

Part 3

Parliamentary Library

Parliamentary Librarian's review

Introduction

The Australian Parliamentary Library's services are established under the statutory office of the Parliamentary Librarian with the following functions¹:

- (a) to provide high quality information, analysis and advice to Senators and Members of the House of Representatives in support of their parliamentary and representational roles; and
- (b) to undertake such other responsibilities within the joint Department, consistent with the function set out in paragraph (a), as are conferred in writing on the Parliamentary Librarian by the Secretary of the joint Department with the approval of the Presiding Officers.

Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library

The Library Committee membership at 30 June 2010 was:

- The Hon. Dick Adams MP (Joint Chair)
- Senator Russell Trood (Joint Chair)
- Senator Guy Barnett
- Senator Catryna Bilyk
- Senator Doug Cameron
- Senator Steve Fielding
- Senator Steve Hutchins
- Mr Russell Broadbent MP
- The Hon. Mark Butler MP (to September 2009)
- Ms Sharryn Jackson MP
- The Hon. David Hawker MP
- Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP (to May 2010)
- Mr Daryl Melham MP (from March 2010)
- Mr Robert Oakeshott MP (from June 2010)
- Mr Graham Perrett MP

The Library Committee met on 10 September and 19 November 2009, and 11 March and 17 June 2010. The Committee discussed:

1. *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* section 38B (1).

- (a) additional funding of \$500,000 in the 2010–11 Budget, and again in 2013–14, “to enhance the capacity of the Parliamentary Library to assist non-Government parties in developing policies in the lead-up to Federal elections”²;
- (b) models for a Parliamentary Budget Office;
- (c) client confidentiality;
- (d) the 42nd Parliament Parliamentary Library client assessment undertaken by Uncommon Knowledge;
- (e) online mapping services including interactive PDFs and files for use with Google Earth;
- (f) the Australian Parliamentary Fellowship;
- (g) digitisation of Hansard; and
- (h) the revised Parliamentary Library’s Statement of Client Service and Operating Policy and Electronic Media Monitoring Service.

The study found that clients highly value the Library’s services. Despite this high level of regard and satisfaction, the assessment identified some areas for improvement. The key areas to address were identified as:

- (a) achieving greater consistency and quality of service in responses to individual client requests;
- (b) improving, if possible, the timeliness of Library publications;
- (c) responding more effectively to all three stages of the life cycle of members of parliament—new, medium and long-term;
- (d) continuing to improve the resources available to clients at their desktop (or mobile devices);
- (e) improving the availability of transcripts and broadcast material; and
- (f) improving communication mechanisms bearing in mind the pressures on the time of clients.

Achievements 2009-10

The Library’s vision is to have an informed Parliament supported by a Library that delivers services to meet client needs. Achievements are described against the Library’s strategic priorities.

Create the 21st century Parliamentary Library and research services

The Parliamentary Library assesses the needs of clients once in each parliament. This enables existing services to be reviewed, changes in information needs to be identified and planning for any new services to provide information, analysis and advice to the Parliament.

For the 42nd Parliament, an independent consultant was engaged to undertake a study based on interviews with a sample of Senators and Members. The report was provided to the Library Committee and Library staff in early 2010.

Communication with clients is important to ensure that clients are aware of all services in order for the Library to provide relevant quality analysis and advice. This year the Library implemented a number of web2.0 services for improved communication with clients. A Twitter feed was launched in October 2009 to provide short, immediate notification of new Library general briefs and publications. The Library has 634 followers and 277 tweets have been published. A Facebook page was launched in June 2010 also to provide information about new publications. Both were created using the Library’s RSS feed.

Knowledge transfer to Parliament

Analysis and advice services to support the Parliament fluctuate in demand according to the parliamentary cycle. However, longer-term changes in demand have been apparent as more services and content are provided to the desktop on a self-help basis and use of these services continues to rise each year. Individual client requests for information, research and analysis saw approximately a 13% reduction in the number of enquiries in comparison to the previous year. In contrast, there has been a significant increase in client use of the digital collection, of library publications and databases.

2. Australian Government, ‘Part 2: Expense measures’, *Budget measures: budget paper no. 2: 2010-2011*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2010, p.282

Connect clients with information

A major service strategy is to increase the amount of the Library's collection available online, including content created by the Library's researchers, to meet the changing needs of Senators and Members. Resources need to be easily accessible to those in electorate offices as well as those in Parliament House.

The use of the digital collections continues to grow with a steady trend upwards continuing in 2009-10. Use of the print collection decreased by more than 15% this year compared to the previous year.

Digitisation of material in the Library's collection, both contemporary and historic collections, remains a priority, although it must be managed within available resources. *Battlelines* by the Hon. Tony Abbott, MP, was digitised to provide access to meet demand and also for preservation purposes (as a back-up for potential loss of heavily used material). This was the first book from the Parliamentary Authors collection to be digitised. The Parliamentary Authors collection commenced in 1971 and comprises works written by current and former Members of Parliament.

Support the Parliament's engagement with the community and democracy

Access to the record of the Parliament is vital for community awareness and engagement with the Parliament. The Library has assisted in a project to digitise Hansard from 1901 to 1980 to make the complete record of the Parliament available on the Parliament's website. Digitising this material enables the community to access parliamentary materials regardless of time or location, and Senators and Members to access additional documents for their parliamentary work.

The Library is committed to supporting parliamentary libraries in the region, particularly in Pacific countries and in emerging democracies. This year the Library provided:

- (a) support for visits; and
- (b) support for neighbouring parliaments through training, website creation and library resources.

Use technology to support better services

The authoring system for the Library's databases in ParInfo Search for press clippings, press releases, Library publications, articles and political party documents was redeveloped. The new system, which will automatically select and categorise material, is in operation. It will result in press clippings being available by 8.30 a.m. to all clients and more efficient delivery of the service.

The Library is piloting acquisition and use of e-books and has acquired a Kindle e-book reader and its first title. The first title was only available electronically and could not be purchased in print. The Kindle is available for use by clients.

Strategic and Workforce Planning

The number of ongoing staff leaving the Library showed a slight increase on the previous year. Eleven ongoing staff left in 2009-10, a separation rate of 7.3%. This compares well with the separation rate of ongoing Library staff for the previous two years—7.2% of ongoing staff left the Library in 2008-09 and 11.6% in 2007-08. Greater use of part time work in some work areas, such as the Law and Bills Digest section, has helped to reduce turnover.

The main reasons for separation from the Library during 2009-10 were transfer/promotion (5 staff, 45% of separations), age retirements (3 staff, 27% of separations) and resignation (2 staff, 18% of separations). One staff member retired on invalidity grounds.

Parliamentary Library overview

Office of the Parliamentary Librarian

The Office of the Parliamentary Librarian comprises the Parliamentary Librarian, an Executive Assistant and the Director, Client Relations.

Relations with clients are managed by the Director, Client Relations, who provides orientation and training services for Senators, Members, their staff and other parliamentary staff.

Research Branch

The Research Branch (RB) provides information, research and analytical services to Senators and Members and their staff, parliamentary committees and the parliamentary departments to support parliamentary or representational duties (services are not provided to constituents or for commercial purposes).

The range of services provided includes individually commissioned information, research and advisory services for clients and research publications.

Information Access Branch

The Information Access Branch (IAB) develops and manages access to print and electronic resources. These resources include books, serials, information databases, electronic publications developed both within the department and acquired externally, off-air recordings, transcripts and related materials.

Access to services is also provided through the Parliamentary Library's Central Enquiry Point and Ground Floor Reading Room.

IAB staff select, acquire, catalogue, index and provide access to collection material. They are also responsible for the publishing requirements of the Department of Parliamentary Services.

Report on performance

Program 1—Library Services

Introduction

Program 1 aims to provide an effective knowledge centre for the Parliament through the provision of information, analysis and advice. These services are provided through two subprograms:

- (a) Subprogram 1.1—Research services. These services include responding to requests from individual parliamentary clients for information and research, and the production of general distribution briefs and publications; and
- (b) Subprogram 1.2—Information access services. Information services are provided to the Library's clients by acquiring and providing access to information resources, through the selection, processing and indexing of material for library and media data bases in ParlInfo, and by publishing print and electronic works.

Performance is assessed using indicators that cover quality, quantity and price. Indicators, performance results and relevant comments are shown against each of the subprograms.

CASE STUDY—PARLIAMENTARY HANDBOOK



Martin Lumb's time with the Parliamentary Library stretches back to 1983, and his integral role in the production of the Parliamentary Handbook began 3 years later.

Regarded as an institution within the institution, the Handbook is used as a reference source for those seeking biographical details on parliamentarians, and historical information on the Parliament. It is also an evolving publication, with the first electronic version in 1988 followed by a partial version on the World Wide Web in 1995 and the full edition in 1999. There are now two versions; the hard copy edition, incorporating information provided by parliamentarians and distributed around a year after each parliament is formed; and the online version, which is being regularly updated by Library staff.

One aspect of the publication Martin looks back upon with amazement is the constant technological change.

When he began, the use of microfiche was cutting-edge, and he has seen the rise and fall of five-inch floppy disks as preferred media. 'Technology is now moving so quickly that no two handbooks are now produced the same way', he comments.

Martin also notes the expectations of timeliness have changed considerably, often driven by the dynamics of an electronic environment. A link to the online version of the handbook is available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/Library/handbook/index.htm>

Figure 3.1—Subprogram 1.1—Research services—Deliverables

Deliverable	Measure	Performance		
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Individual client requests	Percentage of primary clients (Senators' and Members' offices, including Ministers' offices) using the service (target: 98%)	100%	100%	100%
	Number of individual client requests (target: 16,000)	14,907	17,772	15,476
Self-service requests	Number of online uses of the Parliamentary Library's publications, including the Parliamentary Handbook and General Briefs and Publications, through ParInfo and the Internet (target: 6,000,000)	4,956,922	5,990,657	5,555,192 ³
General briefs and publications	Number of general briefs and publications produced (target: 220)	231	280	285
Client training and seminars	Attendance at training courses and events (e.g. Vital Issues seminars) (target: 500 attendees).	723	594	550

3. A Denial of Service attack in February resulted in problems for the statistical reports on use of web services. (See 'Fraud control' under Part 6)

Subprogram 1.1—Research services

Indicator—General briefs and publications

Indicator—Client requests

During 2009-10, consistent with the previous years, all of the Library's primary clients (Senators' and Members' offices, including Ministers' offices) used the client request service at least once—exceeding the target of 98%.

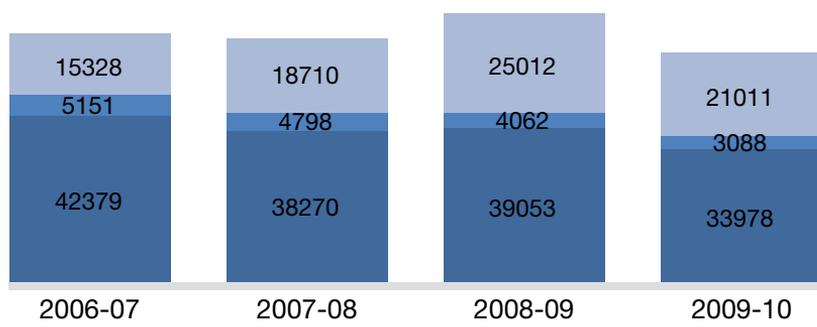
There was a significant decrease in the number of direct client requests—approximately 13%—compared to the previous year. The target for this measure (16,000) was not met. There was a significant increase in use of library publications and online collections.

The number of Library publications this year was within 2% of the previous year with a small increase in total numbers. A 5% increase in the number of Bills Digests published reflected the legislative program. Publications produced, other than Digests, reduced in number from 97 last year to 94 in 2009-10.

Figure 3.2—Subprogram 1.1—Research services—Deliverables

Deliverable	Measure	Performance		
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Cost of research services	Average cost per individual client request	\$446	\$462	\$442
	Average direct cost per self-service client request (staff time only)	\$0.60	\$0.53	\$0.61
	Total cost of subprogram 1.1	\$11.272m	\$11.6m	\$12.16m

Figure 3.3—Distribution of client service hours by service type



- Publications
- Parliamentary committees, parliamentary departments and reciprocal arrangements
- Commissioned services for Senators and Members

Figure 3.4—Subprogram 1.1—Research services—Key Performance Indicators

Key performance Indicator	Measure	Performance		
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10 ⁴
Client satisfaction with requests and general briefs and publications (GBPs)	High level of customer satisfaction (target: 90%)	89%	93%	-
	Client service delivered to timeliness service standard (target: 95%)	97%	97%	96%
	Number of complaints from clients	1	4	0

Indicator-Client satisfaction⁴ with requests and general briefs and publications (GBPs)

As reported last year, client satisfaction with the Library’s service in the 42nd Parliament rose by 4%, based on the 2009 DPS Customer Satisfaction survey.

Subprogram 1.2—Information access services

The services contributing to this subprogram includes:

- (a) the Library collection;
- (b) online full-text content such as news clippings;
- (c) media services—desktop access to television and radio;
- (d) commercial databases; and
- (e) client services.

4. DPS conducts a customer satisfaction survey once for each Parliament. The survey conducted for the 42nd Parliament was in 2008-09.

Figure 3.5—Subprogram 1.2—Information access services—Deliverables

Deliverable	Measure	Performance		
		2007–08	2008-09	2009-10
Material added to Library databases	Number of items added to the Library's Electronic Media Monitoring Service and to ParInfo databases (target: 140,000)	167,537	159,129	161,203
Material added to Library collection	Number of new titles (books and serials) added to the Library's catalogue (target: 4,200).	4,630	4,827	4,275
	Percentage of titles (books and serials) in Library's collection available to clients online in full text (target: 30%).	22.2%	23.8%	26%
Use of the Library collection and databases	Use of the collections and databases, including loans from the collection, radio and television programs from the Electronic Media Monitoring Service, and from ParInfo databases (target: 3,800,000 searches)	2,544,500	3,754,064	4,447,977 ⁵

5. A Denial of Service attack on ParInfo Search in February and March resulted in problems for the statistical reports on use of web services for February and March 2010.

Indicator—Material added to Library databases

The number of media resources added to the Library's databases went up slightly in 2009-10; this is typical of a pre-election year when there is an increase in the volume of press clippings published and selected that reflect press coverage of pre-election issues.

Indicator—Material added to Library collection

The Library's collection of books and journals is constantly updated in accordance with the Library's Collection Development Policy. The Library aims to keep the collection at around 115,000 monograph titles.

Indicator—Use of the Library's collection and databases

Increased use of Library databases

Clients access the Library's databases through ParlInfo Search. Many external commercial databases to which the Library subscribes are available through the Library's Intranet and the Senators' and Members' Services Portal.

Electronic Media Monitoring Service (EMMS)

The Electronic Media Monitoring Service (EMMS) was made available to clients in 2004. In 2009-10, IAB has worked within the broader DPS environment to let a contract to replace the EMMS system and migrate existing digital content.

Figure 3.6—Subprogram 1.2—Information access services—Deliverables

Deliverable	Measure	Performance		
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Cost of information access services	Average cost per item added to the Library's collection	\$376	\$273	\$340
	Average cost per item added to the Library's databases	\$20.39	\$17.62	\$18.68
	Average cost per use of the Library's databases and collection	\$1.91	\$1.82	\$1.69
	Total cost of subprogram 1.2	\$10.246m	\$10.48m	\$10.7m

Figure 3.7—Monthly usage of Library and Media Databases in ParlInfo from 2007-08 to 30 June 2010

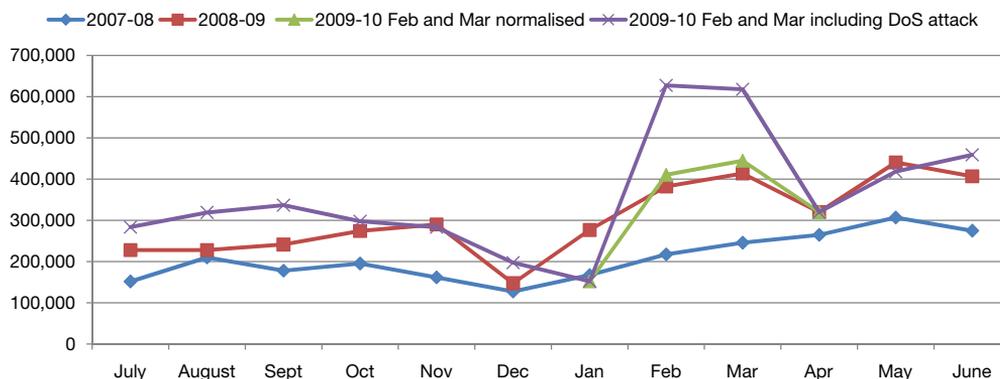


Figure 3.8—Subprogram 1.2—Information access services—Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	Measure	Performance		
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Client satisfaction with information access services	High level of client satisfaction (target: 90%)	89%	93%	- ⁶
	New titles (books and serials) added to the Library's catalogue within timeliness service standard (target: 90%).	90%	82%	75%
	New items added to the Library's Electronic Media Monitoring Service and the ParlInfo newspaper clippings database within timeliness service standard (target: 95%)	90%	94%	98.5%
	Number of complaints from clients	0	0	0

Indicator-Client satisfaction with information access services

The timeliness service standard for new resources measures the percentage of titles added to the Library's collections and databases, including media resources, within defined times.

In 2009-10, the target for adding media resources to the Library's databases was exceeded while the target for adding material to the Library's catalogue was not met for routine material due to staff shortages. All urgent titles and titles requested specifically by clients were added to the catalogue within the service level standard for priority items.

6. DPS conducts a customer satisfaction survey once for each Parliament. The survey conducted for the 42nd Parliament was in 2008-09.

Parliamentary Library Financial Report⁷

	2008-09 Actuals	2009-10 Actuals
Income		
Appropriations	15,075,541	16,460,724
Depreciation expense	1,259,446	1,472,225
Direct expenditure		
Total Salaries	12,530,196	12,717,466
Research Branch	8,042,101	8,160,929
Information Access Branch	4,160,823	4,180,424
Office of the Parliamentary Librarian	327,272	376,113
Other employee expenses	141,674	312,608
Staff training, travel and related expenses	261,066	205,733
Collection (information resources)	1,642,827	1,733,075
Collection (purchases using depreciation funds)	675,259	575,308
Other expenses	296,952	237,531
Asset maintenance (software licences/maintenance)	226,657	357,569
Total expenditure (including expenditure from asset replacement funds)	15,774,632	16,139,290
Total cash expenditure (excluding expenditure from asset replacement funds)	15,099,372	15,563,982
Summary		
Office of the Parliamentary Librarian	394,106	440,501
Research Branch	8,331,400	8,554,279
Information Access Branch	7,049,125	7,144,510
Total	15,774,632	16,139,290

7. The figures presented in the expenditure section of this table are all cash figures and represent the direct cash outgoings attributable to the Parliamentary Library.

Staffing (full time equivalents)	2008-09	2009-10
Research Branch	79.5	77.15
Information Access Branch	57.5	55.26
Office of the Parliamentary Librarian	2.3	2.81
Total	139.3	135.22