Oireachtas Library & Research Service
2006 – 2014:
achieving and learning against a
backdrop of economic boom to bust

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Format & content

• Who we are & what we do
• L&RS achievements 2006 - 2014
• Surviving the recession
• 9 lessons learned in 9 years
• Conclusion
Who we are

- Bicameral
- 226 members
- 21 committees
- Oireachtas Commission runs the Houses
- 400 civil service staff (Houses of the Oireachtas Service)

- L&RS positioned in the Parliamentary Services Division
- 30 staff (17 researchers, 5 librarians, 5 admin, 3 managers)
What we do - vision

We contribute to a well-informed Parliament by delivering….

• Expert information and research services which are impartial, value-added, responsive and accessible

• Professional information and records management services.
What we do - services

Research/Information
- Legislative analysis
- Proactive publications
- Individual research /reference
- Article/book requests
- Current awareness
- Info skills training
- Press monitoring

Corporate/Statutory
- Records management
- Freedom of information
- Documents laid
library/research function has been transformed over last nine years and is on a par with other relevant parliaments in the breadth of services provided to Members…

Value for Money review of L&RS 2013
...verdict on investment

L&RS delivers its services with lower staffing levels and resources than most equivalent parliamentary library and research services.

Value for Money review of L&RS 2013
Achievements 2006 - 2014

1. Integrated L&RS established & VFM
2. Pushed original boundaries - info management role
3. Expanded research/Information portfolio (legislative analysis service)
4. Preferred research provider to Committees
5. Introduced eDocs
6. Online public access to historical collections
The transformation

2013: Historical collections and Docs Laid
Economic boom to bust

National indicators
- Unemployment up: 4.5% (2007) to 15% (2011)
- Govt spending down by 16% (2008–2012)
- Govt moratorium on civil service recruitment (2009)
- Pay reductions, longer hours for all civil service staff

Oireachtas indicators
- 2009: 438 staff, €26.08m annual budget
- 2013: 389 staff, €23.87m annual budget

Focus on:
- Reducing expenditure
- Reducing staff numbers
- More efficient ways of working
L&RS surviving the recession

**Proactive approach**
- ‘Critical mass’ business case
- Reduced no. of admin staff
- Restructured
- Restatement of services
- Reduced non-pay costs

**Robust defence**
- Know value of services
- Know value of expenditure
- Strong response to all reviews
9 lessons in 9 years

1. Be prepared to ‘start again’ in an economic crisis

Start again, rethink:
- Role
- Structure
- Services

Head of Library and Research Services
2. Building credibility can help to obtain additional resources

You can trust us to get the new project done (but we need more resources)!

L&RS
9 lessons in 9 years

3. Be visible in the parliament’s strategic plan
4. Align your services with day-to-day parliamentary business
5. Work out how best to engage with Members…
   and keep engaging with them

You can’t do without us!

L&RS
9 lessons in 9 years

6. There is no perfect staffing structure
7. Integration of librarians and researchers can work but needs to be nurtured
8. Recruit the best and brightest staff
9. Stay connected: learn from other parliamentary libraries… but also from other libraries and research institutions.

*How can we improve what we do?*

L&RS
Conclusion

- Recession strategies seem to have worked for us
- Be proactive - don’t wait for others to make cuts to your service
- Leaner organisations have more chance of surviving & expanding
- We remain open to change-what we do, how we do it
- Keep core values; Impartiality, client focus, excellence in service

Thank you for your attention
Interested in hearing more about eDocs?

See our colleague at IFLA

John McDonough, Head of Collections, L&RS

“A roof over their heads” Government documents, the parliament…developing eDocs Laid, 21 August 2014

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