

Clerk of the House, Ian Harris, addresses staff on the future directions for the department.

Management and Accountability

Corporate governance

The Speaker of the House of Representatives is responsible to the Parliament for the department. The Clerk of the House of Representatives, who is responsible for managing the department, reports to the Speaker. Key elements of the department's corporate governance framework are outlined below.

Legislative structures

The department's operations are governed by the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* and the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA Act), and are subject to provisions of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* and other legislation. Those acts set out the responsibilities of the Clerk for the management of the department.

Ethical standards

The Parliamentary Service Values and Code of Conduct, set out in the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*, provide a framework for the department's ethical conduct. The department continued to promote the values and explain the code during the year: for example, the Clerk gave an address on the topic to all staff in February 2003. The values and the code also were addressed in the department's induction and orientation programs, in educational information provided to groups of staff, and in articles in the department's staff bulletin. All staff development exercises were linked to and rated in comparison with the values. Bookmarks listing the values and the code continued to be made available to new staff on their entry to the department.

Senior management

Senior management of the department consists of the Executive and managers at the Executive Band 2 level.

The Executive comprises the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, and three Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 1 staff, each of whom has management responsibility for one of the three output groups. One of the SES Band 1 positions was vacant for much of the year, with the Deputy Clerk assuming responsibility for managing that output area. At the end of the reporting period a process to fill that vacancy was in progress and was expected to be finalised early in the new financial year.

The Executive met quarterly with the Chief Financial Officer and the Director, People Strategies, to receive comprehensive reports on the department's financial and human resource performance. In addition, all areas of the department reported quarterly to the Executive, until that practice was suspended during a review of the structure and purpose of the department's reporting mechanisms, as discussed in more detail below. The Executive also met as required to discuss issues affecting the overall direction and management of the department.

The Executive was assisted in the management of the department by directors and committee secretaries at the Executive Band 2 level who were responsible for managing the work units supporting the output groups.

Management committees

Audit Committee

The department's Audit Committee comprises the Clerk Assistant (Committees), the Clerk Assistant (Table), the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Chief Financial Officer. The committee, chaired in 2002–03 by the Clerk Assistant (Table), met five times during the year.

The functions and responsibilities of the Audit Committee include:

- planning the department's internal audit resources and activities
- reviewing internal and external audit reports, and ensuring that appropriate and timely action is taken in response to audit recommendations
- overseeing and appraising risk management planning and implementation within the department
- providing advice to the Clerk on the preparation and review of the department's financial statements, and on any significant audit matter that may impact on the operations of the department.

The department's contracted internal auditor is KPMG. The major focuses of the 2002–03 internal audit plan were on ensuring compliance in financial management and processing, managing risk within work areas and reviewing controls.

Consultative committees

The department's Consultative Committee continued to be an important mechanism for communicating and consulting with staff on workplace issues. The committee had five formal meetings during the year. The committee discussed a broad range of issues, including: the consultation process for initiatives for change; the monitoring of workplace agreements; revised recruitment processes; and a range of other matters, including recognition and rewards processes, work performance assessment and leadership initiatives.

The joint departmental (Department of the Senate and Department of the House of Representatives) Security Consultative Committee also operated. Among the issues it discussed in 2002–03 were: the impacts of reviews of security, particularly the Podger review; roster arrangements; staff uniforms; training; and the performance management system. The committee met on six occasions. In addition, the bargaining committee, convened to consider the next certified agreement for security staff, met four times in May and June 2003.

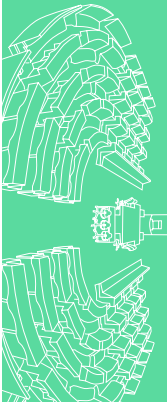
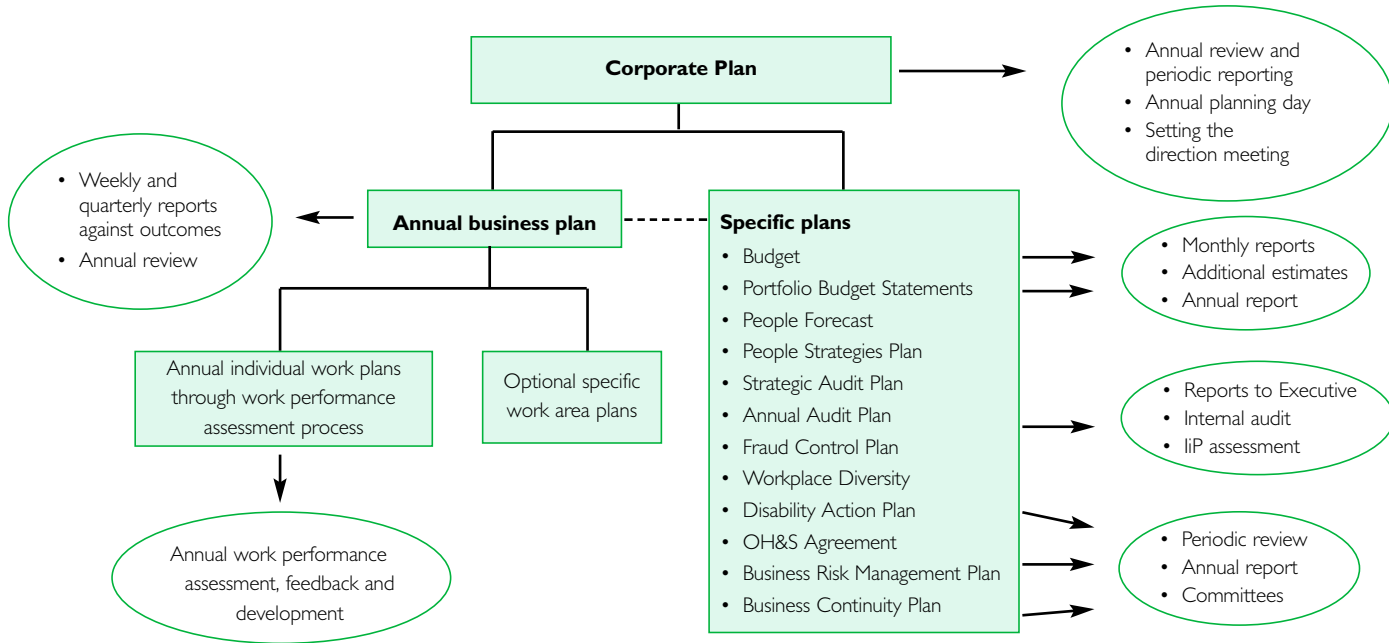


Figure 7 Departmental planning and evaluation framework 2002-03



Planning and evaluation

The department's planning and accountability activity continued to be emphasised by managers. Key elements of the department's planning and reporting framework are set out in Figure 7 on page 47.

Corporate plan

The corporate plan for 2002–05 was released in June 2002, following a departmental planning day. The corporate plan continued to guide a range of other plans and departmental initiatives.

Business plan

The department finalised the business plan for 2002–03 early in July 2002. The business plan, along with the corporate plan, continued to be the basis for periodic reporting to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk by departmental managers. The corporate and business plans, together with relevant work area plans, also formed the basis for determining the work objectives of individual staff members through the work performance management process. At the end of the reporting period, the business plan for 2003–04 was due to be launched early in the new financial year.

Accountability mechanisms

The department's primary external accountability mechanisms were the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) and the annual report, copies of which were provided to all members.

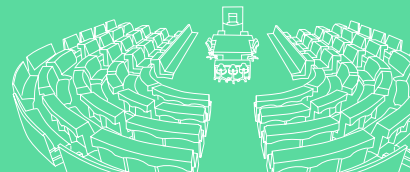
The department's annual report was prepared pursuant to section 65 of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*. It assessed performance against the targets outlined in the PBS, and presented the financial statements of the department.

Risk assessment and fraud control

Risk management is an important focus within the department. Although previous risk assessments have identified a low risk level for the department, departmental staff maintain a heightened awareness of risk management activities.

During the financial year, the level of risk in some areas of security was raised. This led to changes in the management of security during the year and an increase in security costs.

One of the internal audit priorities was risk management in work areas. Internal audits were conducted on the Parliamentary Relations Office gift store, the printing office, information technology operations, the implementation of the department's new financial management information system (FMIS), the Document Production System software, and protection of information. The audits contained no significant adverse findings and reaffirmed the low levels of risk within the department. The gift store audit led to a change in inventory arrangements – the amount of stock held by the store was reduced and supplier arrangements were strengthened – to better meet the department's organisational requirements.



Service charters

As noted in last year's report, the Department of the House of Representatives Service Charter was published in the *Members' Handbook* produced for the Fortieth Parliament in January 2002, and the *Service Charter: Community Service Standards* was published in May 2002 on the department's website and made available in a leaflet.

Both the charters present opportunities for the department to create better awareness of the services it provides and the service standards it aims to achieve. More importantly, the charters provide a basis for members and other people interested in the Parliament to assess the quality of services they receive.

During the year, the service standards reflected in the charters were integrated into the departmental performance information framework for internal and external reporting.

External scrutiny

The department's operations are primarily administrative and generally are not subjected directly to formal external scrutiny. There were no judicial decisions or decisions in administrative tribunals during 2002–03 that had, or that may have, a significant impact on the operation of the department.

As noted in last year's annual report, the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) identified two significant issues for the department in relation to internal financial control in its audits for the period ended 30 June 2001. As a result of action taken by the department to address those issues, the ANAO, in its audit of financial statements of Commonwealth entities for the period ending 30 June 2002, no longer identified any significant issues of financial control for the department's attention.

The ANAO concluded its protective security audit of physical security arrangements (discussed in last year's annual report), in which the department participated. The ANAO found that protective security arrangements, both parliament-wide and within the department, were generally adequate, but made specific recommendations for areas of improvement. The department agreed with all the recommendations, and took action to implement the recommendations relevant to its own activities. The Security Management Board began implementing the recommendations that related to parliament-wide security.

The department, represented by the Serjeant-at-Arms, gave evidence to the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit in relation to a review by the committee of the ANAO's report on protective security. As at 30 June 2003, the committee had not reported its findings.

Freedom of information

The department is not considered to be a department or agency for the purposes of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). It seeks, however, to comply with the intent of the FOI Act where practicable in relation to the release of administrative information. Extensive information about the structure of the department and employment opportunities is provided on the website and in hard copy documents (such as the annual report) published by the department. In addition, information was widely disseminated on how members of the public can interact with the work of the House and its committees. There were no freedom of information requests during the year.

Management of human resources

The department continued to have in place structures, systems and procedures to provide assurance to the Clerk that the department's staff were performing efficiently, effectively and ethically. The most significant of those structures and plans and their relationships to the department's broader planning and evaluation framework are identified in Figure 7.

Investors in People

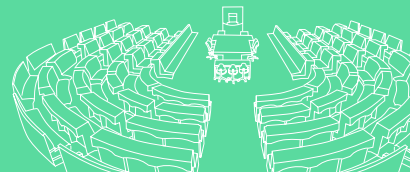
The department was reaccredited as meeting the Investors in People standard during the year. Investors in People is an international quality standard that sets a level of good practice for improving performance through people. The standard provides a basis for continuous improvement of both the department and its people. The key principles and indicators that comprise the standard and the accompanying Investors in People program were noted in the discussion of the department's initial accreditation in last year's annual report.

The National Association of Testing Authorities Certification Services International awarded the reaccreditation in August 2002, following a comprehensive audit inspection involving an assessment of relevant human resources processes and 20 individual interviews with a representative cross-section of departmental staff. The initial accreditation required a commitment from the department to develop our leadership, communication, staff development, and planning and evaluation practices. Action was taken to strengthen and deepen that commitment during 2002–03. The annual reaccreditation assessment will next take place in August 2003.

Workforce planning

As noted last year, in 2001–02 the department's Executive considered the department's future workforce requirements to identify any potential gaps between expected staffing needs at middle and senior management levels and the supply of staff to fill those positions over the subsequent five years. While no specific initiatives were undertaken in 2002–03, senior staff of the department attended workforce planning seminars conducted by the Australian Public Service Commission to monitor developments.

It is expected the Executive will revisit this matter in the near future to determine whether specific action is required.



Certified agreements

The department's two certified agreements are designed to produce employment conditions that are attractive to existing and potential staff, to enable current and emerging requirements to be met and to enable the department to better serve the House and the Parliament.

Administrative Agreement

The *Department of the House of Representatives Certified Agreement 2002–03* (the Administrative Agreement), certified in January 2002, covers all staff in the department except SES and operational security staff. The agreement is comprehensive in that it replaced all pre-existing references to staff conditions of employment, including awards and agreements.

A 4 per cent pay rise was paid to staff with effect from 1 January 2003. This followed an assessment of how well the department had met certain performance indicators set out in the agreement. The agreement has a nominal expiry date of 31 December 2003. Negotiations for a replacement agreement will commence early in the new financial year. The administrative staff salary scales (for Executive Bands 1 and 2 and Parliamentary Service (PS) levels 1 to 6) available under the Administrative Agreement and any applicable Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) from January 2003 are set out in Table 4.

Table 4 Administrative staff salary scales

Classification	Salary scale
Executive Band 2	\$79,427 – \$88,213
Executive Band 1	\$65,279 – \$72,993
PS Level 6	\$51,791 – \$59,058
PS Level 5	\$47,714 – \$50,610
PS Level 4	\$42,868 – \$46,473
PS Level 3	\$38,672 – \$41,629
PS Level 2	\$34,241 – \$37,492
PS Level 1	\$30,134 – \$33,081

Security Agreement

The *Parliamentary Security Operational Staff Certified Agreement 2001–03* (the Security Agreement), which covers security staff, was developed in conjunction with the Parliamentary Security Service's joint employer, the Department of the Senate. The agreement resulted in more stable and productive security arrangements, less absenteeism and greater flexibility in staffing arrangements.

A 2 per cent pay rise was paid to staff employed under the Security Agreement in January 2003. This followed an assessment of how well the Department of the House of Representatives and the Department of the Senate had met certain performance indicators set out in the agreement.

The security staff salary scales (for Parliamentary Security Service (PSS) levels 1–2 and 3) available under the Security Agreement and any applicable AWAs from January 2003 are set out in Table 5.

Table 5 Parliamentary Security Service salary scales

Classification	Salary scale
PSS Level 3	\$36,890 – \$38,905
PSS Levels 1–2	\$28,876 – \$34,139

The Security Agreement expired on 30 June 2003. The Joint House Department, which will assume responsibility for all security staff as a result of the Podger review recommendations, began negotiations on a new agreement with staff in late 2002–03.

Australian Workplace Agreements

All SES staff continued to be covered by individual AWAs, the conditions of which were in keeping with the provisions applying to other staff under the certified agreements. The nature and amount of remuneration and conditions of service for SES staff were determined by agreement between each individual and the Clerk through the AWAs. Under arrangements outlined in their AWAs, the four SES staff shared in \$33,000 in performance bonuses during the year.

A further 14 staff, below the SES level, were also covered by AWAs.

Salaries expenditure

In 2002–03 salaries and allowances totalled \$16.3 million (\$14.1 million in 2001–02). The increase in 2002–03 reflected the changes required in security staffing arrangements.

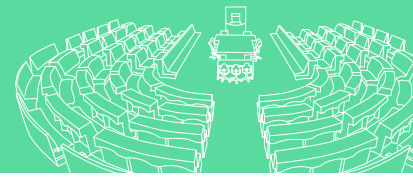
Training and development

The department's training and development expenditure as a percentage of salaries expenditure and person days spent on training in 2001–02 and 2002–03 are set out in Table 6. The average number of training days for staff decreased from 5.3 days to 4.8 days off-the-job training per person per year.

Table 6 Expenditure on training and development programs

	2000–01	2002–02
Expenditure as percentage of annual payroll	2.7	2.3
Average training days per person	5.3	4.8
Average staffing level	222	225

Note: All figures exclude staff of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Second Deputy Speaker and staff undertaking secondments and internal and external placements.



The attendance of staff at training courses in 2001–02 and 2002–03 is set out in Table 7.

Table 7 Average training days attended, by staff classification

Classification	Average staffing level in department 2002–03	Total number of training days attended by staff 2002–03	Average number of training days 2002–03	Average number of training days 2001–02
SES	4.1	26.5	6.5	7.0
Executive Band 2	21.4	76.6	3.6	4.9
Executive Band 1	38.4	119.1	3.1	1.8
PS 6	21.4	86.7	4.1	3.5
PS 5	6.9	30.1	4.3	3.0
PS 4	14.9	96.4	6.5	3.8
PS 3	31.2	94.6	3.0	4.5
PS 2	35.4	61.1	1.7	4.3
PS 1	—	—	—	—
PSS 1–2	51.6	497.7	9.6	11.2
Totals	225.2	1,089	4.8	5.3

Note: Figures have been rounded.

Leadership survey

The department conducted its fourth Leadership Survey in May 2003, following similar surveys in 1998, 1999 and 2001. The leadership survey was primarily designed to measure where our managers are in relation to 13 leadership skills and behaviours, as outlined in the department's leadership statement. Comparison of the four surveys over time delivers a valid evaluation of the effectiveness of the leadership program. The survey questionnaire asked all staff to rate their direct supervisors, their SES managers and the Clerk against the 13 leadership skills and behaviours. They were also asked to rate the importance of the factors to themselves.

The overall ratings of managers were very satisfactory, with all groups receiving an average leadership factor rating of 'high'. Since the first survey in 1998, there has been an average 28 percentage point improvement in the ratings of supervisors, overall. As an evaluation of the department's leadership development program, this indicates a strong return on investment. Responses to the survey questionnaire highlighted areas for improvement, with consistency and communication across the department being the main areas. The department plans to address these issues in the new financial year.

Security staff

Specialist training for security staff included formal courses in Security Guarding (Certificates II and III) and courses on various aspects of first aid treatment.

Studybank

Nineteen staff (an increase on the 16 staff who participated in 2001–02) participated in the department's Studybank scheme. They received financial assistance of \$12,478 (\$10,108 in 2001–02), along with some study leave on full pay.

Clerk's Statement of Skills

The Clerk's Statement of Skills was reviewed during 2002–03 to reflect the department's increased emphasis on people skills, including the adoption of leadership as a core capability. The statement of skills arose from the Investors in People program and is designed to inform staff of the skills and knowledge they need to work effectively in each of the work areas of the department.

Workplace diversity

The department has developed and implemented a workplace diversity program, in accordance with section 18 of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*.

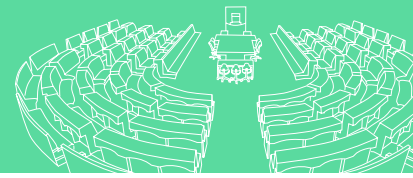
A comprehensive review of workplace diversity issues within the department was undertaken during 2002–03. This included a substantial rewrite of the workplace diversity program, streamlining the previous program with clearer objectives, strategies, actions and performance indicators related to workplace diversity.

In January 2003, all harassment contact officer positions were declared vacant and the vacancies were advertised as open to all staff. Expressions of interest were received from eight volunteers and all of them were accepted to participate in the harassment contact officer network. All contact officers received appropriate training or retraining. The Clerk launched the revised network in February 2003 and the revised workplace diversity program in May 2003, at the monthly management forums.

Occupational health and safety

The department's occupational health and safety (OH&S) policy and agreement with relevant staff representatives was originally formulated in 1991 under the terms of section 74 of the *Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991* – the OH&S Act. The agreement was reviewed in 1996 and again in 2001. The department's policy places specific OH&S responsibilities on all managers and staff. During 2002–03 those responsibilities continued to be met.

In 2002–03 there was one dangerous occurrence requiring notification under section 68 of the OH&S Act, which involved the removal of a person from the House of Representatives Chamber by two members of the Parliamentary Security Service.



No investigations were carried out and no directions or notices were given by the department in relation to sections 30, 45, 46 or 47 of the OH&S Act.

The department's OH&S committee met twice during the year. Summaries of the meetings were made available to staff through the staff bulletin.

The number of claims for compensation was smaller than in 2001–02 and no additional OH&S issues were identified during 2002–03.

We gave additional emphasis to the training of staff in OH&S principles and the provision of appropriate OH&S documentation during the year, in response to the findings of the OH&S audit conducted by Comcare last year. Workplace assessments were conducted for all staff during the year. Table 8 illustrates the injury groups and claims incidence for the department for the past three policy periods.

Table 8 Claims incidence, by injury group

Injury group	Incidence		
	Mar 2000– Feb 2001	Mar 2001– Feb 2002	Mar 2002– Feb 2003
Back	1	2	1
Fracture excluding back	–	–	–
Strain excluding back	6	4	2
Open wounds	–	–	1
Contusion/crush	1	1	–
Other injuries	–	–	–
Occupational overuse syndrome	–	–	1
Stress	–	–	–
Other diseases	1	–	–
Totals	9	7	5

Note: The department renews its OH&S policy annually in March.

Performance assessment processes

Administrative staff participated in the annual cycle of the ongoing work performance management process. This entailed setting annual work and development objectives, conducting annual assessments of work performance, providing upwards feedback from staff members to their supervisors and setting individual development plans for all staff members.

The individual development plans provide important information used to develop the department's internal training program each year.

All security staff completed their third work performance assessment cycle and commenced their fourth cycle. The Joint House Department will complete the assessments for the fourth cycle over the next financial year.

Recruitment and retention of staff

The department advertised to fill 22 ongoing vacancies during 2002–03 (39 in 2001–02), eight of which were filled by internal applicants. Of the 14 successful external applicants, seven were women (in 2001–02, six of the 18 successful external applicants were women).

During the year, the Security Controller's Office recruited 10 non-ongoing staff. This recruitment replaced staff who had left to take up secondments to other parliamentary departments or had obtained permanent employment elsewhere.

In 2002–03, the department used an assessment centre process as part of two selection processes for Parliamentary Service Level 4 and Level 6 vacancies. This process involved group discussions by candidates and the completion of written exercises, together with personal interviews and referee assessments.

SES managers continued to conduct exit interviews with staff leaving the department. As we found last year, the results showed that the department did not have any significant difficulties in retaining staff. In addition, an electronic exit interview form was introduced during the year. The results indicated that the staff had been very satisfied with their conditions of service, their feelings about their job, their personal relations with others, their participation and recognition, and their opportunities for development, whilst employed by the department.

Table 23 in Appendix 10 lists the reasons staff gave for leaving in 2002–03.

Operational initiatives

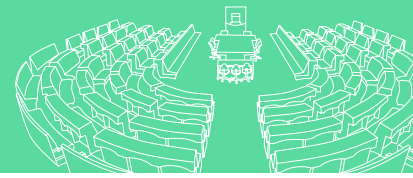
Members' survey

Feedback from members is vital in helping to gauge how effectively the department meets its objectives, including those set out in the corporate plan and the PBS. This feedback is needed every year. As previously mentioned, in 2002–03 the department initiated a new approach to surveying members. We decided to survey a random sample of 30 members in 2003, then another 30 members each year on a continuing basis, so that members would be surveyed on average once every five years. This year 22 out of the 30 members randomly selected for the survey participated.

All participants in the survey were asked whether they were satisfied overall with the services they received from the department. Members were overwhelmingly satisfied with the department's support in helping them fulfil their parliamentary duties and complimented the professionalism and courtesy of staff. The overall result of the survey was a 97 per cent satisfaction rate with the department's quality of service.

The department identified some service provision issues for further investigation and will begin addressing them early in the new financial year.

See Appendix 13 for detailed statistics on the survey findings.



Review of performance information

A working group, chaired by the Serjeant-at-Arms and including representatives from all output groups in the department, reviewed the department's performance information for both external and internal reporting. The review resulted in a revised outcome, output and performance information structure for the PBS for 2003–04.

It also resulted in a revised approach to the department's internal quarterly reporting. As noted earlier, quarterly reporting was suspended while the review was undertaken. A new quarterly reporting framework began in July 2003 (with the first reports covering the final quarter of 2002–03). Each quarterly report will have three elements:

- performance information for the quarter relating to the PBS performance indicators
- performance information for the quarter relating to specific additional internal performance indicators
- a report on progress made during the quarter against action items in the business plan.

We expect that this framework will give a more comprehensive and accountable basis to our quarterly reporting.

Knowledge management

We reported last year that Deakin Consulting Proprietary Limited had reviewed the department's record management processes and systems, presenting a report to the Executive in May 2002. The Executive considered the review, and established the departmental Knowledge Management Committee in November 2002 to determine how to give effect to the review's recommendations. In consequence, we will recruit a specialist records manager for a period of two years to review the department's record keeping systems, identify the department's record keeping requirements and commence implementing strategies to improve the relevant record keeping systems. This recruitment process commenced in June 2003.

Purchasing

During 2002–03, all goods and services were purchased in accordance with statutory and departmental guidelines, in particular the Chief Executive Instructions (CEIs). Financial delegations under the FMA Act were updated and are now based upon staff levels rather than position descriptions. This will allow the department to meet its business needs without the need to substantially change financial delegations.

The department changed to Westpac as its credit card service provider. This was to provide staff with greater access to credit card services in rural and regional areas. Additional services to be provided by Westpac, once fully implemented, will significantly reduce staff administrative requirements by enabling the acquitting of purchases online.

Table 9 provides information about key performance indicators (KPIs) for purchasing.

Table 9 Expenditure, by key performance indicators, 2002–03

Purchasing KPIs	2002–03	2001–02	Comments
Number of payments	2,800	3,600	The Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference was held in 2001–02 and caused increased payments last financial year
Total amount of payments	\$14 million	\$21 million	As for the number of payments
Number of suppliers	750	1,089	The reduction in the number of suppliers is due to a review of suppliers that occurred during the implementation of the new FMIS
Type of supplier:			The types of suppliers engaged by the department remained fairly constant, compared with 2001–02 results
• Government	3.4 per cent	8.5 per cent	
• Non-government	58.1 per cent	56.1 per cent	
• School or university	36.9 per cent	35.4 per cent	
Number of credit cards	80	70	The department's number of credit cards and amount spent on credit cards increased due to additional travel requirements of committee staff
Total amount of credit card transactions	\$1,770,000	\$530,087	See above

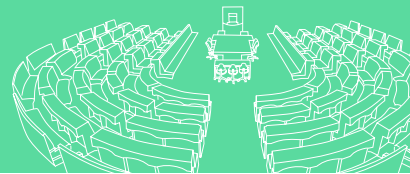
Assets management

The department's assets management strategy assists it to achieve efficient asset utilisation and allows it to identify under-performing assets and, if necessary, to redeploy capital to more value added activities.

The total written-down value of the department's assets is \$18.38 million.

Losses of equipment during the financial year were mainly due to theft and included three laptop computers and one monitor. The cost to the department was \$7,100 and was significantly lower than last year (\$27,800).

The department also undertook a major upgrade of departmental computers during the financial year. The upgrade included disposal of surplus and obsolete equipment.



Consultants and competitive tendering and contracting

Consultants

The policies and procedures for selecting consultants and approving expenditure for their services are set out in the CEs.

In 2002–03, 33 consultants were engaged to provide professional independent and expert advice or services to the department at a total cost of \$234,605. This expenditure covered payments made on all new contracts and payments made on contracts let in previous years. In 2001–02, 45 consultants were engaged at a total cost of \$503,540.

Appendix 12 contains details of consultancy services let to the value of \$10,000 or more.

Competitive tendering and contracting

The following services are provided free of charge by other parliamentary departments and were not included in the competitive tendering and contracting (CTC) process:

- computing, telecommunications and audiovisual infrastructure, facilities and support services (Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff)
- building support systems (Joint House Department)
- library services (Department of the Parliamentary Library).

The only other service that is provided by another Australian Government body to the department is security in some areas of the parliamentary precinct by the Australian Protective Service (APS). Government has made the decision to use the APS for this service and the APS contract is not included in the CTC process.

No contract was exempted by the Clerk from being published in the *Purchasing and Disposal Gazette*.

Advertising and market research

Details of payments made to advertising and market research organisations in 2002–03 are in Appendix 11.

Commonwealth Disability Strategy

All of the department's employment policies continued to comply with the requirements of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

During 2002–03, the department developed or reviewed the following employment policies, in keeping with the principles of the Act: the policy governing our six-monthly learning and development programs, the workplace diversity plan, the guide to the filling of vacancies, the Clerk's Statement of Skills, and the Leadership Statement.

The department's certified agreements and all AWAs in place during 2002–03 contained clauses to allow staff with disabilities to lodge complaints or grievances about any matters affecting their employment. These processes were the same for all staff members. There were no complaints or grievances from staff with disabilities regarding employment practices in 2002–03.

Recruitment information was made available to potential job applicants in formats that are accessible to people with disabilities, as defined in the Act. These include electronic and non-electronic formats. No requests for 'accessible' formats were received during the year. No staff were recruited during the year who required the department to make 'reasonable adjustments' to the workplace or work practices to accommodate any additional needs caused by any disability.

All of the department's training and development activities catered to the needs of staff with disabilities. The department did not offer any training and development programs on disability issues during the year.

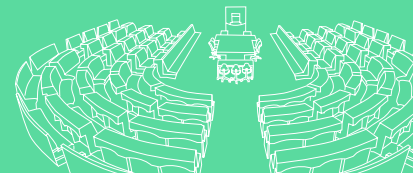
Discretionary grants

The department did not administer any discretionary grants in the 2002–03 financial year.

Ecologically sustainable development and environmental reporting

The department is not an agency for the purposes of section 516A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The Joint House Department is responsible for managing the building assets of Parliament House. That department is implementing an environmental management plan, which provides a guide to environmental management improvements in Parliament House for the three years to June 2003. The plan was developed in accordance with the principles outlined in ISO 14001 of the International Organisation for Standardisation, which deal with the preparation of environmental management systems. The Joint House Department reports on ecologically sustainable development and environmental performance matters in relation to Parliament House in its annual report.



Outlook

A major issue that will affect the management of the department in 2003–04 is the implementation of the remainder of the recommendations of the Podger review. As noted in the Clerk's review, the Houses resolved in August 2003 to fully implement the Podger review recommendations, including the amalgamation of the three joint service departments. The implications of the amalgamation for our department are:

- we must ensure that the quality of services provided to our department and to members will not be affected by the amalgamation
- we should consider, once the amalgamated department has settled into its role, having that department perform corporate processing functions for our department.

Significant attention will be given in the first half of the year to the negotiation of a new certified agreement. The department is committed to providing employment conditions that attract and retain staff, enable current and emerging requirements to be met and enable the department to best serve the House and the Parliament.

Maintaining the resource base of the department will be a challenge. While additional funds have been received to provide for enhanced security measures in the next four financial years, in the latter three of those years the additional funds must be offset by savings of the same amount, to be realised across the parliamentary departments. With the amalgamation of parliamentary departments, it is expected that significant savings will be achieved. However, there may be a need to find additional savings, including in our department. As the department's budgetary position is very tight, this could be difficult to achieve without adversely affecting our services.