

Output Group 3—Procedure Office

**Outputs**

- Provision of legislative drafting services to non-government senators.
- 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 interparliamentary relations, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union, overseas conferences and delegations program for senators.

*Administered item*

Support for the Citizenship Visits Program for school children visiting Parliament House.

	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>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>Curriculum materials and Education Centre programs are consistent with national and state curriculum frameworks and standards.</p>	<p>The senators’ survey in 2005 indicated that overall satisfaction with outputs from this group was high, ranging from 87% to 94%. Advice was evaluated as ‘excellent’ and ‘the quality of the work has always been good’.</p> <p>Amendments and bills continued to be prepared in accordance with the constitutional authority of the Senate. While the survey pointed to an 87% level of satisfaction with this output, resources and strategies will be devoted to addressing the dissatisfaction noted by three senators.</p> <p>Evaluation of each seminar and public information program indicated a consistently high level of participant satisfaction. The survey indicated a 91% level of satisfaction with the output’s publications.</p> <p>Programs and materials retained their focus on meeting national and state frameworks and standards. The survey showed a 94% level of senators’ satisfaction with this output and indicated a need for less focus on the House of Representatives and a proportionate emphasis on the work of the Senate.</p>
Timeliness	<p>Meetings held, documentation provided and reports produced within timeframes set by the Senate or the committee, as relevant.</p> <p>During sitting periods, amendments drafted as soon as possible after receipt of instructions.</p> <p>Information available on the internet and in publications is up to date and available as soon as practicable.</p>	<p>All meetings of scrutiny committees were held as scheduled, with all documentation provided within timeframes set by the committees.</p> <p>While drafting continued to be commenced as instructions were received, the large number of senators now accessing the service and the consistent and routine last-minute issuing of instructions by senators resulted in a mixed report card on timeliness. The timeliness of the drafting service was ranked in the survey from ‘incredibly timely’ through to ‘now very slow’, with more resources seen as a solution to delays.</p> <p>Internal timetables for the provision of information on the internet by the output group were met. The output’s publication <i>Senate Daily Summary</i> continued to be one of the most frequently used documents on the Senate website.</p>

## Analysis

To assist the efficient management of the services which the Procedure Office provides to senators, the office is divided into six functional areas, as shown in Figure 13. The office is headed by the Clerk Assistant (Procedure), who, in addition to managing the office and providing procedural, advisory and drafting services, including a large number of presentations and seminars on Senate procedure, also performs duties as a clerk at the table in the Senate chamber.

The full-time equivalent staffing level for the Procedure Office for the year remained constant at 31.

The cost of providing the services of this output group was \$5.1 million.

Figure 13 Elements and responsibilities of the Procedure Office

<b>Executive and Legislative Drafting</b> Cleaver Elliott, Clerk Assistant Procedural advice and training Legislative drafting of amendments and private senators' bills				
<b>Biographical Dictionary</b>	<b>Parliamentary Education Office</b>	<b>Regulations and Ordinances Committee</b>	<b>Research Section</b>	<b>Scrutiny of Bills Committee</b>
<i>Ann Millar, Director</i>	<i>Ann Owner, Director to December 2004</i>  <i>Chris Reid, Director from January 2005</i>	<i>James Warmenhoven, Secretary</i>	<i>Wayne Hooper, Director</i>  <i>Kay Walsh (acting from February 2005 to May 2005)</i>	<i>Richard Pye, Secretary</i>
Production, editing and publication of <i>The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate</i>	Provision of parliamentary education services to schools, teachers and students	Secretariat, advisory and administrative support to the committee	Research into matters of parliamentary historical and constitutional significance	Secretariat, advisory and administrative support to the committee

### Legislative drafting and procedural advice

In providing procedural advice and legislative drafting services to non-government senators, we met senators' requirements by:

- providing procedural advice to non-government senators, in response to requests and proactively
- providing procedural training and briefing to senators and senators' staff, in response to requests and proactively
- providing accurate advice in the chamber and for use in the chamber
- drafting amendments to bills for non-government senators, in response to instructions received from senators and senators' staff

- drafting private senators’ bills for non-government senators, in response to instructions received from senators and senators’ staff.

We also prepared an average of seven procedural scripts per sitting day, one fewer than last year’s average. The tendency of senators and their staff to seek this advice at very short notice continued during the year. These scripts included notices of motion, terms of reference for committee inquiries, questions, and related documents for senators’ use in the chamber and in committees.

The Procedure Office drafted and processed all non-government amendments and private senators’ bills required by senators during 2004–05 for use in the Senate, to assist with Senate committee work and for the purpose of discussions and negotiations with interested constituents.

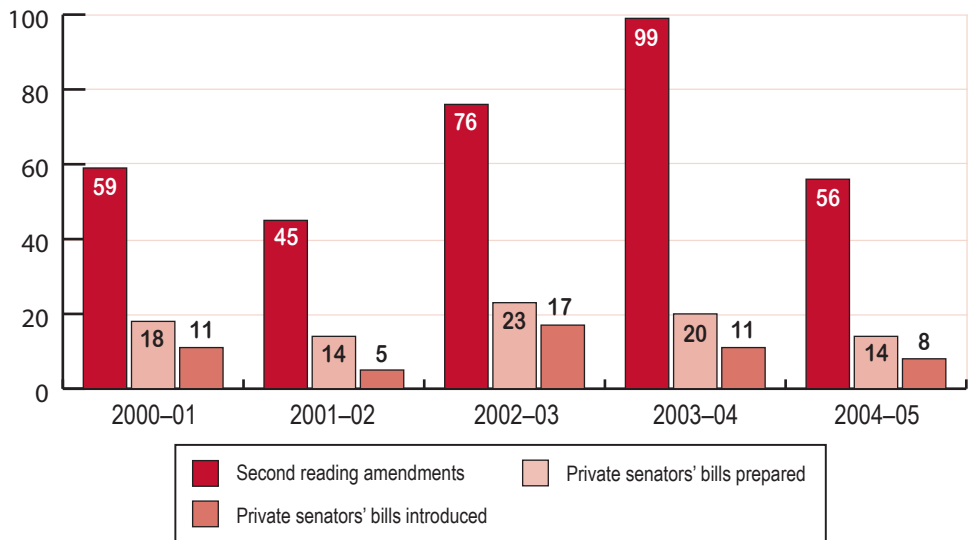
Last year, the Procedure Office prepared a manual to assist senators with the preparation of their private senators’ bills, *Preparing Private Senators Bills, Explanatory Memoranda and Second Reading Speeches: A Guide for Senators*. There were six requests from senators or senators’ staff for copies of the guide.

The numbers of amendments arising from the four most demanding bills, shown in Table 3, are indicative of the general levels of legislative drafting activity during 2004–05. A comparative summary of the legislative drafting services provided by the office in 2004–05 and in the previous three years is provided in figures 14 and 15.

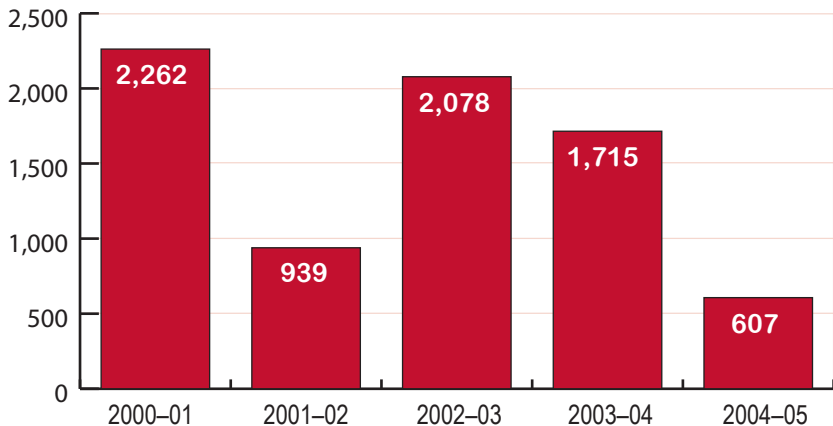
**Table 3 Bills generating significant workload, 2004–05**

<b>Bill</b>	<b>No. of circulated amendments</b>	<b>No. of sets of circulated amendments</b>
Australian Communications and Media Authority Bill 2004	13	4
National Security Information (Criminal Proceedings) Bill 2004	21	3
Schools Assistance (Learning Together—Achievement through Choice and Opportunity) Bill 2005	41	4
US Free Trade Agreement Implementation (Customs Tariff) Bill 2004	38	6

**Figure 14 Legislative drafting services provided to non-government senators**



**Figure 15 Legislative drafting services provided to non-government senators—committee of the whole amendments**



Providing procedural advice across a wide range of senators' requirements continued to be a core function of the Procedure Office. As in previous years, senators and senators' staff frequently sought advice about the operation of various standing orders and the practices of the Senate, as well as advice on how to satisfy their requirements through the procedures of the Senate and its committees. Introductory procedural advice was also provided to senators-elect from November 2004, and the demand for training new staff of senators and providing refresher training sessions in procedural matters to existing staff remained strong. This continuing high volume of work was a major part of the Clerk Assistant's responsibilities.

**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.

The secretariats of the two scrutiny committees assisted the committees to discharge their responsibilities in accordance with their standing orders, including through the publication of the required reports and digests (published every sitting week) and publications such as the *Delegated Legislation Monitor* (also published every sitting week) and the *Disallowance Alert* and *Scrutiny of Regulations Alert* (updated on-line as required), and through the preparation of disallowance notices.

It is the responsibility of the two committees to examine all bills and legislative instruments within their jurisdiction, and the secretariats, assisted by their legal advisers, completed all the necessary administrative work to assist the committees to do so. The workload statistics show that the Regulations and Ordinances Committee staff processed 2,432 instruments during the reporting period (an increase from 1,536 in 2003–04) and 268 responses from ministers (129 in 2003–04). In relation to the Scrutiny of Bills committee, the secretariat processed 207 bills during the reporting period (206 in 2003–04) and commented on 81 bills (78 bills in 2003–04).

Last year, we reported that the Scrutiny of Bills Committee secretariat had begun developing a database to improve administrative support for the committee. In September 2004, the Department of Parliamentary Services advised the secretariat that it could no longer assign resources to the development project. At this stage, there are no plans to initiate a new project.

### Interjurisdictional activities

The secretariats of both scrutiny committees continued to serve as a centre of advice on legislative scrutiny matters for members of the wider public service, as well as for staff of state and territory legislatures. During the year, the secretariats coordinated the preparation of *The Development of National Scrutiny Principles—Discussion Paper* and jointly hosted, with the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly Scrutiny Committee, the Biennial Conference of Australasian and Pacific Legislative Scrutiny Committees. This provided committee members with an interjurisdictional forum to consider the operation of the Commonwealth's *Legislative Instruments Act 2003* and other emerging issues in legislative scrutiny.

### Public information and parliamentary research

The Research Section continued to coordinate and deliver parliamentary information services for the community during the year, through lectures, exhibitions, seminars, publications, programs for visiting parliamentarians and officials, and internships and fellowships.

### Biographical dictionary

The Biographical Dictionary Unit continued to work on the authorship and compilation of entries for future volumes of *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate*, particularly in relation to Volume 3, which covers the period from 1962 to 1983. This volume will contain articles on the 106 senators of the period and their four clerks. As with volumes 1 and 2, the unit's officers will ensure that all articles in this volume are verified, not only to confirm accuracy, but to ensure as far as possible that all important information is included. To date, 59 entries have been written by academic and other authors. Of these, half have been verified and one-quarter have been edited, with officers of the unit continuing to place great emphasis on the need for accuracy and meticulous and thorough research.

The promotion of Volume 2 continued during 2004-05, with numerous radio interviews, briefings and articles in newspapers, addresses at relevant conferences and institutions, the public distribution of flyers (including distribution to schools through the Parliamentary Education Office), and the despatch of copies for review.

### Lectures

Seven lectures in the Senate Occasional Lecture series were arranged by the Research Section in 2004-05, and collectively attracted about 1,100 attendees. Several lectures focused on Australia's development as a modern democracy.

The text of each lecture, together with a transcript of the question and answer session which followed it, was published in the department's journal *Papers on Parliament*.

The lectures, held in the Main Committee Room during Friday lunchtimes, continue to be a prominent feature on the Canberra public lecture circuit, attracting a repeat audience which is very appreciative of the lecture series.

### Exhibitions

During the year, the Research Section continued to maintain and update a number of semi-permanent exhibitions in public areas of Parliament House: 'For Peace, Order, and Good Government', commemorating the First Parliament; 'The Story of Parliament', in the Members' Hall of Parliament House; and 'Women in Federal Parliament', which includes representations of all the women who have served in the parliament since Federation. All women who joined the parliament after the 2004 election supplied their photographs for inclusion in the exhibition, and the new photos were installed by March 2005.

A substantial redesign of the panel which displays projected images in the 'For Peace, Order, and Good Government' exhibition was undertaken during the year, in conjunction with an upgrading of the electronic equipment used in the display. Now the public is able to view video footage of the Senate and its committees in action. As foreshadowed in last year's annual report, work also commenced on the creation of a series of short videos which will illustrate to the public how the Senate and its committees go about the work of legislating and conducting committee inquiries.

In July 2004, the department participated in the annual Parliament House Open Day by mounting some displays, including a number which illustrated the work of Senate committees, in the Members' Hall. Before the open day, a special display illustrating the work of Senate committees was designed and placed in a major shopping centre in Canberra to publicise the Senate's participation.

### Programs for visiting parliamentarians and officials

According to the commentary received from visitors, the Australian Senate is seen as a role model for legislatures around Australia and the world, and is the focus of many visits from parliamentarians, parliamentary officers and others who wish to observe the Senate generally, or to enhance their knowledge of particular aspects of its work.

During the year, four separate attachment programs were arranged for individuals and groups from legislatures in the Czech Republic, Indonesia and Thailand. The parliamentary recess which occurred in the lead-up to the general election may have resulted in a reduced demand for visits by overseas delegations during this period (from seven visits in 2003-04), as visitors naturally wish their visits to coincide with the sittings of the Senate. One group

of visitors, from the new Regional Representatives Council (DPD) of Indonesia, led by the Deputy Chairman of the DPD, Mr H Irman Gusman, wished to observe the Senate estimates process, and arranged its visit to coincide with the budget estimates hearings.

The Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives jointly sponsored the fourth Inter-Parliamentary Study Program, held over two weeks in July and August 2004. The program, involving 16 senior parliamentary officials from 14 countries and representatives from the European Union and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, provided a comprehensive introduction to Australian parliamentary systems, practice and administration.

### Seminars and briefings

The department continued to offer a range of seminars on the work of the Senate for Australian Government public servants, with a total of 1,117 people participating in 37 seminars. The seminars have become an integral part of the graduate induction programs of a number of government departments and agencies. The Australian National Audit Office and the departments of Defence, Finance and Administration, and Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry each enrolled groups of 20 or more participants in the seminar program during the year.

While most seminars attracted participants from a range of departments and took place at Parliament House, others were tailored to meet the needs of particular institutions, where they were held in house. Members of senators' staff and departmental staff were invited to participate in these seminars free of charge, and new staffers frequently availed themselves of the opportunity. Places in the seminars were also provided free of charge to staff of other parliamentary departments. Seminars were arranged for students in the Australian National Internships Program in July 2004 and February 2005.

In addition to formal seminars, briefings ranging in duration from one hour to half a day were arranged for a variety of individuals, such as academics and doctoral candidates, and groups representing organisations, including private companies, the Australian Rural Leadership Program, and the departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade (for locally engaged staff), Defence (for the 'Quantum Leadership' program), Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, and the Attorney-General. Specific briefing programs were also presented for staff from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Austrade, the Australian Communications Authority, Centrelink, and Telstra.

An orientation seminar for senators-elect was held on 17 November 2004. This training will be continued in an intensive three-day program planned for July 2005.

### Publications

The eleventh edition of *Odgers' Australian Senate Practice* was published in 2004. The output group manages the marketing of each new edition. Also published on the internet as an electronic document in HTML and PDF formats, *Odgers' Australian Senate Practice* is regularly updated by supplements in hard and electronic copy.

The second edition of *Can Responsible Government Survive in Australia?*, written by former senator and deputy president Mr David Hamer, was published by the output group in November 2004. The Research Section edited, designed, typeset and marketed the book.

*Can Responsible Government Survive in Australia?* and *Platypus and Parliament: The Australian Senate in Theory and Practice* (published by the Research Section in the previous financial year) attracted sales both within Australia and overseas during 2004–05.

In April 2004, Emeritus Professor John Molony gave a lecture on the Eureka Stockade and its significance in the development of democracy in Australia, as part of the Senate Occasional Lecture series. To mark the 150th anniversary of the uprising, in December 2004 the Research Section published an illustrated booklet, *Eureka and the Prerogative of the People*, based on the lecture.

The second volume of the historical series *Business of the Senate*, covering the work of the Third Parliament from 1906 to 1910, was completed in June 2004 and tabled on 16 November 2004. Work has commenced on the third volume, which will record the work of the Fourth Parliament from 1910 to 1913. This series will ultimately document the work of the Senate up to 1970, when the modern *Business of the Senate* commenced.

The *Senate Daily Summary*, a summary of each day's Senate chamber and estimates hearings proceedings, is distributed primarily as an electronic document. On the days it is produced, the *Senate Daily Summary* is printed for a small internal distribution and emailed to senators and their staff.

A range of publications publicising the Senate and the parliamentary process—including a Senate brochure, the *Senate Briefs* series, and the department's journal *Papers on Parliament*—are issued to the public free of charge. A brochure, distributed in the main foyer through Visitor Services, and through members of parliament directly to their constituents, is issued as a joint publication with the departments of the House of Representatives and Parliamentary Services. A multilingual brochure, offering information on parliament and Parliament House in Mandarin, Japanese, German and French, is also available.

### Information inquiries

The department prepared responses to requests for information about the Senate from a range of overseas publications, such as *The Parliamentarian* and the journal of the Society of Clerks at the Table. Questionnaires on parliamentary practice were completed for the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Many members of the Australian community also made inquiries, by phone, letter or email, which were answered promptly or referred to other information sources.

### Richard Baker Senate Prize

The Research Section administers the Richard Baker Senate Prize. The prize, valued at \$3,000, was initiated by the President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Paul Calvert, in 2003. It is awarded annually for the best essay, article, thesis, dissertation, book or journalism (in any medium) on the work of the Australian Senate. The 2004 prize was awarded in March 2005 jointly to Ian Hancock for his monograph *The V.I.P. affair: the Causes, Course and Consequences of a Ministerial and Public Service Cover-up*, and to Dr Sarah Bachelard for her article *Executive Accountability in the 'Children Overboard' Affair*.

### Australian National Internships Program

Since 1993, the parliament has worked in cooperation with the Australian National Internships Program at the Australian National University to place interns with parliamentarians and parliamentary committees and departments. More than 860 students have participated in the program since 1993. During the year, 77 interns were placed in Parliament House, of whom 20 were placed with senators and Senate committees.

### Senate Fellowship

The Senate Fellowship program enables selected scholars to have access to the department and to Parliament House to conduct their research. The program is virtually free of cost to the department, as no fees or allowances for fares and other expenses are provided to the fellows.

Two Senate fellows were appointed in 2004–05. Mr Chris Ballinger, lecturer in politics at St Peter's College, Oxford, was placed in the department from July to December 2004. His research focused on the practicalities of bicameral relations and proposals to reform upper houses of parliament. Professor John Halligan, of the University of Canberra, was appointed Senate Fellow for a 12-month period from June 2005. It is proposed that Professor Halligan will finalise a manuscript on parliamentary committees during his appointment and undertake research on the career paths of parliamentarians.

### Parliamentary education services

During 2004–05, the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) continued to discharge its responsibility for providing to students and teachers an extensive program of education about federal parliament, its operations and its significance, while also assisting senators and members to provide information about the parliament to their constituents. The output is characterised by two functions: firstly, in the Education Centre, the provision of a one-hour role-play for students who travel to Canberra; and secondly, the provision of outreach programs around Australia, often in association with local members and senators, and the production of on-line publications for students and teachers who may not be able to visit Parliament House.

### Programs

During 2004–05, PEO programs recorded the following achievements.

- The Education Centre continued to develop programs and role-play scripts, employing greater flexibility to help students to explore the legislative process—for example, adding a segment enabling students to move amendments to bills, and giving students a greater choice of bills to use in the program.
- A teaching aid, titled *Unravelling the Role Play*, was published. This resource was developed for teachers who, having observed the role-play at Parliament House, may use the aid to replicate the process in their own classrooms. The PEO is able to reach a wider audience of students by providing such training for teachers.
- The PEO website continued to be reorganised and become increasingly interactive, both to meet the demands of the PEO target audience and to greatly expand the reach of the office.
- Outreach programs (whereby PEO staff travel to regional centres to show students and teachers how to study and learn about the federal parliament and its committees) were completed in Adelaide in South Australia; Ararat, Bacchus Marsh, Ballarat and Melbourne in Victoria; Armidale, Bathurst, Junee, Lismore, Newcastle, Sydney, Tamworth, Uralla and Wagga Wagga in New South Wales; Brisbane, Ipswich, Mackay and Nambour in Queensland; Darwin in the Northern Territory; and Launceston in Tasmania.
- The PEO continued to conduct a range of one-week fellowship programs in Canberra, including tailored sessions for teachers from Far North Queensland and teachers from West Melbourne.

- In May 2005, a PEO representative attended an international conference on parliamentary education, in Zambia, and was also a guest of a number of overseas parliaments, in South Africa, Canada, Scotland and England.
- A successful collaboration with the Queensland Department of Education established the *Cockatoo Island* program (the PEO's successful tool for teaching parliamentary concepts to junior primary schoolchildren, described in more detail in previous annual reports) in an outdoor 'parliament of birds' for students in grades 3 to 5.

During the reporting period, the PEO continued to work closely with the National Museum of Australia to produce *Talkback Classroom*, a stimulating program for senior secondary school students. More than 700 students were involved during the year, generating strong interest from school communities and parliamentarians. The program provides students with a series of briefings on the structure and operations of the parliament and government of Australia, and opportunities to interview distinguished guests in front of large studio audiences. Guests have included parliamentarians, a judge, an ambassador and the Governor-General.

Rotary Adventure in Citizenship, a successful annual joint venture between the PEO, two Canberra Rotary clubs and the National Capital Authority, was held again in 2004-05. More than 50 year-11 students from across Australia were sponsored by Rotary to take part in a week-long citizenship program run by the PEO. Emphasis was placed on experiencing the parliament through role-playing and debate on current issues, to encourage delegates to become active citizens.

In addition, several successful in-house programs, some of which were reported on last year, continued to be delivered by the PEO. They included role-plays for school groups, sessions of the National Youth Science Forum and *Heywire* (a program for rural youth run by the ABC), Little Lunch Sitings and the Budget Forum (held during budget week with a discussion panel featuring guests from the parliament, the press, the welfare sector and academia).

### Professional networks

During 2004-05, the PEO continued to forge strong and useful networks within the parliament and Australia, including by:

- attending the Parliamentary Education Office Conference, held in Adelaide in October 2004
- continuing to monitor state and territory curriculum developments
- working closely with senators and members
- providing performance updates to the PEO Advisory Committee
- forging greater links with interstate parliaments.

### Administered item

The Citizenship Visits Program (CVP) provides subsidies for school groups travelling more than 1,000 kilometres to Canberra to visit the PEO Education Centre. The program is administered by the Department of the House of Representatives and jointly funded by that department and the Department of the Senate.

Figure 16 shows the numbers of students who visited the PEO Education Centre and the numbers of students who received the CVP subsidy in the years 2000 to 2005. Figure 17 gives the same information for school groups.

Figure 16 Numbers of students who visited the PEO Education Centre, 2000 to 2005

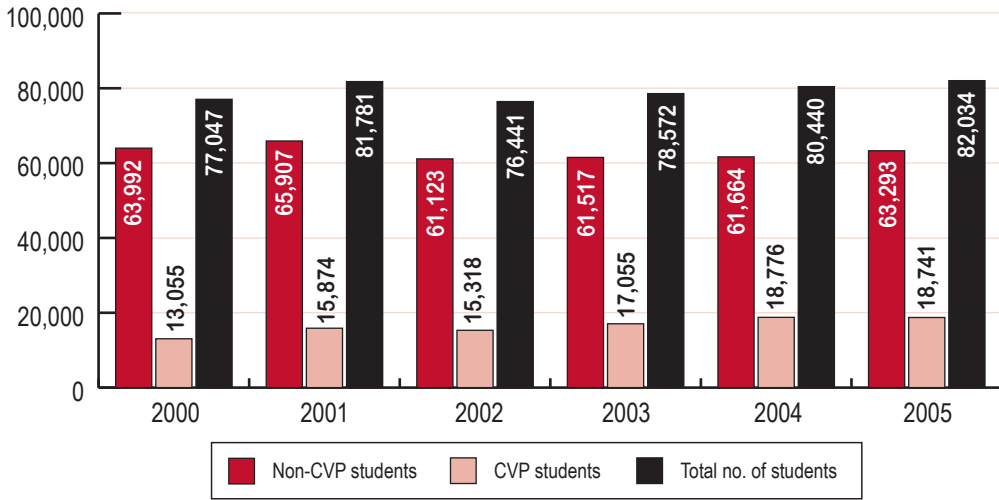
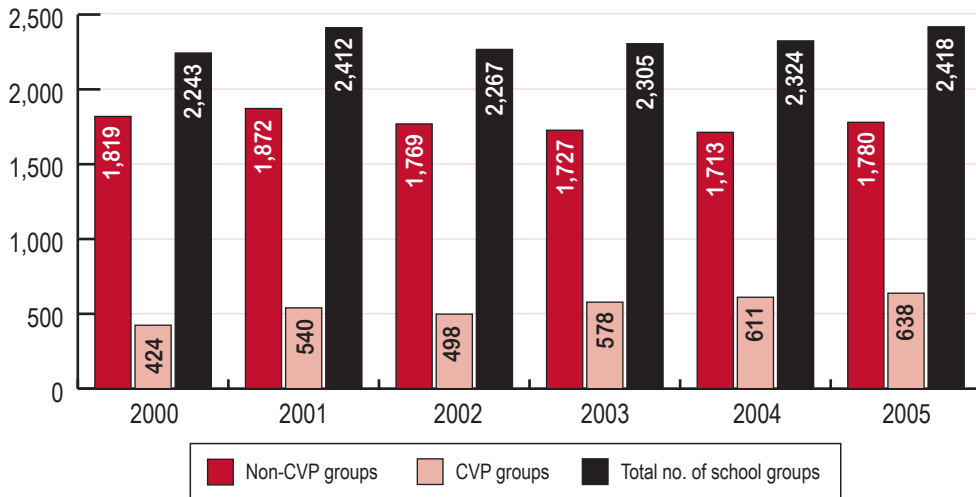


Figure 17 Numbers of groups that visited the PEO Education Centre, 2000 to 2005



Some 2,418 school groups (82,034 students, including CVP students) visited the PEO Education Centre over the financial year. These are substantial numbers. As figures 16 and 17 show, the proportion of CVP students and groups has grown steadily since 2002. Any further increases in the numbers of CVP students in future years will force corresponding reductions in the numbers of non-CVP students able to participate in Education Centre programs, unless the budget allocation for this program is increased to accommodate extra students.

## **Interparliamentary relations**

The department funded the attendances of senators and members from the Australian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) at the 112th IPU Assembly, held in Manila, Philippines, in April 2005. Because of the 2004 federal election, Australia did not have a representative at the 111th Assembly (held in Geneva, Switzerland, in September–October 2004). The Director, Journals and Notice Paper, Table Office, continued to serve as secretary to the Australian IPU delegation.

At the assembly in Manila, members of the Australian delegation contributed fully to all debates, including those of the three standing committees, and attended several other meetings. One delegate was elected to the coordinating committee of women parliamentarians and another was elected to participate in the important work of a drafting committee that prepared a resolution on the 2004 tsunami and other natural disasters for adoption by the IPU. With the approval of the Presiding Officers, a member of the Australian Group also attended an IPU–United Nations panel discussion on financing for development, which was held in New York in June 2005.

In addition to its support of IPU activities, the department provided secretaries to two parliamentary delegations conducting bilateral visits to Italy and Russia, and to Kenya and Mozambique. The secretaries to these delegations were experienced officers who provided administrative and research support at all stages of the delegations' visits, including during the preparation of reports for tabling in the parliament.

## ***Significant changes in functions and services***

There were no significant changes to the functions of, or the services provided by, the output group during the year.

## ***Factors, events and trends influencing performance***

Extensive use continued to be made of the legislative drafting and procedural advice services of the Procedure Office. As is evident from figures 14 and 15, drafting workload demands remained high. The office continued to maximise the efficiency of its drafting services through close coordination with other areas of the department, particularly the Printing and Desktop Publishing Subsection and the Legislation and Documents Section of the Table Office, which provided important technical assistance with the drafting of amendments and bills.

Factors affecting the legislative drafting workload of the office during the review period were:

- the number of bills introduced in the Senate
- whether the bills caused senators to have amendments drafted
- the number of public policy issues emerging in Australian society which senators sought to address by private senators' bills
- the extent of negotiation between senators and others on the wording of amendments
- uncertainty about the timing of the 2004 federal election, causing extra pressure on the need to complete a legislative program
- the number of sitting days and the concentration of legislative activity on particular sitting days.

The office continued to receive valuable support from participants in the Working in the Senate (WISE) program, who assisted with legislative drafting and related research work during their placements with the Procedure Office.

The reputation of, and demand for, the department's seminars for public servants and other groups remains high, with many departments and agencies being repeat customers. The number of seminars we are able to conduct is close to maximum capacity, as those who conduct the seminars must maintain their primary focus in serving the needs of the Senate and senators. It is this direct experience which makes their presentations sought after.

### ***Evaluation***

Much of the work of the output group involves frequent and direct contact with senators and their staff, or with members of the public. That contact provides the mechanism for continual appraisal of the work of the output group, as well as opportunities to respond to changing requirements.

Formal and informal mechanisms available to the output group—such as letters, emails, phone calls, the seminar evaluation forms completed by every participant in every seminar, and direct advice from senators, their staff and members of the public—indicated high levels of satisfaction with the services provided by the group. Figure 18 gives examples of the favourable comments we received.

Figure 18 **Typical feedback on Output Group 3 programs**

**On the seminar program ...**

‘Overall this was a very valuable day ... a good opportunity to refresh and expand my understanding of the Senate and the constitution.’

(a participant in the graduate program, Department of Environment and Heritage)

‘... very worthwhile, should be mandatory for all public servants.’

(an Executive Level 2 officer, Department of Defence)

‘I will be recommending this seminar to my colleagues.’

(an Australian Public Service Level 6 officer, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources)

‘Overall, the most interesting training session thus far conducted for the Graduate Development Program. Thoroughly enjoyable, well done.’

(a participant in the graduate program, Department of Defence)

‘Just what I needed to give me a more complete picture of the Senate committees and my role as a public servant—particularly when reporting for ‘estimates’ or preparing question on notice responses.’

(an Executive Level 1 officer, Department of Education, Science and Training)

‘Sorry I was unable to attend sooner! Great level of information provided by very experienced staff. Has left me wanting more.’

(an Australian Public Service Level 6 officer, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations)

**On the Parliamentary Education Office programs ...**

‘The Parliamentary Education Office is seen throughout the world as an example of best practice ... I think that we should take that as a badge of honour.’

(House of Representatives Hansard, 16 March 2005)

‘It was a wonderful, energising and insightful two days. My knowledge of our constitution and parliamentary processes has been enhanced enormously.’

(student evaluation from a Queensland outreach program)

‘Just a quick email to say how much my students enjoyed the role-play activities ... they have really gained from the experience.’

(teacher feedback after an outreach program)

‘After such an exciting week, it was hard to return to work yesterday ... I cannot stop telling everyone how exciting Canberra was.’

(Senate Fellowship program participant)

The major formal means of evaluating the work of the output group is the biennial survey of senators’ satisfaction with the services provided by the department. The 2005 survey revealed high levels of satisfaction with the services provided by Output Group 3.

The legislative drafting service continued to be subjected to high levels of demand at short notice. Most responding to the survey were either satisfied or highly satisfied with legislative drafting services and procedural support. However, two of the 25 senators surveyed reported a high level of dissatisfaction and one reported dissatisfaction with the level of service, with

timeliness and sufficiency of resources being the main areas of concern. The department will respond to these concerns by putting in extra staff resources, by encouraging senators' staff to submit requests for amendments in a timely fashion and by continuing to advise senators about the value of referring bills to committees as a means of developing and testing amendments in a considered and timely way.

*The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate* has continued to attract considerable interest and comment as a reputable work of scholarship. During the year, this was reflected in positive reviews, and in the fact that sales of Volume 2 over 12 months totalled 476 copies, from a print run of 1,250 copies, while sales of Volume 1 continued. Reviews and newspaper comments were positive, and included the following:

The senators whose political lives are recorded here may be dead, buried and mainly forgotten but the issues they debated and the causes and the states they represented are not. As Harry Evans reminds us in his introduction, the Senate prevented the parliament from being just a rubber stamp ... This volume is the second in a series ... It meets high standards of scholarship and book production, and is, in effect, a gift to the nation.

*The Australian*, 1 September 2004

This handsome volume, produced by the Biographical Dictionary Unit in the Department of the Senate, consists of generally illuminating entries on the lives, personalities and careers of ... senators ... through the Great Depression, World War II and the Cold War years ... The entries—which are more akin to small articles—are rarely pedestrian; most are written with flair and an eye for the defining idiosyncrasy.

*Australian Historical Studies*, 125, 2005.

Feedback received during the year, mainly from the parliamentary guides' service, indicated that visitors to Parliament House were continuing to express appreciation of, and interest in, the various exhibitions arranged and maintained by the department.

Feedback from senators, subscribers, members of the public and staff of the parliamentary guides' service indicated that Senate publications continued to meet client needs in terms of their content, format, accessibility and timeliness. The *Senate Daily Summary* continued to be the most frequently used document on the Senate website. Appraisal from users of the summary—in ministers' offices, government departments, academia, embassies and the media—indicated that it was highly valued as a convenient way of keeping track of the work of the Senate.

The department's journal, *Papers on Parliament*, continued to be widely read and cited in other publications. In the preface to a book on the Senate, a visiting American scholar wrote:

I encourage interested readers to explore the Senate's Papers on Parliament series ... It is difficult to imagine American political scientists and political practitioners on Capitol Hill in Washington finding such common ground, or even making the effort to look for it.

Public response, as measured by attendance, requests for transcripts and results of formal surveys, indicated that the Senate Occasional Lecture series continued to meet a demand for authoritative information and comment on parliamentary, constitutional and historical matters.

Visiting parliamentarians and officials universally indicated, orally or in writing, their gratitude for and satisfaction with the programs arranged for them.

Questionnaires were distributed to all participants in the Senate seminar program. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, and managers of the program took care to be responsive to any suggestions for change that appeared in them.

As foreshadowed in last year's report, an evaluation of the Education Centre was conducted. The evaluation led to a revision of the scripts used in the role-plays conducted in the centre, including a fresh focus on the role of the Senate and its committees. The evaluation also addressed comments made about PEO programs by senators in the 2005 survey. Further program evaluations—and evaluations, under the performance communication scheme, of the performance of PEO staff—are planned for the next reporting period.

In all cases in which the department provided secretaries to parliamentary delegations, delegates expressed satisfaction with the support and advice provided by those officers, most commonly in remarks made in debate on the tabling of the parliamentary delegation reports. In every case, reports were drafted and tabled in a timely manner and to the satisfaction of the delegation.

Individual performance was also evaluated under the performance communication scheme, as required by the department's certified agreement, and all Procedure Office staff were assessed as being 'effective or better'.

## ***Performance outlook***

The Procedure Office will continue to provide its broad range of services and to maintain service levels at the high standards expected by senators. The office will do this by retaining and, where necessary, recruiting high-performing staff who understand the requirements of senators. The office will provide training to its own and senators' staff, and procedural briefings for senators themselves, to assist senators in their work in the Senate and its committees.

The office expects that the existing high demand for training programs for public servants and visiting parliamentary officials will continue. The office will develop and maintain training programs to cope with the demand.

The Biographical Dictionary Unit will continue to focus on meeting its goal of having over half the manuscript for Volume 3 prepared by the end of the coming financial year, and to have finalised arrangements for the publication of this volume.

The PEO will continue to develop and enhance its parliamentary education agenda, including by completing a reorganised and interactive website, launching specific teacher-based and student-based learning resources, and pursuing initiatives designed to increase student involvement in learning about the Senate. The PEO expects to continue to host record numbers of students at the Education Centre and, in doing so, will be trialling an additional class beginning at 5 pm during the high-demand period of July to September. The PEO will also work with members and senators to provide educational resources for their constituents.