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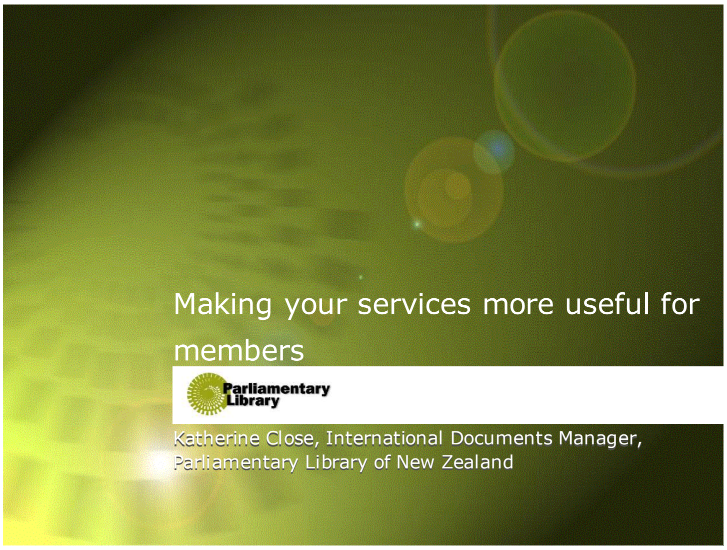

Good afternoon to you all and greetings from Moira Fraser and all the other staff at the NZ Parliamentary Library
To those of you from tsunami effected countries I'd just like to say that you have been very much in our thoughts and we offer our deepest sympathies.
I notice none of the capital cities were directly effected, but our Parliament sits right on a major earthquake faultline and is very close to the sea, so it's been a sobering reminder of the risks we face.

My topic for today is an exciting one! After all, being useful to our clients is the reason for our existence.

We're all of us working in very challenging times, and to meet those challenges we need to:
understand more about our clients, and
Understand more about what they do with the information we provide

Slide 2

So, here is what I am planning to cover:

Some scene setting
Learning about our clients
Measuring success
Developing new services & products
Staying relevant

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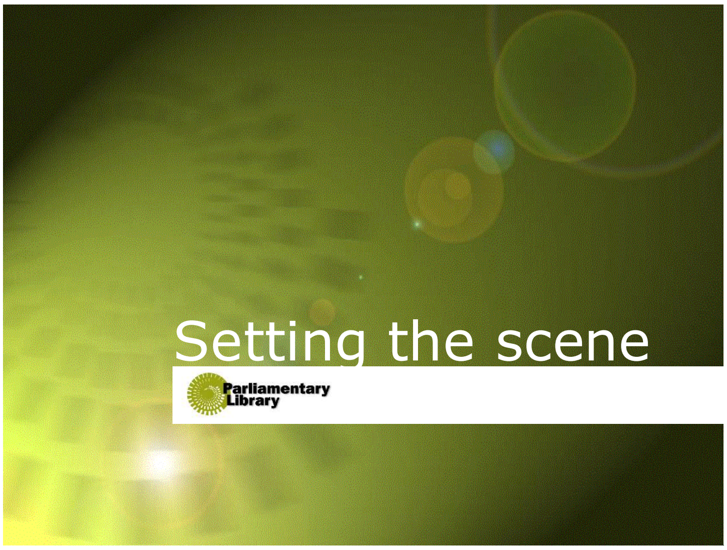


Before I get to the serious part here are a few screens to give you some New Zealand context.

Slide 4

It's certainly unique for NZ in terms of it's age and architecture
Just 4 years after the Parliament itself was started.
Some national functions carried on beyond that.

Slide 5

That’s Parliament House and the Library is just out of the picture on the right.
The distinctive round building is known as the Beehive, and houses the Executive.
All three buildings are linked so you can easily walk from the Library, through to the other buildings.

Slide 6

Our Parliament has only 1 Chamber. Our upper House was abolished in 1950.
We've had an MMP system of government since 1996 which includes a very strong Select Committee system to provide the appropriate checks and balances.
10 Select Committees
Nearly all bills are referred to a Select Committee, and they are nearly all changed by the Select Committee.
There are only 2 levels of government – the national level and local government level.

Slide 7

MMP resulted in many changes when it was introduced in 1996

We now have a **wider** variety of MPs, including:
A Muslim MP, Pacific Island MPs, Asian MPs, even a transsexual MP
15% of our MPs are Maori – about the same as the population
28% of our MPs are women. And in fact the top 5 positions in NZ generally are held by women.

All our governments since 1996 have been minority governments so this means:
Government must negotiate and make deals with smaller parties to get legislation passed
Government must listen more carefully to the people because their majority is slim
No party has been in power more than 12 years or 4 terms, even before MMP.

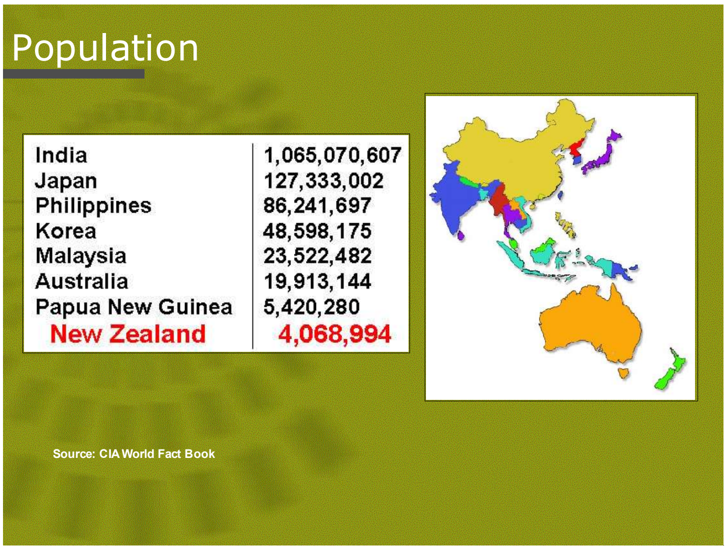
Slide 8

Images from www.nzedge.com

Slide 9

Images from www.nzedge.com

Slide 10



A few pretty pictures and now some hard facts
In terms of population NZ has a lot fewer people than most of your countries.

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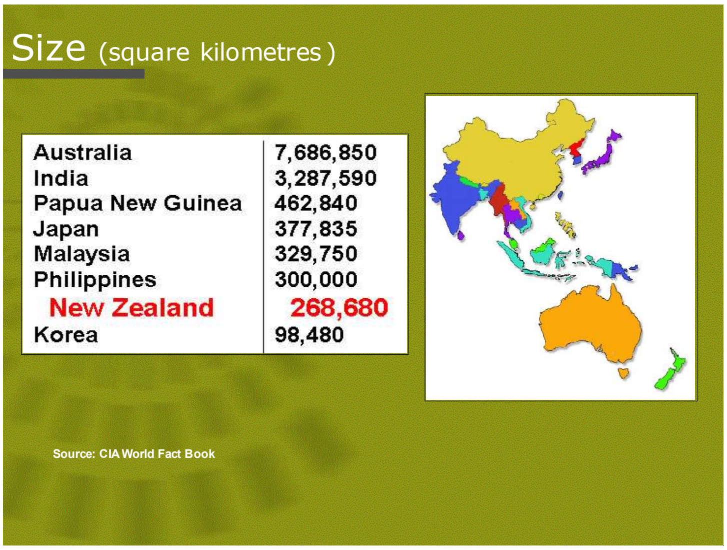

In geographic size, we're also quite small, but some Asian countries are not too much bigger than us.
Overall we are a sparsely populated country by comparison.

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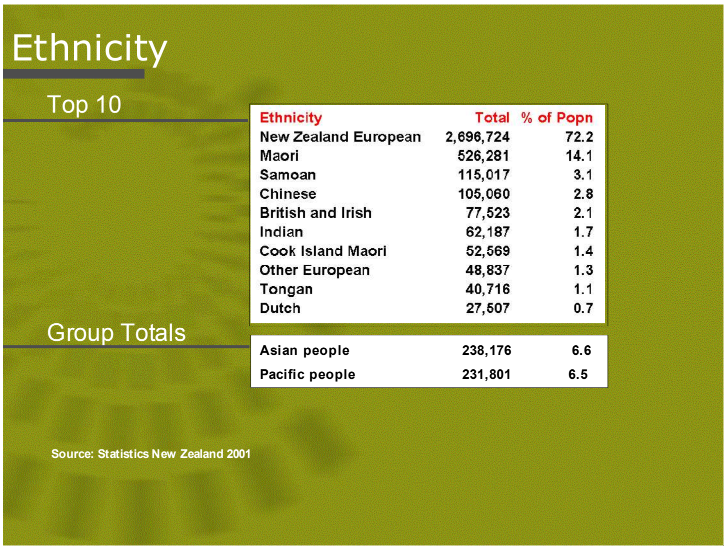


Ethnicity	Total	% of Popn
New Zealand European	2,696,724	72.2
Maori	526,281	14.1
Samoan	115,017	3.1
Chinese	105,060	2.8
British and Irish	77,523	2.1
Indian	62,187	1.7
Cook Island Maori	52,569	1.4
Other European	48,837	1.3
Tongan	40,716	1.1
Dutch	27,507	0.7
Asian people	238,176	6.6
Pacific people	231,801	6.5

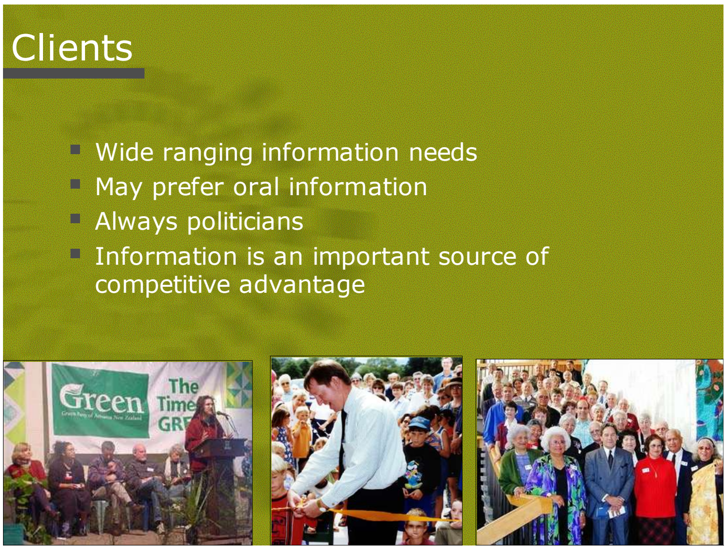
14% of our population are Maori, the indigenous people of NZ.
6.6% are Asian
6.5% are Pacific people

Slide 13

Well – thats enough on setting the scene

Looking now at our clients, there are a few general statements that are probably true of MPs in any country.

Slide 14



MPs are all comfortable in an oral environment and tend to prefer information given verbally
They seldom stop being politicians and thinking about political advantage
They use information to compete – between parties, and for power within their party

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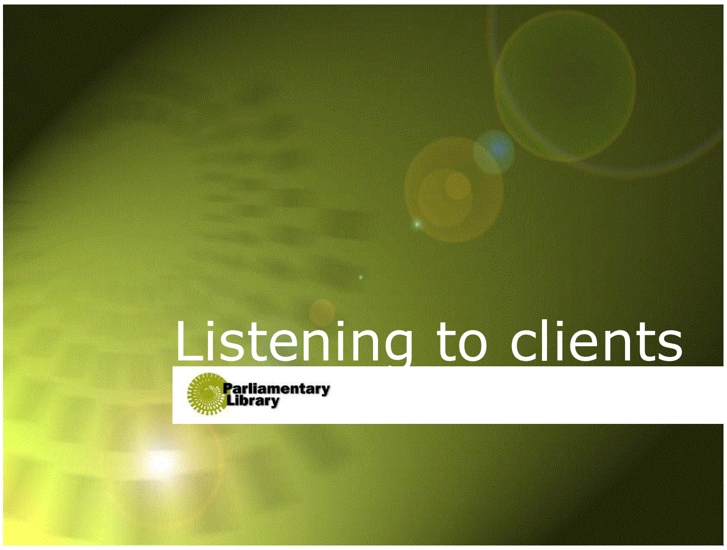

It isn't hard to listen to MPs. Sometimes the difficulty is getting them to talk about the things we want to hear about.

Because our clients have such high profiles, it can be easy to fall into the trap of thinking we know everything there is to know about them and their work.
There are several methods we use to combat this, and I'm just going to run through a few of them.

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READ SLIDE

With regard to inviting clients to talk about their work, We've found it very useful to invite three or four members to talk to us each year as part of our strategic planning. Sometimes we also invite staffers, such as someone from a Minister's office or a Party Researcher.

We ask four questions:

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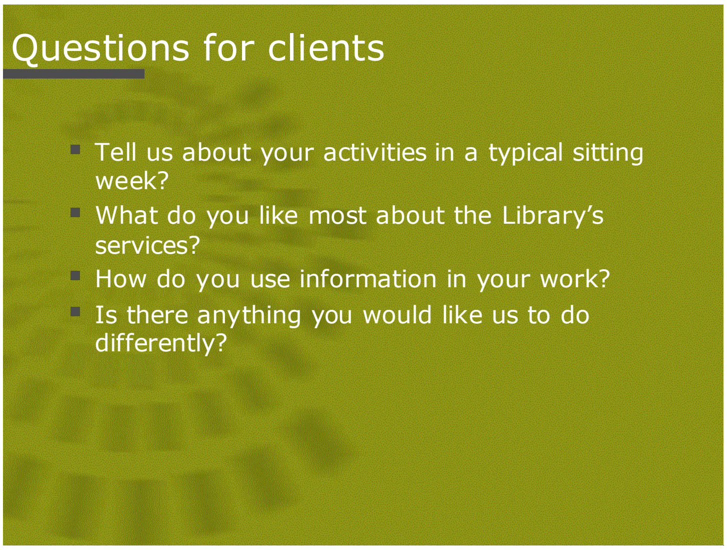

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· This is simple to do and very effective, and really challenges our assumptions about what MPs do with their time and with information.
Another interesting aspect of this exercise is that different staff hear different things,
However careful listening does tell us about the challenges in MPs lives and the potential opportunities we have to support them.
This year we are planning to invite some MPs to talk to us in the week before our strategic planning session, rather than during it, as we have done in the past.
There are 2 reasons for this:
1, because they are so interesting & useful we'd like as many staff as possible to hear them.
2, they play havoc with our strategic planning session timetable because the MPs are often late, or unavailable at the time we had allocated.

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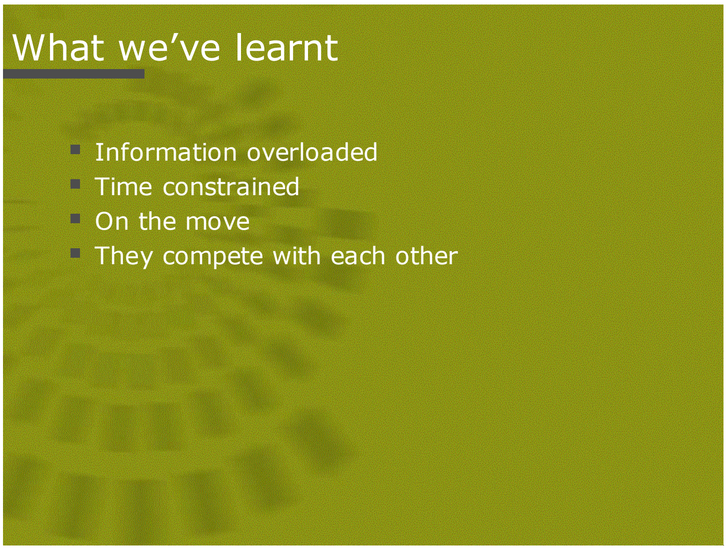

What we've learnt:

Our MPs are lucky if they spend an hour a day at their desk
Emails tend to be the first thing they spend time on so email delivery of services is GOOD
They are a very mobile workforce
Talking to people is nearly always a much higher priority than information is
The Westminster Parliamentary model is an adversarial one and MPs do compete – most obviously with other parties but also for more power within their own party.

Slide 19

Client feedback comes in various ways:

Anecdotal feedback is still extremely useful, if somewhat unscientific.

How many MPs know the names of staff members or the names of our products

Providing training on how to use electronic resources gives us a great opportunity to learn more about that particular client and get feedback from them. Training is usually one-to-one, in the client's own office.

NZers are not great complainers – so we need to listen very carefully to any adverse comments we do receive because there are likely to be more unspoken adverse views

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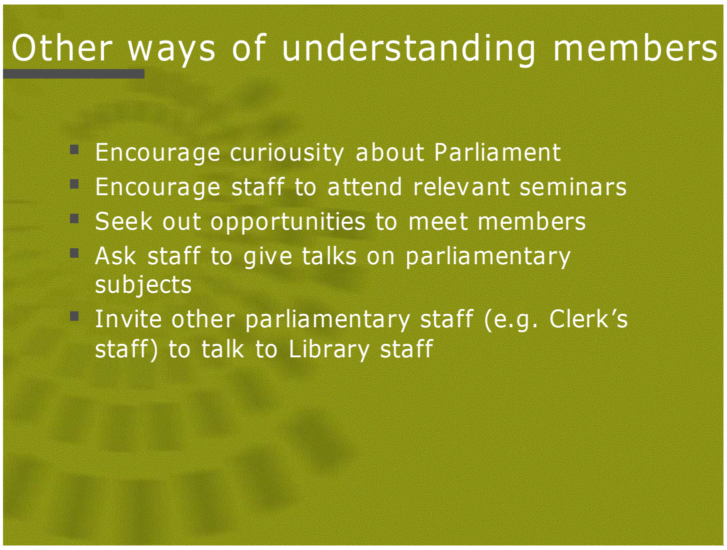

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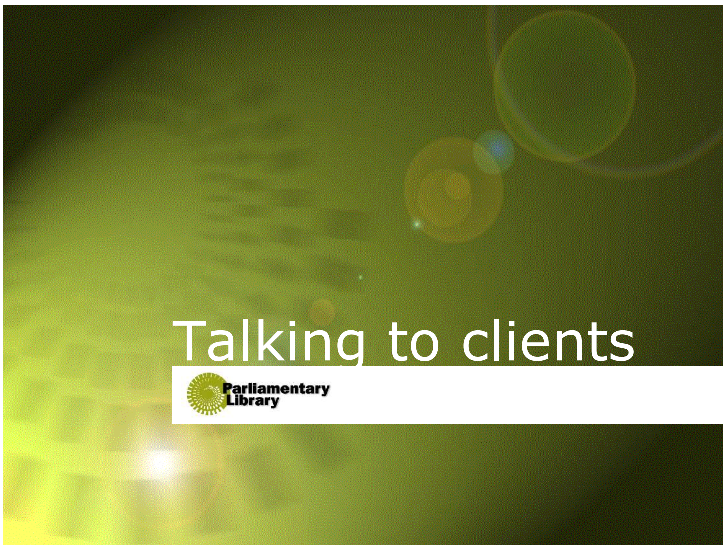
Anything we can do to encourage staff to deepen their knowledge of their clients and Parliament is useful.

Slide 21



We have found that in the online world it is very easy for the Library to evolve into a provider of virtual services and for the Library to become faceless. We have tried actively to combat that by seeking out opportunities to talk to our clients face to face.

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The Client Liaison Program. A core group of library staff is allocated a group of MPs who fit into their subject areas. These people are theoretically, a personal contact for MPs and their staff. These library staff are also responsible for rolling out to their clients information about new products and services.

However in reality, this hasn't gone according to plan. Staff have struggled to make contact with clients – and some of them have found it difficult to talk to MPs when they get there!

We know how we want this to work, so we're still experimenting with different ways and means; keeping track of what works, and taking note of what doesn't. What has worked?

- getting the right library staff involved…need people who are comfortable talking to high powered people.
- coordinator to keep the momentum going
- targets (deliver a job to a client; visit them once every six months)
- networking – taking opportunities to talk to client – whether it be bumping into them in the queue at Bellamys or talking to them at a function

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We've improved the quality and usefulness of our client events by briefing Library staff beforehand and collecting feedback afterwards.

We emphasise to staff that:
This is work not a party
There are Key messages to convey to clients
We match clients expected with Library staff – both in numbers and which staff attend
We go through the material we will be distributing

Slide 24

Another way we talk to clients is indirectly, via our 'branding'.

We needed to align our paper products with our online products, but it turned into a more far reaching project.

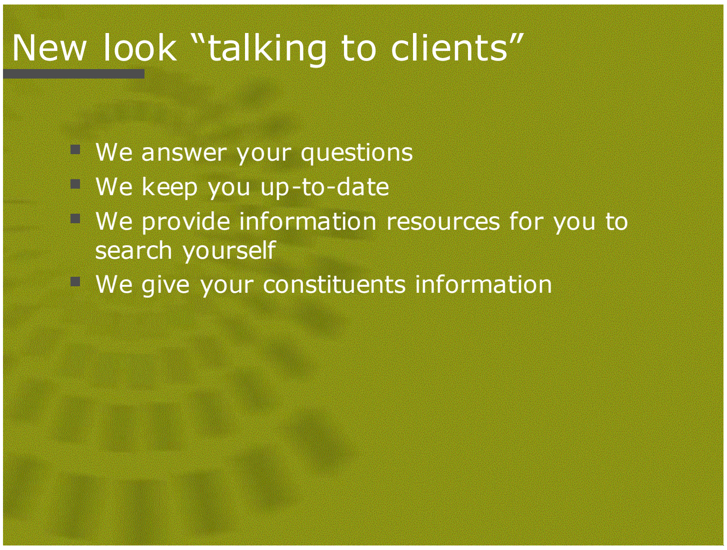
LOOK AT SLIDE

The most important communication mechanism we have is what our staff say to clients in their day to day encounters.

Slide 25

We are trying to move towards more direct relationships and much simpler language to explain our services & products
Some of this move was influenced by the website for the British Columbia Legislature which says that Parliament exists to:
Make the law
Authorise finance
Scrutinise government
If the work of a legislature as a whole can be described in 7 words how many should we need to describe the work of the Library.

Slide 26



These are the very succinct words we've come up with to describe our services to our clients:

READ SLIDE

Some other plans from our Identity Strategy include:
We will have more photographs of clients using our services
Any pictures of our staff will have them looking at the camera
We are investigating a variety of ways to work in a more face to face manner, for example delivering a job in person from time to time.

Slide 27

How do we know that we have our priorities about right and that we are expending the not inconsiderable resources that Parliamentary libraries have on the right things. It's a perennial question, and one that our funders are always particularly interested in. Parliamentary libraries traditionally get glowing reports from their users. We may be doing the wrong things wonderfully well, or there could be great gaps in our service offerings that we are not aware of.

What measures of success do you use?

Slide 28

Measuring the effectiveness of products is a good way of knowing how successful your services and products are for clients. The trick is finding the right things to measure that will give you good quality data and an accurate picture of what clients really think, without being too difficult to collect.
The Library has a number of measuring systems implemented to gauge uptake and use of products.
We can take our current awareness product, called Infocus, as an example.
The Infocus data sits on an Access database and the browser-based nature of Infocus allows for comprehensive reporting of Infocus use. Reports can be provided on who is using it and what type of content is being used.
By analyzing the level of use and content being used, we are able to see patterns of information use.
If we see a topic is getting high hit rates in Infocus that may prompt a subject specialist to write a research paper on the issue.
Reporting also allows the Library's Resource group to measure the use of the journal collection.
A simpler means of reporting on uptake includes requesting read receipts for emails sent out from the Library.
The Library's new electronic clipping service has no formal measure of its uptake, so Intermittently the Library will request read receipts, through Outlook.By requesting the read receipt we are able to see who is opening the email or who is deleting the email without reading it. This form of reporting does not measure actual use of the clippings itself, but it indicates the level of uptake by our clients. We know that the service is, at least, being opened.

To measure the exact level of usage by clients the Library relies on word of mouth.

Word of mouth is an inexact measure used for a lot of the Library's products.

Effective feedback from clients requires a good relationship between the Library and the rest of Parliament.

'Word of mouth' feedback is gathered either by email and formal or informal client contact.

Regular client liaison allows the Library to keep up to date with how clients use various applications and any change in their user requirements.

To ensure "word of mouth” is an effective measure of success you can't rely solely on ‘good’ library clients. Any client consultation should include feedback from both high and low end users.

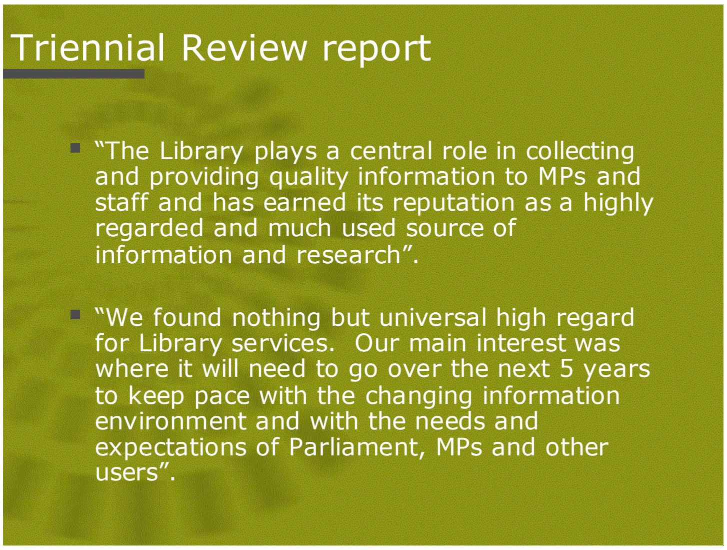
The Library also monitors the usage of its pull resources. We are able to accurately measure the hit rates of databases that the Library subscribes to.

The reporting systems in place report how often a specific database is been used and the types of information been retrieved from it.

The Library also conducts regular surveying of clients through annual Servqual surveys.

These are written questionnaires where random clients are selected to critique specific services of the Library. This is the standard method of evaluating the effectiveness of the Parliamentary Service, but doesn't usually provide us with very meaningful results for our purposes.

Slide 29



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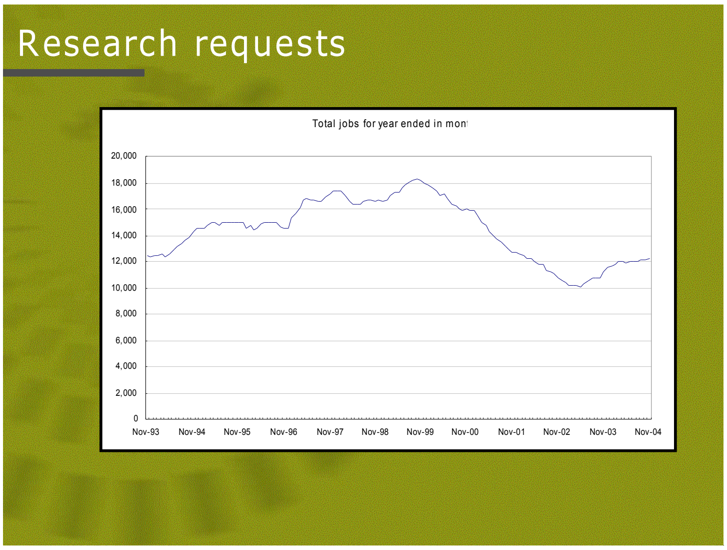
These are quotes from the Triennial Review, which is required by the Parliamentary Service Act and happens once in every parliamentary term. The Review looks at the services provided to Parliament, how effective those services are and whether those services are adequately resourced.

We can't complain too much about those comments!

Slide 30



Our Library is old, but our Research service is of relatively recent origin. There has been a statistician at the Parliamentary Library for more than 20 years, an economist for about 10 years, and a Bills Digest service for nearly 10 years. Six years ago the number of researchers was increased to five. Two years ago the Library was reorganised into subject teams and the number of researchers doubled to twelve.

In early 2003 we were delighted to arrest the decline in the number of research requests, a decline which we, like many other libraries across the world, had been observing. The number of requests is a crude but useful indicator of whether we are providing relevant services to our members of Parliament. We must be getting some things right, but what were the changes we made that have generated an increasing number of requests for us? What other changes could we make that would continue to increase our usefulness?

The most important factors contributing to ensuring that we provide the research that members of Parliament want are:

- Understanding their needs
- Staff capability
- Building trust

Slide 31

The area of what services and products we should deliver has required some challenging thinking in the past few years. Partly because while it is relatively easy to deliver new services, it seems to be particularly difficult to stop the old ones. And while some of our clients love online services, we probably all still have clients who would prefer everything in paper.
So I have just a few comments to offer in this area.

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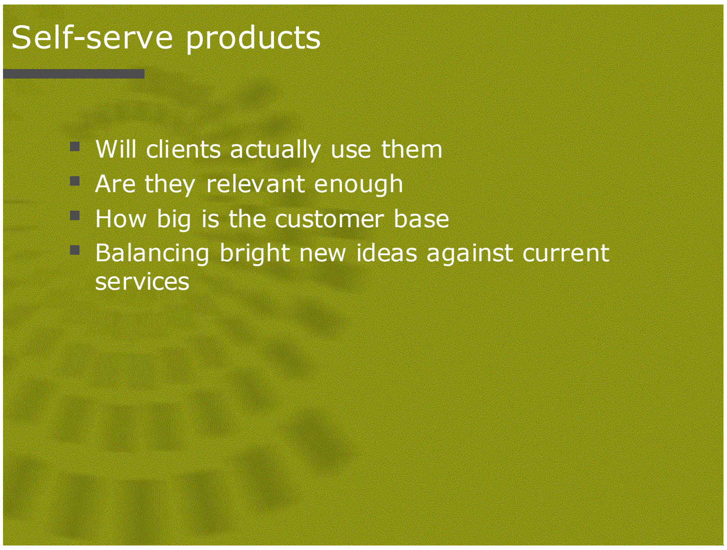
One of the most challenging areas in identifying gaps where new services could be provided is where there are spaces between the way the functions are currently organised in our Parliaments and no-one is responsible for the gap.
If members keep telling you about an information problem that exists – even where it isn't your accountability, then their perception is that it has something to do with you.
It doesn't mean that it must be your problem to solve, but it could be a good opportunity for you…
Another of the big challenges is in thinking about the strategic framework for evaluating new services against existing ones.
And here again we have encountered the greatest challenges in thinking about the areas where we have only partial responsibility, such as services to the public or history and heritage activities.

Slide 33



Coming back to a more operational level and the products that the Library is directly responsible for. We have a wide range of self serve products and there are certain aspects that need to be managed to ensure the products continue to meet needs.

We are working on a better evaluation tool to enable us to decide where to put our resources, time, effort, energy and money. The plan is to use this tool to evaluate existing products and services against new ones, in order to determine what takes priority.

There are complex issues in managing the value of particular products to their customer base. If there is a small user base of passionately committed customers how does that stack up against a large user base of luke-warm customers?

Parliamentary Service has introduced its own criteria for evaluating and prioritising new projects, but it doesn't mirror the criteria we in the Library would use.

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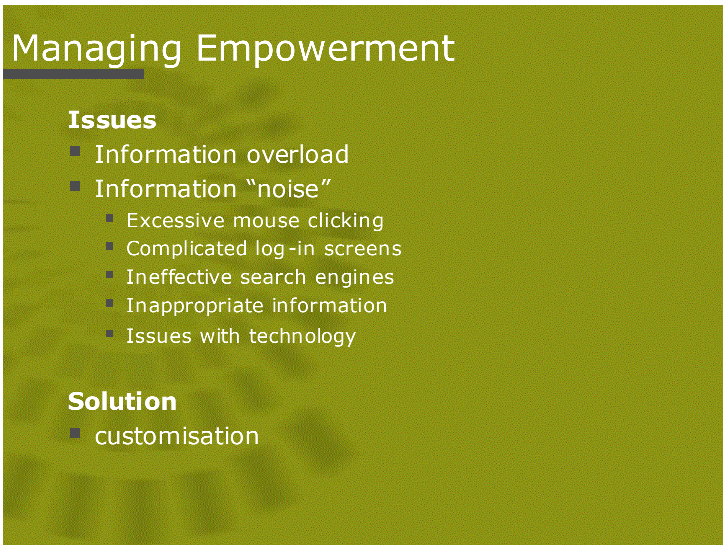

Just about all our clients report information overload as a major problem. Whenever we approach our clients about a new service or product they will cite their number one issue as information overload and the first thing they want to know is "how does this product reduce the amount of information I already receive".

Information Noise:

Information noise is disruptive factors that impair a users access to information. Noise can include:

§ Excessive mouse clicking to get to information
§ Complicated log-in screens and passwords
§ Ineffective search engines
§ Inappropriate information – when a user who has specific needs cannot access the right information until they have waded through a lot of unnecessary information.
§ Issues with technology - ensuring suitable technology to support applications
§ Conflicting standards (HTML v Plain Text) or systems (Lotus V Outlook)

There are strategies the Library implements to try and alleviate the problems associated with information overload.

The key method to reduce noise and information overload is to provide enhanced customization.

Customisation

Customisation is not simply a matter of better customer service, but of control over information.

The problem with customization is that in the past libraries had control over the flow of information. When fewer online resources were available to clients, Librarians' directly supplied information to clients. Librarians had control over the information. They knew its quality and what the clients demands were etc.

The variety of information sources available online tips the balance of control to the user. This can have a negative effect, as clients can feel inundated with information, creating a feeling of 'information overload'.

What the library is attempting to do is to allow a high degree of self-use by clients, but create tools that help clients manage all this information.

Libraries and information providers need to recognize information overload as a significant issue and develop strategies to reduce the flow of extra information.

This doesn't mean necessarily reducing the number of services or products we provide, but by ensuring these services efficiently and effectively meet user requirements and needs.

The Library provides customization through Infocus and some externally sourced databases.

Infocus allows clients to select areas of interest and then when Bulletins are published an individualized email is created including only the subject areas of interest to that specific client.

Some of the databases the Library subscribes to allow profiling to be set up. A client can establish a profile that indicates their areas of interest, the type of content they want and on what basis they require the information.

Because their information is delivered via email, customization also reduces the level of ‘noise’ when retrieving information.

It is also useful for people who find it difficult to use search engines.

A source of frustration for some Library users can be their inability to undertake the initial set-up required for customisation. Frustration can be another source of 'noise' and a barrier between client and use.

With good client liaison, the Library can recongise those clients who may be unable to do the initial start-up. By establishing the search for clients we can reduce this frustration.

Ensuring the products are relevant and meet needs
In our environment it is essential that the Library's resources and services meet and continues to meet the needs of its clients. To achieve this the Library has to establish good relationships with the rest of parliament.

Strategies to achieve this include:
§ Knowing the clients
§ Listening to clients and thinking about what they want
§ Targeting key user groups
§ Matching the right product to the right client
§ Establishing relationships
§ Committing to training
§ Listening to all feedback

If a good relationship exisits clients feel more inclined to share ideas and feedback about existing products and to suggest new ideas or innovations.

The Library profits by knowing that a suitable rapport exists in which new ideas or innovations can be discussed, tested and implemented.

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Here are some of the things we are currently developing. Some are due to be launched in the next few weeks. Some we are applying for extra money to complete. I won't discuss them in detail now, but feel free to ask me later about any you are interested in.

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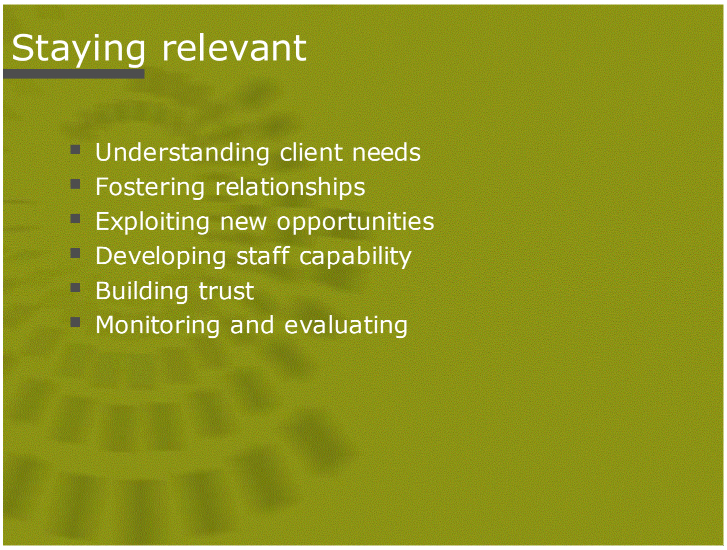
Slide 37



I'll finish by stressing the challenge we all face to stay relevant to our clients.
With continual development in information technology and ever expanding options for clients to get their information elsewhere, the challenge of remaining relevant is very real.
It requires us all to be on the ball,
monitoring our environments,
keeping up with new developments,
understanding our clients,
always looking for new opportunities,
and developing our staff.

It's what makes our jobs so interesting, challenging and worthwhile and I do look forward to lots of interesting discussions with you all over the next few days.