



Department of Environment  
Land, Water & Planning

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Ms Lilian Topic  
Committee Secretary  
Legal and Social Issues Committee  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Ref: SBR008125



14 OCT 2015

Dear Ms Topic

*Lilian,*

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT INQUIRY**

I refer to the Committee Secretariat correspondence of 24 July 2015 outlining the questions on notice taken at the hearing of the Legal and Social Issues Inquiry into Machinery of Government changes on 21 July 2015.

The detailed responses from my department are included as attachment 1 to this letter.

If you or the Committee have any further questions I will be pleased to receive them and respond accordingly.

Yours sincerely

**Adam Fennessy**  
Secretary

## Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Standing Committee on Legal and Social Issues – Inquiry into machinery of government changes

Responses to Questions on Notice

### Question 1

*DELWP will provide the Committee with a breakdown of the ins and outs of DELWP structure within specific groups*

DELWP has conducted a thorough review of its staffing data as part of its end of financial year processes for reporting in the Annual Report for 2014-2015. This review has resulted in a minor adjustment in the number of FTE staff recorded as transferring out of the department as a result of the MOG (1231.9 FTE compared with 1237.9 FTE) on 1 January 2015. This is due to a refinement in the classification of MOG transfers and other non-MOG related movements.

Prior to 31 December 2014, the former DEPI had 3556.1 FTE.

On 1 January 2015, 1237.9 FTE transferred to the new Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR). At the same time, 640.5 FTE transferred to DELWP from the former Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) and from the former Department of State Development, Business and Innovation (DSDBI). These FTE were attributed to the Local Infrastructure and Planning outputs in DTPLI (excluding the 29 Regional Planners from DSDBI).

The table below shows the breakdown of groups\* within DELWP pre and post the MOG:

Group	December 2014	January 2015
Water and Catchments	189.9	193.0
Corporate Services	502.7	501.4
Land, Fire and Environment	443.9	444.8
Regional Services	1514.4	1185.7
Planning	0	221.3
Local Infrastructure	0	390.6
Capital Projects	9.6	9.6
Office of the Secretary	24.0	7.0

\* Table does not include figures for Office of the Victorian Government Architect, Office of the Victorian Environmental Water Holder or the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability as these do not sit within the group structure and there was minimal change due to MOG. The Office of the Victorian Architect transferred to the Department of Premier and Cabinet in April 2015.

## Question 2

*DELWP will furnish the Committee with details surrounding DELWP's complaints management system.*

DELWP considers that this question relating to complaints management was primarily focused on the local government sector and asked in two parts, as outlined in a) and b) below. The answers are in response to each part.

- a) Are those complaints logged in a manner that allows those agencies to interface and to get an overall picture of complaints?
- b) Is there a plan to perhaps produce an information sheet or a flowchart advising the community about the processes of lodging complaints in relation to local government so that there is an understanding of how they all interface?

**a)**

DELWP provides a range of contact points for the public to lodge complaints relating to the functions and services it provides. As part of this complaints management process, DELWP has implemented a centralised complaints gateway on its website. This provides the public with a single point of contact to submit a complaint and allows the department to more effectively facilitate the management, monitoring and reporting of complaints.

The aim of this centralised system is threefold: it is to ensure members of the public understand where to direct their complaints and how they will be managed; to resolve specific complaints; and to identify any patterns in the nature of the complaints that will allow the department to improve its service delivery.

**b)**

Local Government Victoria (LGV) in DELWP supports the Hon Natalie Hutchins MP, Minister for Local Government in responding to complaints about local government.

Complaints specific to local government may be made to the DELWP website and these will be redirected to LGV via the complaints gateway. LGV also receives complaints about local government directly through letter/email correspondence or over the phone.

Complaints in writing (letter/email) to Minister Hutchins are tracked through the Department's systems. This allows for summary reports on the subject matter, target council and source of the complaints to be generated in real time. Such reports have informed the basis and rationale for the development of guidance documents and capacity building programs to improve council performance.

Phone complaints are fielded by officers who make a determination if they are queries about what authority councils have under the Act, or are complaints about council decisions/actions or councillor behaviour. If the matters raised can be resolved through advice or guidance, officers will act accordingly. For more complex issues, the complainant is advised to write in with details about the matter and the nature of their concerns so that the Department can formally take the matter up with the relevant council.

In cases where the matter may be more appropriately dealt with by the Local Government Inspectorate, the Auditor-General or the Ombudsman, the complainant is advised to write to or contact the relevant authority. LGV does not make referrals on behalf of complainants. However, if a trend is observed in relation to complaints received, LGV will discuss such observations with the relevant authority to determine any further action that may be appropriate.

In regard to advising the public about a process for lodging complaints, LGV has published comprehensive information on the DELWP website that details how complaints about local government can be lodged and who the appropriate authority for dealing with a particular type of complaint may be. The information can be found at <http://www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/local-government/guide-to-how-councils-work/consultation-and-complaints/complaints-and-resolutions>