Slide 1 – Welcome slide

Good afternoon everyone, my name is Sonia Hornery and I am a Member of the Legislative Assembly of NSW. I have represented my constituency of Wallesend since 2007, which is a western suburb of Newcastle on the north east coast of NSW. It covers an area of roughly 117 square kilometres with a population of just over 75,000.

Slide 2 – Introduction

My topic today is 'Better Dissemination of Information' and 'Towards User-Friendly Information Infrastructure'. Access to accurate, timely, impartial, confidential, quality information and research is a fundamental part of the democratic process. This information can be delivered to Members of Parliament from a variety of sources, many of which change on a frequent basis to keep pace with the new technologies that seem to emerge at great speed. Indeed even the term 'infrastructure' could be considered out of date as delivery moves to cyber space.

I think we all appreciate that Parliament is an information intensive and information demanding institution. Organising, managing, distributing and preserving information is fundamental to its constitutional mandate. To ensure that Parliament, the Members and the public are properly informed in today's fast-evolving environment it is important that there is a comprehensive approach to managing, identifying and providing access to these resources.

Slide 3 – From Books to the Cloud
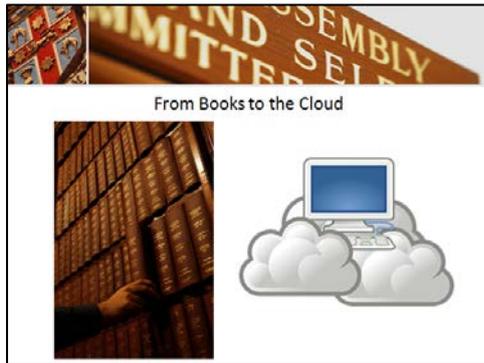
The title of this presentation uses the term 'Information architecture' – if you 'Google' this term you get many different returns and definitions. So I've picked just one… Wikipedia defines information architecture as

'…the structural design of shared information environments; organizing and labelling websites, intranets, online communities and software to support usability and findability. Typically, it involves a model or concept of information that is used and applied to activities which require explicit details of complex information systems. These activities include library systems and database development.'

So I've summarised this to these key points, effective information architecture requires:

- Organisation;
- Labelling;
- Navigation; and
- Search.

Well it's a bit late in the day for all that jargon , so I am going to try and make this presentation more about my experiences of how I, as a Member of the Legislative Assembly of NSW interact with information and the infrastructure it operates on.

I think before we can look forward we need to quickly reflect on where we have come from, or indeed in part where we still are, as in NSW paper still plays an important part in the way we disseminate the information. Information is still contained in physical documents and books form the history of the Parliament and contain the precedents and records of the House. Life, we might suggest would have been much simpler in the early years of the NSW Parliament when the Clerks and Members would refer to the bound volumes of Hansard, the Votes and Proceedings and the Notice Papers. However, it is not hard to identify the limitations of this environment, with access to information limited and production slow and costly.

The advent of computers and desktop publishing enabled information to be shared across networks through shared drives and then onwards through emails and websites. Information then became global with websites becoming an important space for Parliaments to publish large volumes of information including its House Papers and Hansard. Now with the video streaming of proceedings from the House, the watching audience enjoys experiencing live one of the most adversarial Chambers in Australia. Now and into the future technology based on cloud infrastructure will enable the Parliament to continue to improve its website and the resources available to Members and the public through a dynamic design for an enhanced experience when using mobile devices.

I will talk about the great advancements in mobility and accessibility later; however, it is interesting to note that many of our processes in NSW still require the submission of physical copies to start the process. This includes petitions, questions on notice, and notices of motions. Relevant information is then keyed into databases and published on the Parliament's website.

Slide 4 – Dissemination and Representation

One of the key roles as a Member is to represent your constituents in the Parliament and to raise local issues on their behalf. It is important therefore that the information architecture in place supports the flow of information and facilitates this representation. There are a number of different ways a Member can 'represent' which demonstrates the complex nature of the information systems currently in place in NSW.

These include:

- Notices of Motions;
- Community Recognition Statements;
- Private Members Statements;
- Questions on Notice;
- Petitions; and
- Making speeches on bills and motions.

Slide 5 – Community Recognition Statement

An excellent example of how we represent our electorate is through Community Recognition Statements. I would just like to do a quick case study and show a very short video to demonstrate these. They are given orally in the House and captured in Hansard. First introduced in February 2013 by sessional order, these 60 second statements are a great way to acknowledge achievements of local groups or individuals who have done great work or to congratulate them on specific events or honours. I have recognised charity work, retirements and sporting achievements to name just a few of the topics covered. There is time set aside in the routine of business for these statements to be made and the following video is a clip of a statement I gave on Wednesday 16 November regarding Heaton Public School, in my electorate. (PLAY VIDEO)

Slide 6 – Q&A Tracking and Notices Tracking

Many of the processes currently in place start with the submission of signed papers, including petitions, notice of motions and questions on notice. These are then transferred into their relevant databases for publication onto the website. Once on the website, Members and the public are able to track the progress relating to an answer to a question or whether a notice is due to come up for debate in the Chamber. The flexibility to be able to filter this information by a variety of different metadata has made the information more accessible. At this stage the Business Paper and the Question and Answer Paper are still produced in their traditional formats. A new tracking system is due to be implemented in early 2017, when a Ministerial Portal is implemented. While only available to Ministers and their staff, it will enable them to log in and track the business that they are responsible for providing responses for. This one stop shop for questions on notice, petitions and responses to committee recommendations will assist Ministers and the Table Office in managing their Parliamentary business more effectively.

Slide 7 – Hansard
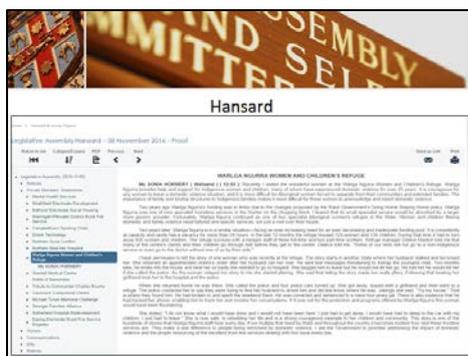
The publication of Hansard on the Parliament's website has recently undergone a major upgrade and now looks very different, with the publication of fragments of speeches, as well as a daily XML and PDF version of the full transcript. The system is a metadata based system and it enables Hansard to be published progressively during the day, the fragments are published within 3 hours of

the proceedings in the House. I also want to highlight some of the technical features that have recently been developed; Hansard now has the following features:

1. The Hansard by Member page on the website provides access to current and former members' Hansard speeches in HTML and PDF back to December 1991.
2. Pages automatically scroll to the start of the relevant members' speech when accessed from the Hansard by Member page or from Hansard links on a member's web profile page.
3. Member's speeches, which can be easily accessed from the website, (Hansard by Member) are numbered in reverse chronological order for quick reference and counting.
4. The left hand side table of contents dynamically expands to provide better context about the section of the full day's proceedings currently being viewed; and
5. Advanced Hansard search has been enhanced to include more date range options including current Parliament, last Parliament, current year, or last year.

All of this has been possible with a move to a fully integrated Microsoft infrastructure, with a SQL database and SharePoint platforms. This is a major ongoing project in the NSW Parliament which is undertaking the decommissioning of its outdated Lotus Notes databases. The transition from Lotus Notes to SharePoint will continue into 2017 and has involved a great collaboration between all the departments. The new architecture will enable greater flexibility and integration of systems going forward with single input of data and sharing of data across the Houses.

Slide 8 – Influence of Social Media

We now live in an information age where the use of smartphones and the increased use of the internet and social media mean that people now expect their information instantaneously. News and events are streamed 24/7 via the internet on websites and social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. The public have the ability to critically assess the information, as

and when it is happening, make immediate judgements on it and then decide if they want to continue to view or follow it. The public also have the expectation that they can access information and communicate electronically with multiple institutions; this includes the same connectivity and responsiveness from their democratic institutions – which includes Parliament and government.

For me the prevalence of social media in politics has made elected representatives more accountable and accessible to voters. The ability to publish content and broadcast it to potentially thousands of people instantaneously allows me to interact with people in real time and at almost no cost. In summary, the main benefits of social media are:

1. Transforming public perceptions and maximise awareness;

2. Drive citizen engagement with limited resources and budget;

3. Being able to test your messaging and analyse results; and then

4. Improve your services / delivery if required.

The move to cloud based infrastructure has enabled our world to become mobile. Now I may be speaking to an audience that all know what cloud computing is all about, but having already mentioned it a few times in this presentation I thought I would be useful to explain what the term actually means. So rather than hear it from me I went to YouTube and found this short video for you to watch. Now, whilst it's a sales pitch and talks about business systems, I think it gives a very good quick over view of what we mean by 'in the cloud' (PLAY VIDEO)

Slide 9 – What is Cloud Computing?

Slide 10 – Mobility, accessibility and BYO

So, to summarise, Cloud computing is a type of Internet-based computing that provides shared computer processing resources and data to computers and other devices on demand. This infrastructure has enabled us all to have the 'mobile offices' that we all now take for granted. I suspect if I did a quick experiment and asked you all – 'how many of you have a smart phone and were checking your work emails while you were here at the conference?' the majority of you would put your hands up. We now have the luxury (or not!) of being on top of the issues wherever you are, including the tropical paradise of the Cook Islands. Indeed the mobile phone is a vital tool for today's Member of Parliament in assisting us to carry out our work. As well as connecting to emails and social media, bespoke apps make accessing and using mobile devices simpler for the end users who can have single click access to many programs designed to add value to the working environment.

I hope this has given you a flavour of what is happening in NSW which I think demonstrates how user friendly infrastructure is being applied in our Parliament. Internet-based computing allows our IT departments to deploy new technologies that provide all users with the flexibility to work when they want, where they want and with devices that they can carry anywhere. Systems are being designed to integrate and data is being shared between systems, leading to improved information dissemination.