

Procedure Office

Output Group 3

Provision of advisory and drafting services to non-government senators.

Provision of procedural advice and training to senators, staff, public servants and officials from other parliaments both within Australia and overseas.

Provision of secretariat support to the Regulations and Ordinances Committee and Scrutiny of Bills Committee.

Provision of parliamentary information services to the community.

Provision of parliamentary education services to schools, teachers and students.

Provision of policy advice and secretariat support for the maintenance and development of inter-parliamentary relations, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union, overseas conferences and delegations program for senators.

	Performance indicators	Performance results
Quality	<p>The degree of satisfaction of the President, Deputy President, committee members and senators, as expressed through formal and informal feedback mechanisms, with the quality and timeliness of advice and support and the achievement of key tasks.</p> <p>Procedural advice is accurate and covers all foreseeable eventualities.</p> <p>Amendments and bills are accurate and legally sound.</p> <p>Public information and parliamentary research is accurate, comprehensive and targeted for particular needs.</p> <p>Education Centre teaching and other PEO projects accurately reflect the parliament and its work.</p>	<p>The 2009 survey of senators revealed high levels of satisfaction with the group's outputs. This was supported by consistently favourable feedback from the group's ongoing evaluation processes.</p> <p>Senators continued to acknowledge the accuracy and value of procedural advice.</p> <p>Legislative amendments and bills were prepared to the satisfaction of senators.</p> <p>Public information resources were updated as required to reflect arrangements and procedural changes in the Senate.</p> <p>The Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) continued to deliver its Education Centre program at near capacity and further expanded its services to include greater online interactivity and a range of new resources.</p>
Timeliness	<p>Procedural advice is timely.</p> <p>Scrutiny committee meetings held, documentation provided and reports produced within timeframes set by the Senate or the committees, as relevant.</p> <p>During sitting periods, amendments drafted as soon as possible after receipt of instructions.</p> <p>Seminars and lectures held on time and in accordance with advertised schedule; public information projects delivered according to programmed schedule.</p> <p>PEO teaching programs held on time and in accordance with booking schedule.</p> <p>PEO projects delivered according to programmed schedule.</p> <p>Information available on the internet and in publications is up to date and available as soon as practicable.</p>	<p>Procedural advice met all chamber deadlines.</p> <p>All meetings of the scrutiny committees were held as scheduled and documentation was provided within the timeframes set by the committees.</p> <p>Amendments were drafted in accordance with timetables set by senators and the Senate.</p> <p>All seminars and lectures were held on time and in accordance with advertised schedules.</p> <p>All programs were held in accordance with the booking schedule.</p> <p>Projects, programs and outreach activities were delivered as scheduled.</p> <p>Information resources were updated as required to reflect changes in personnel and procedures.</p> <p>The PEO website was constantly monitored, with required changes addressed immediately.</p>

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Analysis

The Procedure Office provides a range of advisory, support and information services closely aligned with the role and work of the Senate. The office is divided into the functional areas shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10 **Elements and responsibilities of the Procedure Office**

Executive and Legislative Drafting <i>Richard Pye, Clerk Assistant</i> Procedural advice and training Drafting of legislative amendments and private senators' bills		
Public information and parliamentary research	Parliamentary education	Legislative scrutiny
<i>David Sullivan, Director, Research Section</i>	<i>Chris Reid, Director, Parliamentary Education Office</i>	<i>James Warmenhoven, Secretary, Regulations and Ordinances Committee</i> <i>Julie Dennett, Secretary, Scrutiny of Bills Committee</i>
Publications, seminars, exhibitions and research on parliamentary matters Production of <i>The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate</i>	Parliamentary education services and resources for schools, teachers and students	Secretariat, advisory and administrative support to the committees

The office is managed by the Clerk Assistant (Procedure), who also undertakes procedural and legislative work, principally for non-government senators, and performs duties as a clerk at the table in the Senate chamber.

The office provides secretariats for the Senate's legislative scrutiny committees, the Regulations and Ordinances Committee and the Scrutiny of Bills Committee, which examine bills and legislative instruments against certain rights and accountability criteria.

The Research Section undertakes parliamentary research and produces publications, lectures and exhibitions, each with a focus on the work and role of the Senate and the parliament. The section also provides and coordinates training and seminars on parliamentary and procedural matters for a wide range of audiences. A unit within the Research Section produces *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate*, a multi-volume work containing biographies of senators focusing on their parliamentary careers.

The Parliamentary Education Office produces educational programs and resources for school students, teachers and others, with an increasing focus on outreach activities through school and regional visits and through its website: www.peo.gov.au.

In 2008–09, the cost of the Procedure Office in providing its services was \$6.1 million (\$5.3 million in 2007–08). The full-time equivalent staffing level for 2008–09 was 34 (32 in 2007–08).

Procedural support and legislative drafting

The Procedure Office provides direct support to the work of senators by two principal means:

- providing procedural advice and support
- drafting legislative amendments and private senators' bills.

The services are provided to ensure that senators are supported in undertaking their legislative work. The demand for these services is substantially driven by the requirements of senators and the Senate chamber.

Procedural support

In 2008–09, the office assisted non-government senators and their staff by providing procedural advice relating to the role and work of the Senate and its committees. The office does not keep statistics on the quantum of advice given, but there was consistent demand for such advice during sitting periods.

The office prepared an average of seven procedural scripts per sitting day for senators' use in the chamber and elsewhere. This was slightly lower than the 2007–08 average of eight. The scripts included notices of motion, the text of procedural motions and terms of reference for committee inquiries. The closely balanced numbers in the Senate chamber also led to a demand for procedural advice and the drafting of procedural motions designed to test support for dealing with motions and legislation other than in accordance with government programs.

Legislative drafting

In 2008–09, the office provided legislative support to senators' work by:

- drafting amendments to bills, in response to instructions from senators and their staff and recommendations contained in committee reports
- drafting private senators' bills, in response to instructions from senators and their staff.

This work was undertaken primarily for non-government senators, but a small number of backbench government senators also used these services.

Peaks in demand for legislative amendments reflected the concentration of legislative work within a small number of sitting weeks, and an unpredictable legislative timetable.

The office drafted and circulated 147 sets of 'committee of the whole' amendments, containing 859 individual amendments. Committee of the whole amendments are amendments proposed to the text of bills dealt with by the Senate. Two key debates—on the Water Amendment Bill 2008 and the Fair Work Bill 2008—jointly accounted for a quarter of those amendments.

The office also prepared and circulated 25 'second reading' amendments. These are proposed resolutions which comment on or affect the passage of bills, but do not propose specific changes to the text of bills.

Many more committee of the whole and second reading amendments were drafted—for use in negotiations between parties, for instance—but were not proceeded with.

Private senators' bills continued to be used as vehicles for non-government parties and individual senators to put down policy footprints and advance debate across areas of interest. During the year, the office drafted, finalised and processed 23 private senators' bills for introduction—a record number for any reporting period. Another 28 bills were drafted to

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different stages of development, for introduction at a later date or for use by senators outside the chamber. Two private senators' bills were passed by the Senate during the year, but neither was debated by the House of Representatives.

Table 1 summarises senators' use of the office's legislative drafting and procedural services over the past four reporting periods.

Table 1 Legislative drafting and procedural advice services provided to non-government senators, 2005–06 to 2008–09

Service	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09
Committee of the whole amendments	736	1,524	423	859
Second reading amendments	56	111	56	25
Private senators' bills prepared	34	41	28	51
Private senators' bills introduced	6	20	19	23
Procedural scripts prepared	274	353	304	394

Legislative scrutiny committees

During the year, the office provided secretariat, research and administrative support to the Regulations and Ordinances Committee and the Scrutiny of Bills Committee, assisting the committees to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with the standing orders. The two committees examine all bills and disallowable instruments within their jurisdiction.

The secretariats, assisted by their legal advisers, completed all of the necessary administrative work to enable the committees to undertake these tasks. The Regulations and Ordinances Committee staff processed 3,404 instruments during 2008–09 (2,982 in 2007–08). The Scrutiny of Bills Committee secretariat processed 210 bills during 2008–09 (207 in 2007–08) and the committee commented on 111 bills (108 in 2007–08).

The secretariats also prepared material arising out of the work of the committees, for use in the Senate chamber and for publication elsewhere. This included:

- publication each Senate sitting week of the required reports and alert digests
- publication of the *Delegated Legislation Monitor* (each Senate sitting week), the *Disallowance Alert* and *Scrutiny of Disallowable Instruments Alert* (updated online as required) and biannual volumes of committee correspondence
- preparation of disallowance notices.

In addition to its regular alert digests and reports, the Scrutiny of Bills Committee published *The Work of the Committee during the 41st Parliament, November 2004 – October 2007*, which provides an overview of the legislative scrutiny work undertaken by the committee during that period, along with statistical data.

Staff from both secretariats briefed several international delegations about the role and operations of the Senate legislative scrutiny committees, and conducted a training seminar for public servants.

The secretariats also organised the Biennial Australia–New Zealand Scrutiny of Legislation Conference, to be hosted by the Commonwealth Scrutiny Committees in July 2009.

Public information and parliamentary research

The Research Section of the Procedure Office continued to coordinate and deliver seminars and professional training programs for senators and their staff, departmental staff, Australian public servants and other audiences. The section also produced publications, lectures and exhibitions, each with a focus on the work and role of the Senate and the operations of the parliament. The section also managed an internship program and a formal research partnership with the Parliamentary Studies Centre at the Australian National University.

The aim of these programs is to ensure that senators and their staff are supported in their legislative work, and that other audiences are able to develop appropriate levels of knowledge and awareness of the Senate and its work.

Seminars and training programs

In July 2008 a major orientation program was conducted for new senators who commenced their terms on 1 July 2008. The three-day program, conducted by senior officers of the department, focused on the operations and procedures of the Senate and its committees, as well as services provided by the Department of Parliamentary Services. The program is widely regarded by new senators as an essential part of their preparation for legislative duties.

A series of training seminars was also offered to the staff of senators. The seminars, delivered by senior officers, explained in detail the operations and procedures of the Senate and its committees.

The department's seminar series continued to provide members of the Australian Public Service with comprehensive training in the operations of the Senate and its committees, and the accountability to parliament of the executive and government departments and agencies. During 2008–09, a total of 1,090 people attended 33 seminars.

The seminar series remained an integral part of most graduate training programs in the public service. Some of the larger departments enrolled all of their graduates in the full-day Introduction to the Senate seminar. A range of half-day seminars on the budget and the Senate estimates process, Senate committees, the legislative process and role of legislative scrutiny committees was also well received. The section also conducted half-day seminars for Senior Executive Service officers on the accountability of public servants to parliament and the law and practice of parliamentary privilege. The seminars were conducted by senior officers of the department.

The section organised seminars tailored to the needs of individual government departments and other interested groups, including the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism; the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; AusAID; the Office of the Chief Scientist; the Defence and Industry Study Course; the Rural Leadership Program; and a group of Indigenous graduates.

Seminars and training programs were also organised for parliamentary officers visiting from overseas parliaments, including from Hong Kong, Jordan and Namibia. The Inter-Parliamentary Study Program, conducted jointly with the Department of the House of Representatives, provided training for 15 officers from overseas parliaments, including Afghanistan, Bhutan, Canada, China, East Timor, Estonia, Ghana, Hong Kong, Iceland, Indonesia, Marshall Islands, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Sweden, and Vietnam.

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Occasional lectures

During 2008–09, the section produced lunchtime lectures as part of the popular Occasional Lecture series. Topics ranged from the implications for Australia of the 2008 election result in the United States, to the powers of a republican head of state in Australia and the role of parliament under an Australian charter of human rights.

The department published lecture transcripts in its free journal *Papers on Parliament* and made audio recordings available on its website. Lectures were filmed and broadcast on television and the internet by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Australian Public Affairs Channel, increasing the audience for, and accessibility of, the lectures.

Publications and information services

The Research Section edited and published two editions of *Papers on Parliament* during 2008–09. Entitled *Constitutional Politics* (August 2008) and *Parliament, Politics and Power* (March 2009), these editions largely comprised papers in the Occasional Lecture series. A number of *Senate Briefs* and *Brief Guides to Senate Procedure* were revised and reissued to account for the election of Senator Hogg as President in August 2008 and changes to the structure of the committee system which took effect from May 2009.

The third volume of *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate*, covering senators whose terms ended between 1962 and 1983, was submitted to the publisher in May 2009 for publication in early 2010. During 2008–09, editing and checking of the manuscript was completed and extracts were read by specialists in military history and state politics. Genealogical research and the acquisition of illustrations for the volume were also concluded. Work continued on the 109 entries for the fourth volume, which will cover 1983 to 2002. A total of 75 entries have been allocated to authors.

The section continued to issue a range of free publications raising awareness of the Senate and parliamentary processes. A revised and updated *Senate Brochure* was issued in May 2009. Details of the publications available in 2008–09 are provided in Appendix 4.

During the year, the section responded to requests for information and research support from a range of sources, including senators, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Clerks Assistant, and members of the academic community and the general public.

Exhibitions

During the year, the department commenced a major new public exhibition in the Presiding Officers' exhibition area on the first floor of Parliament House. Entitled 'Acting Wisely: the Work of the Australian Parliament', the exhibition documents and illustrates the work of the contemporary parliament.

The introductory segment of the exhibition describes the role of parliament and illustrates its power to make laws under the Constitution. Leading off this segment is a display dealing with the way that parliament makes laws, including documents used by both houses during the legislative process, a graphic illustration of the passage of a bill on a video loop, and some illustrated case studies of bills that were considered by parliament before passing into law.

The next stage of this exhibition will incorporate Australia's copy of Magna Carta, which will move from its current position in the Members' Hall once appropriate preservation and security arrangements are complete.

Internships program

As in previous years, the department successfully ran the Australian National Internships Program in partnership with the Australian National University. During 2008–09, 39 students were placed in parliamentary departments and 34 students were placed in other departments and agencies. Interns continued to see Parliament House as an outstanding venue in which to be placed. The Research Section coordinated an induction seminar for each group of interns and organised some of the functions associated with the program.

Research partnership with the Australian National University

During 2008–09, the department continued to play an active role in the Strengthening Parliamentary Institutions research program, which is funded by the Australian Research Council and run by the Parliamentary Studies Centre at the Australian National University. Senate officers participated in a series of workshops which provided feedback to authors who had submitted papers for publication.

In October 2008, the department co-hosted a two-day international conference on bicameralism as part of the research program. The conference investigated trends in bicameralism in Australia and related these trends to international developments in bicameral parliamentary systems. In April 2009, the department co-hosted a half-day workshop on parliaments and bills of rights. The workshop focused on ways that parliaments can respond to bills of rights by reforming their institutional rules and procedures.

Parliamentary education services

During 2008–09, the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) continued to deliver a high level of educational services to schools, teachers and students, with demand for its services and resources also remaining very high.

The PEO has two main strategies:

- Through its Education Centre, the PEO delivers a role-play involving simulations of chamber and committee proceedings of the House of Representatives and the Senate, for students visiting Parliament House.
- Through a sophisticated outreach strategy, the PEO provides other opportunities for students and teachers to learn about the parliament. To support this strategy, the PEO produces materials and resources on its website, on CD and DVD, and in print.

The PEO also undertakes several joint ventures and invests in a range of training and development activities for staff. During 2008–09, the PEO continued to work with and report progress to the PEO Advisory Committee and received positive feedback from the 2009 senators' satisfaction survey.

Education Centre activities

The Education Centre delivered its one-hour role-play program to 90,786 students in 2,533 groups during 2008–09. Trends in Education Centre attendance are shown in figures 11 and 12. The Education Centre continues to provide excellent opportunities for data and market research to assist the PEO evaluate and develop its programs and resources.

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Figure 11 **Students who visited the PEO Education Centre, 2004–05 to 2008–09**

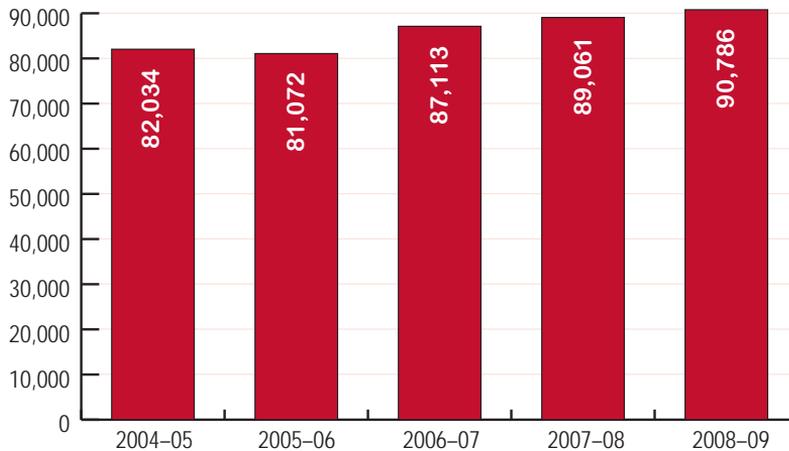
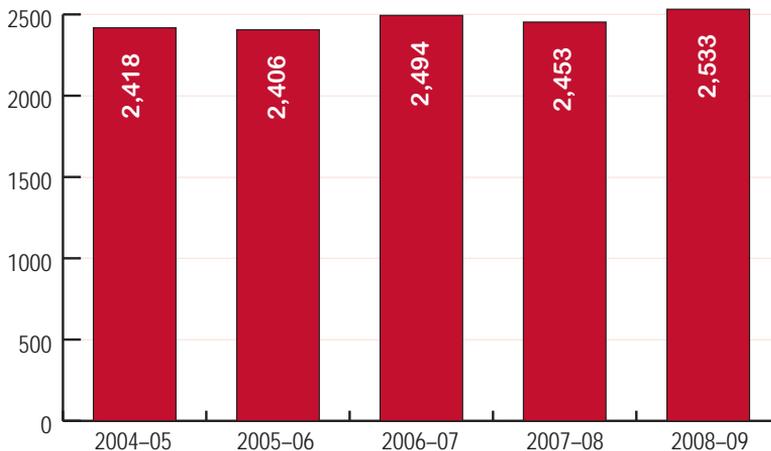


Figure 12 **School groups that visited the PEO Education Centre, 2004–05 to 2008–09**



Website and other resources

In 2008–09, the PEO continued to develop its website and other resources, as well as its capacity to produce quality educational resources in multiple formats.

Highlights included:

- enhancing the interactivity, usability and accessibility of the PEO website, including technical developments to reflect changes to World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
- introducing a multimedia section to incorporate new video learning initiatives on the website
- developing Assignment Assistant, an interactive online study tool for students
- introducing an in-house video production unit to produce educational videos for the website and other outlets—two short videos were available on the website by the end of June 2009.

In addition, the site was developed to allow more PEO resources to be ordered online or downloaded from the website.

The PEO continued to produce and update print resources and publications, including:

- *Parliament of Wizards*, a new CD-ROM resource for teachers that introduces primary school students to the work of parliament through the world of magic
- an updated version of the successful *Parliament in Pictures* poster series which features as a public display in the schools hospitality area of Parliament House
- reprints of the pocket-sized *Australian Constitution*, *Peeling back Parliament*, and *Unravelling the parliamentary role-play*.

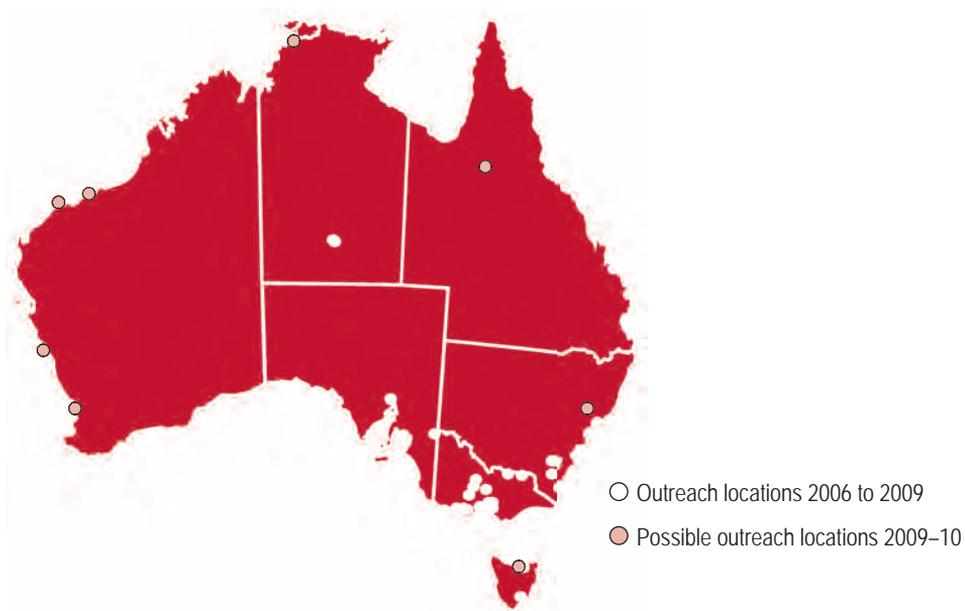
As an indication of the growing demand for PEO resources, web patronage increased again this year, with the website recording over 3.5 million page views, an increase of 21 per cent on 2007–08.

Outreach

An important part of the PEO’s objectives is to provide educational resources for students and teachers who cannot make the journey to Parliament House in Canberra. One popular solution to this has been conducting outreach activities across the country, taking the parliamentary role-play and other activities ‘on the road’. A satisfying geographical spread has been achieved in recent years. In 2008–09, the PEO participated in activities in the following locations: Ballarat, Bendigo, Brisbane, Caboolture, Canberra, Castlemaine, Colac, Dakabin, Dandenong, Deception Bay, Geelong, Gladstone, Grovedale, Gympie, Maryborough, Melbourne and Norfolk Island.

Plans for outreach activities in Western Australia were confirmed during 2008–09; the activities will take place in July and August 2009. Planning for visits to several other regions during 2009–10 has commenced. Figure 13 shows the geographical spread of outreach activities in the five calendar years from 2006 to 2010.

Figure 13 Locations of PEO outreach activities, 2006 to 2010



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An important feature of many of these outreach activities was the involvement of senators and members in both creating and executing PEO programs, especially in conjunction with local schools through an initiative called *Parliament Alive*.

Joint ventures

The PEO continued to work with a range of groups and organisations as part of its broader educational aims.

For the twentieth successive year, the PEO, in partnership with Rotary International, hosted the Rotary Adventures in Citizenship program at Parliament House. The five-day program for students from across the country gave 31 Year 11 students an opportunity to experience the work of the parliament, meet members of parliament and participate in an intensive learning program.

The PEO again contributed to the Talkback Classroom program by assisting secondary students to interview a member of parliament about issues important to young Australians. In 2008–09, students interviewed the Honourable Stephen Smith MP and met the Honourable Warren Truss MP, the Honourable Greg Hunt MP and the Honourable Pat Farmer MP in preparation for the interview.

As in past years, the PEO contributed to the Australian National University-sponsored National Youth Science Forum and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's *Heywire* program. These events attracted senior secondary school students from all states and territories to Parliament House where the PEO delivered specially designed experiential learning programs focused on the processes of parliament.

The PEO continued to work with the Australian Secondary Principals Association and helped coordinate periodic association meetings at Parliament House.

Staff training and development

In addition to standard training exercises, over recent years the PEO has developed and refined a comprehensive training program for new staff teaching in the Education Centre. This program continued in 2008–09. All participants have successfully completed the training and joined the PEO teaching staff.

The PEO's publishing capability continued to expand with the appointment of a dedicated web developer in March 2009. Training and development was also a focus, with an emphasis on the use of new web technologies, improved interface and application design, usability and accessibility.

From November 2008 to May 2009, a committee secretariat was created within the PEO to serve the Senate Select Committee on Men's Health. This six-month development opportunity was completed according to plan, and the committee's report was tabled on 29 May 2009.

International activities

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) brings together representatives of the parliaments of 153 sovereign states to foster contacts, coordination and the exchange of experience among parliamentarians, to consider questions of international interest and concern and to express its views on such issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians.

During 2008–09, the department supported the work of the IPU by funding the attendance of delegations at two IPU assemblies. The Secretary of the Community Affairs Standing

Committee served as secretary to the delegation that attended the 119th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, in October 2008 and the Director, Journals and Notice Paper was secretary to the delegation to the 120th IPU Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in April 2009. Both officers provided sound advice on the procedures and practices of the IPU as well as administrative support.

The Deputy President of the Senate and the Deputy Clerk attended the thirty-ninth Conference of Presiding Officers and Clerks, held in Adelaide in July 2008.

The department also provided experienced officers to serve as secretaries to delegations that went to:

- Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in September–October 2008
- Serbia in October 2008
- Papua New Guinea and East Timor in October–November 2008
- Switzerland in April 2009
- Canada and Mexico in April–May 2009
- Austria, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States in April–May 2009.

Factors, events and trends influencing performance

As noted, the demand for procedural and legislative services is substantially driven by the requirements of senators and the Senate chamber. Factors influencing demand include the frequency of sittings, the number of bills dealt with by the Senate and the legislative priorities of the government and others. The composition of the Senate is also a factor: a situation in which no one group controls Senate outcomes typically leads to a strong demand for these services.

The capacity of the office to undertake drafting work was increased in 2008 by the addition of a senior legislative officer on a trial basis. The trial was successful, and the arrangement was made permanent in October 2008.

The facilities for the PEO's education program at Parliament House operate at near capacity, with schools making bookings for the program many months in advance. This has been an important factor motivating the PEO to expand the range and quality of its online and multimedia services and resources.

Evaluation

The main vehicle for evaluating the services provided by the office is the survey of senators which is undertaken every two years. The 2009 survey reported continuing high levels of satisfaction with support to the Senate chamber, advisory services and support for the legislative process, all of which reflect well on the work of the office. Specific questions relating to legislative drafting services and procedural support for non-government senators found that 62 per cent were highly satisfied, 23 per cent were satisfied and the remaining 10 per cent were neutral. The survey also reported that five government senators had used such services, and each was recorded as being highly satisfied.

The survey reported an improvement in satisfaction since the 2007 survey with the promotion of public awareness of the Senate, reflecting well on the information resources and seminar programs provided by the Research Section. High levels of satisfaction were again recorded for the PEO.

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The Procedure Office monitors levels of satisfaction with its performance through formal and informal channels including letters, emails, phone calls, seminar evaluation forms and direct advice from senators and their staff and members of the public. This continual performance appraisal assists the office to make timely and responsive adjustments to the way it delivers its services. High levels of positive feedback were received in 2008–09.

The PEO in particular monitors feedback of its activities and resources from senators and members, as well as its target audiences of students and teachers. Figure 14 provides a few examples.

Figure 14 **Comments on PEO services and resources**

<p>From senators and members</p> <p>'The students were able to gain a better understanding of the workings of the parliament through the skilful delivery of the educational and entertaining role play exercise ... The experience provided a valuable opportunity for students to learn about democracy and law making in Australia, some of whom may never travel to Canberra.'</p> <p>'The Parliament Alive sessions with the students from primary and high schools from my electorate were a great success. Thanks to the educators for their excellent work.'</p> <p>'The PEO resources are a fantastic aid when visiting schools in my electorate and have been well received by teachers. I am impressed with the knowledge and understanding that students have retained from their sessions in the Education Centre.'</p>
<p>From teachers</p> <p>'Congratulations on a wonderful support system to make our teaching job easier. All teachers at our school are impressed with your resources, which will add so much to our classroom and I'm sure that the students will gain a greater understanding of the functions of parliament.'</p> <p>'Thank you for all of the fantastic resources that you have sent to our School. We are looking forward to making good use of the fantastic resources available, especially "Parliament of Wizards" ...'</p> <p>'Congratulations on the Parliamentary Education Office website. The information is clear, factual, inspiring and accessible.'</p>
<p>From students</p> <p>'It was good making decisions and feeling like you're a part of the outcome.'</p> <p>'We were very proud to be part of the program and for the opportunity to speak out and act like a real government with cabinet ministers. It has a lot of meaning to us to see how a bill is passed and the process.'</p>

Performance outlook

In 2009–10, the office will continue to provide its procedural and legislative services to meet the requirements of the Senate and individual senators. Training and seminar programs will continue, including a new round of procedural training for senators' staff.

The Research Section will further develop its information resources with publication of Volume 3 of *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate*, a revised version of *The Pocket Guide to Senate Procedure* and an A to Z reference guide on the parliament.

The first segments of the 'Acting Wisely' exhibition on the legislative process and Magna Carta will be officially launched, and work will commence on additional segments that will explore the themes of representation and accountability.

The Senate will continue to participate in a range of activities as part of the Strengthening Parliamentary Institutions project, including conferences on benchmarking parliamentary performance, the state of oppositions, comparative legislative responses to global crisis management, and parliaments and architecture.

The office will also be involved in planning an event to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Senate's system of legislative and general purpose standing committees.

A new Richard Baker Senate Essay Prize aimed at secondary school students will commence in the second half of 2009, managed by the Research Section and promoted via the PEO.

The PEO will seek to complete and consolidate a range of projects and programs. In addition to facilitating role-play classes at Parliament House for more than 90,000 young Australians, the PEO will release new material on its website, with an added emphasis on interactivity and a specific focus on secondary students. Strategic outreach involving senators and members has been planned, as has the release of new interactive resources and print publications.