

Departmental overview

Supporting the Senate and senators

The Senate department is the secretariat to the Australian Senate. Its core functions derive from this purpose and its work is substantially driven by the requirements of the Senate and senators. It provides services in four areas:

Senate support – advice and secretariat support for the Senate

Committee support – advice and secretariat support for Senate and some joint committees

Senators' services – office services and other support services to senators and Senate officeholders in Parliament House

Public education and awareness – promotion of public knowledge and awareness of the role and work of the Senate and its committees.

In undertaking its functions the department is responsible not to the government of the day but to the Senate and all senators, maintaining complete impartiality in serving equally senators from all political parties and independent senators.

Before turning to the department's performance during 2014–15, this overview sets out the department's organisational structure, program structure and objectives.

Organisational structure

The department is responsible to the Senate through the President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Stephen Parry, who was elected to that position on 7 July 2014. The administrative head of the department is the Clerk of the Senate, Dr Rosemary Laing, who was appointed in December 2009. The department is organised into the Clerk's Office and four other offices, as shown in figure 1. Figure 1 also identifies the elements of each office.

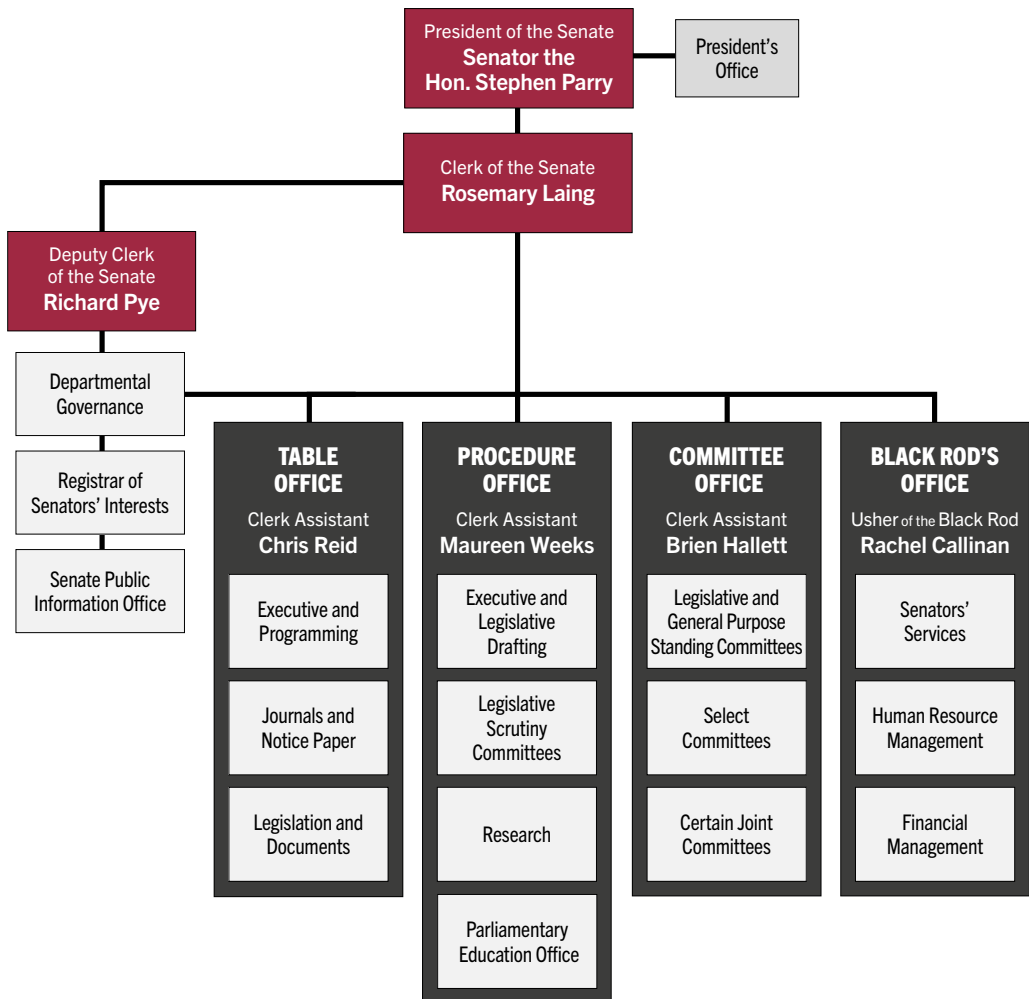
Senior staff from across the department provide direct support to the Senate on sitting days as clerks at the table. The following staff performed such duties during the year:

- Rosemary Laing
- Chris Reid
- Sue Blunden
- Tim Bryant
- Richard Pye
- Rachel Callinan
- James Warmenhoven
- Maureen Weeks
- Brien Hallett
- Jackie Morris

The Usher of the Black Rod performs certain formal and ceremonial duties on sitting days. During 2014–15, the following staff assisted with these duties:

- John Baczynski
- Anthony Szell
- Glenn Krause

Figure 1 – Organisational structure, 30 June 2015



Outcome and program structure

In planning terms, the department's purpose is expressed as a single outcome: Provide advisory and administrative support services to enable the Senate and senators to fulfil their representative and legislative duties. In providing these services staff support the operations of the Senate and its committees, and promote public awareness of their role and work. In order to achieve its outcome, the department's objectives, set out in its corporate plan 2012–2015, are to:

- continue to develop expertise in the constitutional and procedural bases of the Senate and its committees
- maintain and improve services to the Senate, its committees, senators and other users of departmental resources using efficient and up-to-date technology
- ensure the highest standard of accurate and prompt procedural advice
- publish a range of practical, procedural resources on the work of the Senate and the Parliament and maximise awareness of and access to these resources
- produce and deliver effective education and information programs
- implement effective workforce planning, recruitment and staff development practices to ensure the department has a highly skilled, knowledgeable and motivated workforce.

The department delivers its outcome through a single departmental program which comprises the services provided by its five offices.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the department's organisational and program structures. It also identifies four intermediate outcomes against which the department's services may be broadly categorised and indicates the key responsibilities of each office.

Figure 2 Outcome and office structure, 30 June 2015

