchasing them. Other documents were available in 2009–10 under the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*.

In 2009–10, DECCW received 188 new freedom of information requests and processed 194 applications. These included 41 applications to the NSW Office of Water.

DECCW (excluding the NSW Office of Water) received 147 new freedom of information requests this year, 56 more than in 2008–09, and processed 148 applications. Many applications were from members of parliament, solicitors, journalists, businesses and community organisations. Only three applications were from people seeking information about their personal affairs.



Photo: R. Nicola

A draft regional conservation plan for the far north coast was released for public comment in 2009–10.

Although 26% of these applications were subject to some exemptions from release, around 93% of requested documents were either partly or fully released. Except when ongoing investigations and cabinet-related documents were involved, very few documents created by DECCW were exempted.

There were nine internal review decisions made in relation to freedom of information determinations during 2009–10. Eight decisions were affirmed and one application was withdrawn.

There were no decisions proceeding to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal. Two complaints were made to the NSW Ombudsman about DECCW decisions.

Due to the large scope and complexity of many freedom of information applications and a 61% increase in the total number of applications, 18 applications were not completed within the statutory timeframe. Some applications involved hundreds of documents, or required obtaining documents from regional locations, or required extensive consultation with many affected third parties, which contributed to delays in these cases.

In the NSW Office of Water there were two internal review decisions made in relation to freedom of information determinations during 2009–10. The original decision was upheld in each case. There were no decisions proceeding to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal and no complaints were made to the NSW Ombudsman about NSW Office of Water decisions.

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* will replace the *Freedom of Information Act 1989*, commencing on 1 July 2010. The new Act creates additional rights to information which are designed to meet community expectations of more open and transparent government. The legislation strongly encourages the routine and proactive release of information by government agencies. Guidance is being provided to DECCW staff to ensure compliance with the new legislation.

Connections with Aboriginal communities

Enhancing Aboriginal people's connection to Country and increasing their involvement in managing natural resources helps DECCW to conserve Aboriginal cultural heritage and has positive health, education and social benefits. DECCW participates in both state and national initiatives to improve the health, education and social outcomes of Aboriginal people.

DECCW is a significant partner in the NSW State Plan priority to help strengthen Aboriginal communities. DECCW is also a partner agency in *Two Ways Together*, the NSW Government's 10-year plan to improve the lives of Aboriginal people and their communities, and the Australian Government's Closing the Gap Strategy.

In May 2010, DECCW established an Executive Subcommittee on Aboriginal Affairs to direct and monitor DECCW's Aboriginal affairs activities. By the end of 2010, this subcommittee will have developed DECCW's Aboriginal Affairs Action Plan to guide activities over the coming years.

DECCW activities to help strengthen Aboriginal communities during 2009–10 included:

- contributing to a mid-term review of *Two Ways Together* and the revised priorities set out in the NSW State Plan, the Making it Our Business Strategy for improving Aboriginal employment in the NSW public sector, and the Two Ways Together Partnership Community Program
- leading the collection of data and information about improvements in Aboriginal culture and heritage to assist the development of indicators for a two-yearly report on implementation of Two Ways Together, published by Aboriginal Affairs NSW
- developing, in partnership with Aboriginal Affairs NSW, a discussion paper about developing ways to measure Indigenous community wellbeing for consideration by the national Ministerial Council for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
- participating in a Joint Working Group for Advancing Indigenous Reconciliation in Natural Resource Management and Primary Industries

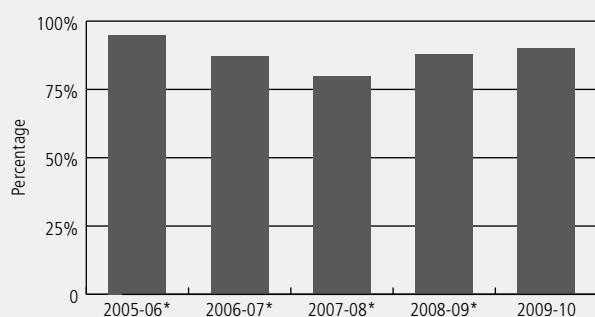
■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Freedom of information requests

Definition: This indicator measures the percentage of freedom of information applications that DECCW (and its predecessors the Department of Environment and Climate Change and the Department of Environment and Conservation) processed where 80% or more of the requested documents were released.

The figures do not include the NSW Office of Water. Comparative data for 2008–09 is not available as the NSW Office of Water was part of the former Department of Water and Energy until 30 June 2009.

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



* DEC and DECC data for these years.

Interpretation: In 2009–10, DECCW provided 80% or more of the requested information for 90% of freedom of information requests. In general, DECCW exempts very few of its documents from release. Documents received by DECCW in confidence from third parties or in response to regulatory requirements may be exempted, as release of information on personal or business affairs may have an adverse effect on them. The *Freedom of Information Act 1989* provides protection in these circumstances.

For more information on freedom of information applications, including NSW Office of Water statistics, see Appendix 11.

- working with other NSW agencies to finalise the National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy, which aims to improve service delivery and overcome disadvantage in urban and regional areas
- continuing to fund and support the DECCW Aboriginal Staff Network, including the network's annual conference held at Bourke in March 2010
- conducting clean-up programs on Aboriginal-owned lands in partnership with local Aboriginal communities, local Aboriginal land councils and local councils.



Photo: DECCW

DECCW protects Aboriginal heritage through Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permits (AHIPs) and other mechanisms. These objects were recovered under an AHIP.

Strengthening Aboriginal community wellbeing

In 2009–10, DECCW continued to work on the Strengthening Community Wellbeing Framework, an information package which identifies the different material and intangible elements that contribute to a community's wellbeing.

DECCW, in partnership with Aboriginal Affairs NSW, is developing the Strengthening Community Wellbeing Toolkit to assist Aboriginal community governance bodies to develop plans and strategies to improve outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

The draft framework and toolkit have benefited from advice from the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee and individuals working in Aboriginal affairs. The work also draws on Canadian insights and perspectives on community resilience obtained through a SGE Credit Union Travelling Fellowship to Canada.

Following further consultation and design in early 2010–11, the toolkit will be piloted in selected communities.

NAIDOC celebrations

DECCW celebrated NAIDOC week in July 2009 with the theme *Honouring Our Elders, Nurturing Our Youth*. This theme encouraged people to acknowledge Elders as inspirational leaders and role models for young people.

Highlights of DECCW's involvement in NAIDOC activities included:

- the Director General hosted a morning tea at the Sydney head office, including a Welcome to Country and a performance of Indigenous song and dance
- DECCW offices at Hurstville and Parramatta held events that included Welcome to Country, awarding 'Aboriginal champion' certificates and performances of traditional and contemporary music and dance
- helicopter tours were conducted to the Solitary Island lighthouse as part of the Aboriginal Discovery program
- on the south coast, celebrations included bush tucker and medicine, walks, women's and men's business, dance, art and music
- along the north coast, community events and celebrations included a barbecue lunch with the Bundjalung People of Byron Bay (Arakwal), an open day by the Worimi Conservation Lands Board of Management, and a Saltwater community day at Saltwater National Park.



Photo: DECCW

Healthy staff and productive workplaces

Occupational health and safety

In September 2009, DECCW began implementing its Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and Injury Management Strategic Objectives 2009–10, which included:

- a comprehensive safety culture review program that was introduced to national parks staff after a successful pilot in botanic gardens
- a review of the Manual Tasks Injury Prevention Project which was undertaken to improve risk management and decrease soft tissue injury frequency and costs
- improving the online management of accident investigations, forms completion, audits, risk assessment and record keeping
- new safety incident investigation protocols, supported by a training program to ensure incidents were managed effectively and remedial actions followed all workplace incidents
- a program to improve the proactive management of risks associated with slips, trips and falls
- a review of the OHS Risk Management System and the endorsement of a field-based checklist
- completion of an internal audit program, supported by manager coaching, to ensure systematic OHS and injury management across DECCW
- a review of key hazard management policies, procedures and guidelines for working with flying foxes, alcohol and other drugs; and managing asbestos, personal protective equipment, volunteer safety, tree risk management and aviation safety.

A development program was delivered to managers to reduce workplace conflict and associated psychological injuries. This was supported by programs to assist staff with work issues such as dealing with threatening and aggressive behaviour.

The NSW Office of Water has continually updated its OHS Management Plan to take into account new standards and practices. Major programs implemented in 2009–10 included:

- a formal OHS review of the water drilling unit which resulted in upgrading major drill equipment, developing and implementing a mechanical maintenance plan, and employing a full-time OHS officer
- a formal OHS audit and review of Riverworks units including two quarries operated by the NSW Office of Water
- implementation of *Tracertrack* allowing managers to track and monitor the safety of remote and lone workers engaged in field and compliance activities.

Occupational health and safety statistics for 2009–10

Incidents reported	762
Claims	308
Cost of claims	\$2,542,414

Bicycle working group

With growing staff interest and participation in cycling, a DECCW Bicycle Working Group was formed to promote and support the safe use of bicycles by staff when commuting to work, travelling for official DECCW business, and participating in public cycling events (e.g. Ride to Work Day, MS Gong Ride and Spring Cycle).

Bicycle user groups are very active in the Sydney head office and the DECCW offices at Gosford, Newcastle, Queanbeyan, Wollongong, Hurstville and Parramatta. The Parramatta office won a National Workplace Challenge for staff participation as part of the 2009 Ride to Work Day.

Key cycling issues for DECCW's business systems and programs include:

- occupational health and safety
- facilities and infrastructure
- promoting safe cycling as healthy, sustainable transport.

In view of the growing use of cycling, bicycle storage space in the Sydney head office tenancy was further expanded in 2009–10.

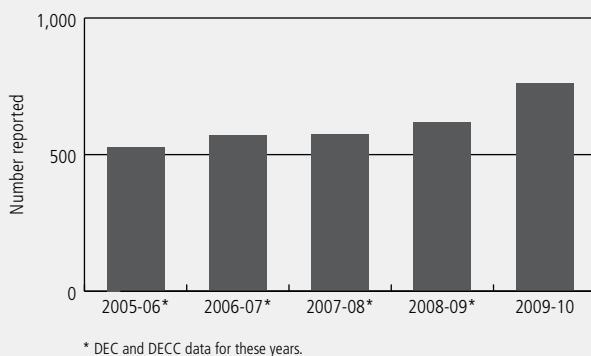
■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

DECCW staff accidents and workers compensation claims

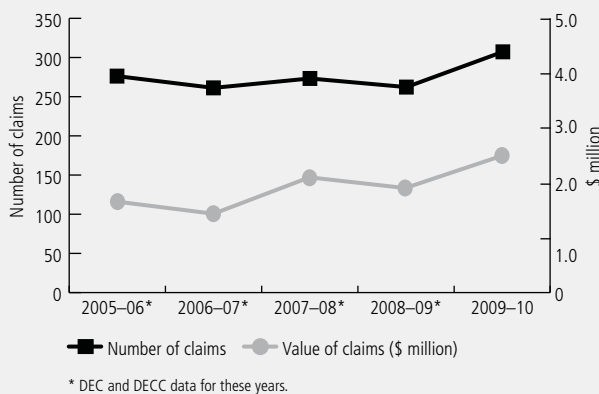
Definition: This indicator measures work-related incidents and accidents, and any resulting claim for compensation. The number of reported accidents and incidents indicates staff-reported events that could have led to, or did cause, an injury. The number and dollar value indicators measure the number 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, which means historical trend data may vary from year to year. Costs are not adjusted for inflation.

Note that data for the years before 2009–10 relate to the former Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

Accidents and incidents reported



Workers' compensation claims and their value



Interpretation: In 2009–10, the number of incidents reported, including near misses, increased to 762. This increase is attributed to increased staff numbers, the introduction of a more effective online reporting system and other ongoing programs to improve the reporting and management of safety incidents. An improving total reported incidents to claims ratio generally indicates an improving safety culture.

The number of claims increased to 308 for 2009–10 compared with 263 for the previous year, which corresponds directly with the inclusion of the NSW Office of Water as part of the department. The injury rate per 100 employees remains unchanged at 7.1.

Total claims costs increased for the period, compared with the same time last year, largely due to an increased number of full-time staff. An increase in the average cost of claims is attributed to a single major incident from which a third party cost recovery is expected.

An adaptive organisation

DECCW has in place a suite of strategies to support organisational adaptability and staff skills development in a rapidly changing operating environment. These include:

- Leadership and Management Development Strategy
- Learning and Organisational Development Strategy
- Aboriginal Employment Strategy
- Reward and Recognition Guidelines
- Conduct and Performance Strategy
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- Talent Development Program
- Knowledge Continuity Program (for retirement).



Photo: DECCW

Rangers Lucy Gibson and Greg Watts manage a job share arrangement that suits them and their colleagues.

Work and development scheme

DECCW utilises a Work and Development Scheme to enable all staff to annually plan and align their work with DECCW's overall strategic directions and organisational goals. The system also enables staff to manage workloads, enhance their professional development, increase motivation and improve job satisfaction.

The system, introduced in 2008, was reviewed in 2009–10 and an update is planned for 2010–11 that will allow greater online functionality, such as scheduling key dates for staff discussions about individual plans.

Learning and development framework

Learning and development opportunities available to staff during 2009–10 focused on seven major areas:

- management and leadership
- occupational health and safety
- policy, writing and communication skills
- financial and project management
- operational skills
- personal development
- Aboriginal culture and heritage.

The programs offered in each area are based on training needs analysis, formal evaluation of past programs and feedback from staff. A key focus for 2009–10 was a training program for managers to develop capabilities in leadership, coaching, and identifying and resolving conflicts. Other programs included:

- depression and mental health issues in the workplace: a program for managers
- dealing with contentious issues
- dealing with conflict
- negotiations skills
- a powerful communications skills workshop
- personal influence skills.

The average number of training days per staff member increased in 2009–10 (2.45 days, as shown in the table below) compared to the previous year (2.25 days).

Summary of formal staff training 2009–10¹

Total number of formal training days	Average number of formal training days per staff member ²
10,415	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 DECCW.

Given DECCW's key role in the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW, its extensive employment of Aboriginal people and its close connections with Aboriginal communities, DECCW has an ongoing program of Aboriginal cultural awareness training (see under 'Equal employment opportunity' in this chapter).

Industrial relations

In 2009–10, negotiations between DECCW, the Public Service Association (PSA) and the greater NSW branch of the Australian Workers Union continued regarding proposed changes to the Crown Employees (Department of Environment and Climate Change – Parks and Wildlife Group) Field Officers and Skilled Trades Salaries and Conditions 2009 Award and the Crown Employees (Department of Environment and Climate Change – Parks and Wildlife Group) Conditions of Employment Award, as well as the associated memoranda of understanding resulting from the 2008 public sector wage agreements. Negotiations between the parties will resume in the latter half of 2010, as these awards are due for review in June 2011.

Graduate development program

Following the successful completion of the graduate program in 2009, DECCW commenced a further two-year program in January 2010. The 2010 intake consisted of 18 graduates, including two Aboriginal graduates, who were placed in various positions across DECCW.

The NSW Office of Water commenced a graduate program in 2008. Eleven graduates were appointed to a variety of core business areas located across the state. The program has been extremely successful and a number of graduates have since been appointed to positions in the Office.



Photo: DECCW

DECCW's graduate intake for 2009–10.

Aboriginal cadetship program

In 2009–10, 10 Aboriginal cadet rangers, one Aboriginal cadet project officer, and one Aboriginal cadet policy officer were employed by DECCW. Cadets participated in structured work placements and were provided with a workplace mentor. While they were undertaking tertiary studies, they were paid a weekly study allowance. Two cadets successfully completed their cadetships during 2009–10, and were appointed to permanent positions.

Aboriginal traineeships

Nine Aboriginal trainee field officers and one Aboriginal trainee interpretive assistant were employed in 2010 in DECCW offices at Bourke, Lachlan, Ulladulla, Dubbo, Nelson Bay, Hay, Queanbeyan, Mutawintji National Park and Tumut. Training is 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 over 12 months. In 2009, seven Aboriginal trainee field officers and one Aboriginal trainee interpretive assistant completed the traineeship program.

JumpStart cadetships

In 2009–10, 20 Jump Start cadets were employed by DECCW in entry-level positions. The JumpStart Cadet Program is an initiative of the NSW Government to boost jobs for young people who have a HSC or vocational qualification at Certificate IV level or above.

Workforce planning – NSW Office of Water

A critical issue for the NSW Office of Water is the age of its workforce. The average age of staff is 46 years, with 23% of staff aged 55 years and over. This means that many staff will be leaving over the next five or more years, which risks significant loss of corporate and technical knowledge.

A knowledge continuity program called Water Wise Ones has been developed with an external provider to address this risk. The program has identified and transferred critical knowledge between workforce generations. Seven key staff participated in the program as mentors and 60 staff participated in knowledge transfer workshops. The program has been very successful, and is being extended to a further 20 senior staff and technical specialists over 2010–11.

In addition, a retirement transition program has been developed to provide a framework to re-engage some staff in specific capacities after they retire, to transfer skills and knowledge to other staff.

Equal employment opportunity

Each year, DECCW develops and implements strategies to eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in its workplaces, and to promote equal employment opportunity across the organisation. DECCW policies and programs during 2009–10 included:

- continuing and promoting the Spokeswomen's Program
- conducting Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training, with 33 courses held during the year attended by 683 staff members
- drafting a DECCW Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2010–2015 that will be implemented during 2010–11
- continuing implementation of the Disability Action Plan 2009–2012
- researching strategies to help increase the proportion of women in senior management, in alignment with the NSW Government strategic plan: 'Making the public sector work better for women'
- continuing actions under the department's Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement 2006–2010.

DECCW will continue to focus on improving employment opportunities and conditions for people with disabilities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and improving access to services for all members of the public. Major activities and outcomes planned for 2010–11 include:

- conducting respectful workplace training throughout DECCW
- piloting a program to capture the knowledge and experience of employees approaching retirement
- finalising the DECCW Aboriginal Employment Strategy 2010–2015 and implementing it throughout the department
- preparing a DECCW Multicultural Policies and Services Plan to replace the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement 2006–2010.

■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

DECCW staff representation in equal employment opportunity groups

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

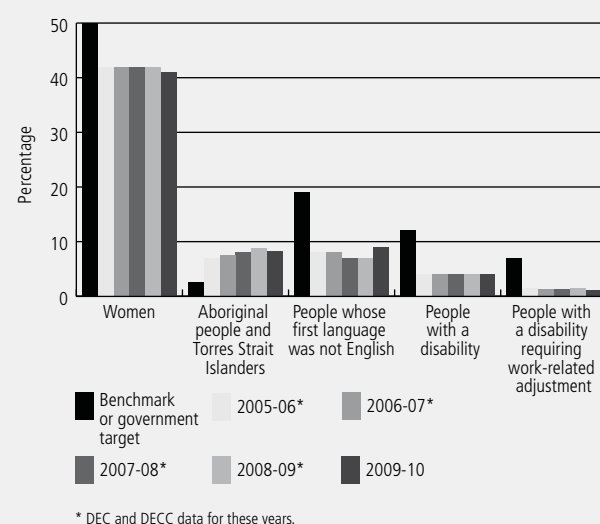
This indicator measures staff statistics according to five EEO groups: women, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, people whose first language is not English, people with a disability, and people with a disability requiring work-related adjustment.

EEO figures below are provided by the Department of Premier and Cabinet following lodgement by DECCW of its Annual Workforce Profile Return. These EEO figures include staff from the Botanic Gardens Trust and the NSW Office of Water. The figures exclude casual staff and contractors.

DECCW does not report on staff attached to catchment management authorities and board and committee members.

DECCW is an amalgamation of former agencies and has been known over the reporting period as Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC) and Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW).

Percentage of DECCW staff representation for EEO Groups



Interpretation: DECCW's employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff during 2009–10 was significantly higher at 8.3% than the NSW Government benchmark of 2.6%.

DECCW did not reach the NSW Government benchmarks for employment in the other target groups, although:

- there has been increased representation of women at the executive levels
- there has been an increase in the concentration of people whose first language is not English in the higher salary levels.

DECCW continues to build the profile of target groups across the organisation and improve representation. DECCW is committed to continuing to provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to study, increase their skills, gain work experience and secure temporary and permanent employment; and actively engages to improve under-representation in other target groups through workforce strategy.

Multicultural policies and services

DECCW's Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement 2006–2010 (EAPS) (see www.environment.nsw.gov.au/whoweare/eaps.htm) outlines key strategies and actions that have been pursued by DECCW to assist in achieving the government's ethnic affairs policies and the principles of cultural diversity, as set out in the *NSW Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act 2000*.

The NSW Government-wide EAPS program was replaced during 2009–10 with the Multicultural Policies and Services Program. Final evaluation of DECCW's EAPS 2006–2010 commenced in 2009–10, with a view to preparing a DECCW Multicultural Policies and Services Plan by the end of 2010.

DECCW engages with multicultural communities through the Ethnic Communities Sustainable Living Project to promote more efficient use of water and energy and to encourage more waste recycling. Under the project, DECCW works in partnership with the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW to employ 18 bilingual educators. In 2009–10, DECCW delivered workshops and field trips in nine community languages to 2,645 participants. Information stalls and interactive activities were featured at 20 community and cultural festivals, reaching a further 6,500 people. These activities will continue in 2010–11.

The high-profile Save Power energy efficiency campaign (see www.savepower.nsw.gov.au) targets speakers of Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Greek, Spanish, Korean, Macedonian and Italian through radio and print media and the campaign website. During 2009–10, 7.6 per cent of the campaign's press activity and 4.6 per cent



Photo: A. Burton

Through the Protected Area Workers Association NSW, DECCW staff train South American rangers in using specialist equipment.

of electronic media activity were directed at non-English speakers. In 2010–11, DECCW plans to increase these non-English components of the campaign to 10% of press and 5% of electronic media to meet the NSW Government's targets.

DECCW runs extensive volunteer programs involving almost 5,000 people in bush regeneration and clean-ups; as tour guides; in maintaining historic places and working on tracks and trails; and in education and scientific surveys and research. Historically, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities have had little participation in volunteering. In recognition of this, several initiatives in 2009–10 aimed to engage volunteers from across the community:

■ CASE STUDY

Multicultural approach to pesticide use

Since the introduction of the *Pesticides Act 1999*, DECCW has recognised the need for support programs for growers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are involved in food production. In particular, many people from Arabic, Chinese, Khmer and Vietnamese backgrounds manage and work in horticultural food industries in the Sydney basin.

In 2009–10, DECCW and the NSW Department of Primary Industries began a new program of bilingual extension officer services, aiming to:

- increase participation in training courses for the safe use of pesticides, which are mandatory under the Pesticides Regulation
- promote best-practice chemical use methods
- reduce chemical risks to human health and the environment.

From past experience, DECCW has found that take-up of training can be constrained by language differences, time pressures and a degree of suspicion about the



Photo: DECCW

DECCW trains farmers from culturally diverse backgrounds in the safe use of pesticides.

role of governments. Bilingual liaison officers (known as BiLOs) play a valuable role in addressing these issues by liaising directly with the growers and generating the trust required to ensure growers attend training. The officers also follow up with farms to encourage ongoing compliance and best-practice use of pesticides.

The results have been encouraging, with strong attendances at bilingual courses in safe pesticide use.

- at Bents Basin State Conservation Area near Wallacia, which is a culturally diverse part of western Sydney, tree-planting and other activities run in association with Conservation Volunteers Australia have, since March 2010, been taking place on Saturdays in prominent locations and been accompanied by large signs inviting locals to enquire or become volunteers
- DECCW's corporate volunteer program in parks is involving people who might not otherwise have been drawn to conservation-related activities, including many people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Proposed actions in 2010–11 to foster greater multicultural engagement include:

- developing and promoting guidelines for staff about when and how to use accredited interpreters when dealing with people from non-English speaking backgrounds, either in-house or through the telephone interpreting service run by the Federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- developing policies and processes to ensure that safety messages in national parks are communicated effectively to all visitors, such as through signs and publications
- considering a new project under the Ethnic Communities Sustainable Living Project to provide opportunities for multicultural community groups to participate in activities focusing on Aboriginal culture and Australian plants
- continuing to actively identify people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to strengthen DECCW advisory boards and committees.

Disability action plan

In October 2009, DECCW finalised a new Disability Action Plan 2009–2012, that lays out practical and achievable actions to be undertaken over three years to improve DECCW's services, employment practices, workplace conditions and consultation to make them more accessible to people with a disability and their carers. Such services include information, environmental education, tourism and recreation in parks and gardens, volunteering opportunities, project grants, residential rebates and various licensing systems.

In December 2010, staff presented a workshop at a conference for special purpose schools. As an outcome of the conference, DECCW agreed to develop teaching resources for special purpose schools, guided by a project planning group that includes two school representatives. These teaching resources are expected to be in use later in 2010–11.

Work in national parks is continuously improving accessibility. In Budderoo National Park, south of Wollongong, a full renovation of the Minnamurra Rainforest Visitor Centre was completed in 2009–10, with many aspects of the new design providing enhanced accessibility for visitors with a disability. At the popular Burragorang State Conservation Area, south-west of Sydney, the popular Burragorang Lookout was upgraded

(see the case study 'Upgrading Burragorang Lookout' in Chapter 4, under 'Contribute to sustainable visitation and tourism, community wellbeing and regional development through parks and reserves').

Parks Eco Pass, the new online system for commercial recreation and tour operator licensing, was introduced in 2009–10. As part of the new system, tour operators provide information on their capacity to take customers with a disability. This information is conveyed to the public on www.environment.nsw.gov.au/nationalparks/touroperators.aspx.

During 2009–10, DECCW investigated recruiting trainees through the NSW Traineeships for People with a Disability program, which is run by the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Three national park field officer trainees were appointed. DECCW received external funding to cover part of the cost of workplace adjustments. One officer, for instance, used an interpreter during TAFE sessions, while all trainees were entitled to tutoring assistance. Appointing further trainees under this program will be considered.

Spokeswomen program

DECCW's active Spokeswomen program in 2009–10 supported women's career development with three separate courses aimed at women in non-traditional roles, in non-managerial positions and in senior positions. Sixty-three women attended these courses held across both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

Contributions to developing policy, procedures and facilities for breastfeeding mothers, and flexible work practices, were major achievements in 2009–10.

This year presented challenges for staff, including departmental structural changes and external environmental pressures such as record-breaking droughts, floods and storms. Spokeswomen developed and promoted events, attended by around 350 staff, which included mental health workshops, talks on healthy living, and the celebration of guest speakers and staff championing these ideals at the annual Spokeswomen Awards.



Spokeswomen champions Michelle Weight, left, and Janelle Randall-Court, right, with Lisa Corby, Director General.

Photo: DECCW

Public recognition for our staff and programs

This year, many DECCW staff and programs received awards for their outstanding contributions to public service and environment protection in NSW.

Phil Hahn, DECCW's manager of concessions and leasing at the Nowra national parks office, received the Public Service Medal for outstanding service to the NSW Government. Phil manages tourism operator licensing and commercial and community activities throughout the south coast region.

Tim Rogers, who in April 2010 retired as Executive Director, Departmental Performance Management and Communication, received the NSW Service Medallion in May 2010. This award is presented to public servants who have given 40 or more years of service to the people of NSW.

Former NPWS ranger Mike Dodkin was named on the 2010 Queen's Birthday Honours List and received a Public Service Medal in recognition of his years of outstanding service to the Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns NSW program. Mike has benefited more than 80 communities across regional and rural NSW, for more than ten years, as an assessor for the program.

Simon Loschiavo, a national parks field officer based at Merimbula, was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his services to sport for people with a disability. Simon has for many years worked with skiers with a disability on the slopes of Thredbo and Perisher within Kosciuszko National Park.

The Carol Kendall Award is presented each year to an Aboriginal female employee in DECCW who has demonstrated outstanding skills and achievement. This year, the award was presented to Deidre Martin, who leads a team of Aboriginal Discovery Rangers on the south coast, and interprets the female role in Aboriginal culture through interactive demonstrations, talks and hands-on activities. Deidre has earned enormous respect from her team and colleagues for her knowledge of her culture and her excellent leadership skills.



Sally Barnes, Deputy Director General Parks and Wildlife Group, with Deidre Martin, the recipient of the Carol Kendall Award.

Jenny McAllister, DECCW's Director of Climate Change, Air and Noise, was nominated as Australian Eisenhower Fellow for 2009. The fellowship is awarded to professionals who show outstanding leadership qualities, and enables them to travel in the United States for six weeks to research the issue of their choice. Jenny's research identified government best practice methods to promote innovation in low-carbon goods and services.

Dr Caroline Ford, a DECCW Cultural Heritage Researcher, was awarded the NSW Archival Research Fellowship at the 2009 Premier's History Awards in October 2009.

Dr Denis Byrne, DECCW's manager of cultural heritage research, was awarded the 2009 John Mulvaney Book Award for his book *Surface Collection: Archaeological Travels in Southeast Asia*. His book is about an archaeological tour, and is also a personal investigation and critique of heritage conservation. It comprises studies of south-east Asian histories and cultures, and critiques how western conceptualisation of heritage often undermines local accounts.

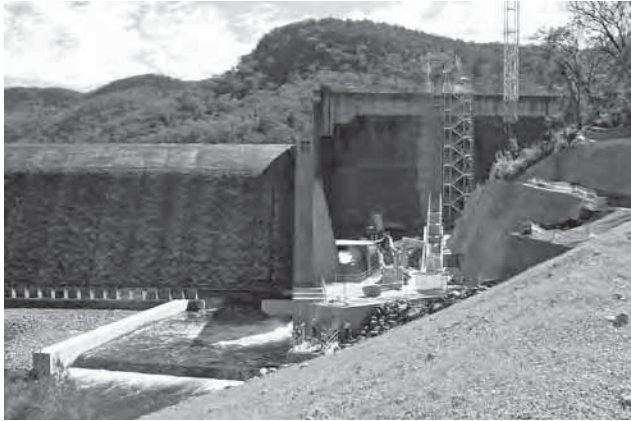
Steve Brown, a DECCW Cultural Heritage Researcher, was engaged to evaluate the worthiness of the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands for inscription on the World Heritage list. Steve travelled at the request of the International Committee on Monuments and Sites, which is an advisory body to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

Steve Brereton, a DECCW Aboriginal Heritage Conservation Officer, received the North Coast Region Aboriginal Education Award for Outstanding Contribution to Educational Achievement by a Community Member from the NSW Department of Education and Training, for his continued work and dedication to promoting cultural heritage issues on the mid-north coast.

Gunther Theischinger, a DECCW scientist, was awarded a full professorship by the President of Austria in recognition of his work on the taxonomy of insects. His work was assessed as being internationally significant by the Austrian Government and the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Gunther has been working on river health programs since 1997 and specialises in the taxonomy of dragonflies.

At the thirteenth annual Premier's Public Sector Awards presented in November 2009, DECCW staff and programs received several awards:

- Jeff Thomas, a DECCW Pest Management Officer based at the Grafton national parks office, won the Premier's Award for Individual Excellence for his role in delivering community conservation in northern NSW
- DECCW's Far West Solar Project, under which solar power capacity has been installed in six DECCW buildings, won the Leading Change category (see also 'Carbon management' section)
- Managing Water Quality in Large Reservoirs, a joint DECCW and Sydney Catchment Authority project, won a commendation in the Delivering Services category



Tallowa Dam Fishway, showing fish passage provisions including the entrance, lift structure and hoist tower.

Photo: DECCW

- The Tallowa Dam Environmental Flows and Fishway Project, jointly run by the Department of Services, Technology and Administration, NSW Public Works, DECCW and the Sydney Catchment Authority, won a commendation in the Project Delivery – Making it Happen (Large Agencies) category.

DECCW's *Lighthouses of Northern NSW Oral History Project* received a High Commendation award at the 2009 Energy Australia National Heritage Trust Awards. NSW lighthouses are regarded for their history, their fine architecture and the contribution they have made to safe navigation of the difficult coastline.

The Sculptures in the Scrub Project also received a High Commendation award at the 2009 Energy Australia National Heritage Trust Awards. The sculptures are bronze, stone, and stainless steel figures set amongst Pilliga scrub in the Dandry Gorge Community Conservation Area near Baradine. This culturally significant area for the local Gamilaroi people, and the sculptures, will be the subject of an ABC documentary.

The Aboriginal Tour Guide Training Program developed by DECCW and TAFE NSW was honoured at the annual TAFE NSW Gili Awards in July 2009, winning the Industry Partnership Award. The training program helps Aboriginal communities to develop tourism opportunities and engage visitors with Country. More than 160 people from 10 Aboriginal communities across NSW have been trained so far.

The restored Sugarloaf Point Lighthouse Cottages in Myall Lakes National Park, north of Newcastle, won the New Tourism Development Award at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards in 2009. The award recognised DECCW's commitment to protecting and conserving the historical character of the lighthouse while providing accommodation for visitors.

Five national parks in far western NSW – Mutawintji, Mungo, Kinchega, Paroo–Darling and Sturt – won a Broken Hill Tourism Award for the Natural Attraction category. While tourist numbers to NSW declined in the past year due to global economic conditions, outback NSW has seen a growth in tourism of around 18%.

The team that operates the ski resorts in Kosciuszko National Park received a merit award in the Local Government category at the 2009 National Environmental Management System Awards for their work in establishing an environmental management system for the Perisher Range resorts.

Blue Mountains National Park was awarded the 2009 NSW Tourism Gold Award for Ecotourism. The award recognised the contribution of the park's World Heritage natural and cultural values to tourism, and recognised the value of the park in fostering a greater understanding and appreciation of ecotourism.

The Canopy Café at the Dorrigo Rainforest Centre won Best New Restaurant in the Restaurant and Catering NSW 2009 Northern Awards for Excellence.



DECCW held a celebration for Warren Burke, Administration Officer, who in November 2009 had served 50 years with the NSW Public Service. Warren is pictured here with Lisa Corbyn, Director General.

Photo: DECCW



Photo: DECCW

Good knowledge, information and systems to make decisions

Information management and communications technology

During the year, DECCW continued improvements under its 2007–2010 Information Management and Communications Technology Strategic Plan. Significant achievements included:

- continuing the DECCW Information Technology Infrastructure Replacement Program, replacing around 600 desktop computers and 100 laptops
- implementing new technology to support the upgrade of DECCW's spatial applications
- continuing the upgrade of the DECCW data centre's infrastructure for improved data storage capacity and virtualisation technology that will provide enhanced disaster recovery capability and significantly reduce energy costs
- improved data security technology to ensure DECCW's critical data assets are protected
- continued upgrading of the DECCW telecommunications network, including a dark fibre network connecting DECCW's major offices and data centres, and continued expansion of wireless technology connecting DECCW offices in regional NSW

- supporting various business initiatives including the asset maintenance system for parks management, the SAP financial system, a new Aboriginal Heritage Information Management system, an Executive Dashboard and enhancements to an application used by catchment management authorities to manage property vegetation plans
- developing a new DECCW Information Management and Communications Technology Strategic Plan for 2010–2015.

Natural resources and environment information

DECCW manages an enormous, and increasing, volume of data relating to natural resources and the environment, much of which has come from former agencies that are now part of DECCW. Accordingly, DECCW has commenced improving the quality, consistency and accessibility of this data.

DECCW's spatial data and systems across the organisation are being consolidated. This work includes publishing metadata statements that provide descriptive information about specific data sets.

■ CASE STUDY

Improving library services

During 2009–10, the DECCW library improved desktop access to online bibliographic databases and journals, which reflects a continuing move away from print based resources. Holdings catalogues inherited from the libraries of the various former agencies that are now part of DECCW were also integrated.

These developments significantly improve access to information for staff, especially those based outside metropolitan areas. Library officers also trained other staff in searching and selecting from the wide range of information sources available, and in using the databases effectively.



Photo: DECCW

DECCW library staff. Left to right: Fang Zhao, Louise Mahon, Christine Davie and Jason Davidson.

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

Internal communications

Within DECCW, stronger relationships are being built across a large and dispersed department. A monthly *onDECCW* newsletter is sent to staff to highlight news and events, and a quarterly Director General's e-newsletter keeps staff informed about the organisation's achievements, staff achievements and key directions.

Most work areas also produce their own newsletters, while key parts of DECCW, such as those involved in scientific work and park management, hold regular staff forums and presentations. The NSW Office of Water, for example, has 'team briefs' and an online platform that enables all staff to contribute through weblogs, image galleries and surveys.

Financial management

Financial policies and systems were further enhanced across DECCW during 2009–10. Key financial projects and activities included:

- participating in government reforms, including super-agency amalgamations, transition arrangements and plans to meet required efficiency and offset savings through the Better Services and Value Plan, ICT review, corporate services consolidations, efficiency dividends and the Savings Improvement Plan
- completing statutory financial statements for 21 entities, including the first combined accounts for an expanded DECCW (including NSW Office of Water), and the first accounts for the Water Administration Ministerial Corporation (WAMC) and the Office of Hawkesbury–Nepean. Other accounts included the Environmental Trust, the Environment Protection Authority, the Marine Parks Authority, the Dams Safety Committee, the Dumaresq–Barwon Border Rivers Commission, and 13 catchment management authorities
- commencing a business intelligence project to improve efficiency and access to critical departmental performance information, including key performance indicators for finance, human resources and operations
- upgrading the SAP financial system, online petty cash management and travel allowance management
- introducing an integrated asset maintenance system across national parks
- continued review and enhancement of financial reporting and the business warehouse data analysis system
- providing strategic financial support to the 13 catchment management authorities in close liaison with NSW Treasury
- completing a DECCW finance manual and updated policies and procedures, including delegations, accessible through an enhanced finance intranet site

- training senior staff in net cost of services principles and processes to strengthen budget management and compliance with NSW Treasury requirements
- other financial management training across DECCW, including courses in the use of the SAP financial system.

Financial improvement initiatives planned for 2010–11 included:

- transition arrangements associated with the NSW Government's super-agency reform program and corporate services consolidations
- progress on DECCW's business intelligence capabilities, focusing on key performance indicators and core operations management
- the continued rollout and development of the asset management system.

Insurance cover

As part of its approach to risk management, DECCW obtained insurance cover in 2009–10 through the NSW Treasury Managed Fund, which used Allianz Australia Pty Ltd for workers' compensation and GIO General Ltd for other risk areas.

Areas of risk and related insurance costs

	2008-09 (\$'000)	2009-10 (\$'000)
Workers compensation*	5,722	1,862
Public liability	3,477	3,624
Property	2,124	2,009
Motor vehicles*	1,258	1,617
Miscellaneous (Fire Fighting Fund)	10,339	8,000
Miscellaneous (Other)	32	42
Total	22,952	17,154

* Includes hindsight adjustments relating to prior year premiums.

Premiums are based on claims history and reflect DECCW's risk management approach to managing claims. The 2008–09 and 2009–10 financial years are not strictly comparable, as the total premium for 2009–10 includes insurance for the NSW Office of Water, which was established as a division of DECCW in July 2009.

Employee liabilities

Liability as at 30 June 2010	(\$'000)
Long service leave*	111,243
On-cost long service leave	13,492
Recreation leave	44,936
On-cost recreation leave	2,636

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

■ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Payment of accounts

Definition: This indicator shows the value and timing of trade creditor accounts paid in each quarter during the reporting year, which is an important measure of the way DECCW manages its business and treats its partners and clients.

Trade creditor 'accounts payable' balances at the end of each quarter for the financial year 2009–10

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	15,036,258	459,525	480,042	1,198	476,588
December	1,858,702	50,568	119,679	2,338	31,922
March	5,040,423	600,868	46,310	33,503	10,934
June	3,448,501	709,833	2,488	29,926	2,942

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 for each quarter

Quarter	Target %	Actual %	\$	Total amount paid \$
September	85	82.28	233,604,136	283,899,506
December	85	89.27	265,697,773	297,639,029
March	85	81.23	235,548,036	289,968,971
June	85	93.61	389,350,416	415,943,675

Interpretation: DECCW 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 is certified that credit card usage by officers of the NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water has been in accordance with the appropriate government policy, Premier's Memoranda and Treasurer's Directions.