

## Message from the Clerk

This corporate plan describes our priorities for 2013 to 2016, and provides the framework for our annual business plans. It reflects the way we see our work and the challenges we face in supporting the House of Representatives and the wider Parliament. The plan has been prepared for the Speaker, Members, our people and parliamentary departmental colleagues.

The period covered by the previous corporate plan saw the election of the first minority government in seventy years. The department acquitted itself with distinction in responding to the immediate pressures minority government created for Members and staff whilst continuing progress on longer term institutional and corporate activities.

The 2013 planning day in which most staff participated gave us an opportunity to reflect on the previous three years and how those experiences might be applied to the next three years. As a result, this plan reflects revised priorities that better demonstrate our capacity to be innovative, flexible and resilient.

External factors influence the way we work. We are about to commence a new Parliament with many new Members of the House and a continuing public interest in the work of the Parliament. Technological change demands that we innovate and respond. We also will need to continue to perform within financial constraints. Our relationships with our colleagues in other parliamentary departments will be of increasing importance as we collaborate to deliver services.

This plan provides the framework to guide the department's work over the next three years and I commend it to you.

**Bernard Wright**  
Clerk of the House

## Our work

Since 1901, the department has served the House of Representatives and the Australian Parliament with professional and impartial support. We provide advice, services, facilities and support of a high standard, to help ensure that:

- the Chamber and Federation Chamber operate effectively;
- parliamentary committees operate effectively;
- Members receive appropriate services to fulfil their parliamentary duties;
- international and regional relationships with other Parliaments, parliamentary bodies and organisations are maintained; and
- the community understands, and interacts with, the work of the House of Representatives and the Australian Parliament.

We are continually seeking better ways to ensure that the House of Representatives can perform efficiently as a representative and legislative body, and in doing so, we aim to meet the changing needs of Members, the parliamentary institution and the community.

Our work is guided by the environment in which we operate. In the context of minority government and greater public interest in the Parliament's work we have enhanced our reputation for providing impartial and credible advice and support. As a result, our confidence in our own abilities to perform under pressure has increased. We have welcomed the opportunities to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability. We also have sought to strengthen our relationships across the parliamentary departments.

We will carry these attributes into the next three years. We will continue to invest in our people, to maintain our capability and to provide a workplace where people are valued and appreciated for the contribution they make. We will continue to recognise our unique identity and the breadth of knowledge held by our staff.

We will ensure that our work is enhanced by continuing improvements in technology while ensuring our budget remains well-managed to meet current and future demands.

In developing this plan, we have outlined the four areas where we will continue to build on our capacity and potential to deliver our services in a professional and impartial manner, for the benefit of the House, the Parliament, and the community.

## Our Values

In serving the House of Representatives, and the wider Parliament, we will be:

*Committed to service* by being professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and working collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Parliament;

*Ethical* by demonstrating leadership, being trustworthy and acting with integrity in all that we do;

*Respectful* by respecting the Parliament and all people, including their rights and heritage;

*Accountable* by performing our functions with probity and being openly accountable for our actions to the Parliament and the Australian community; and

*Impartial* by being non-partisan and providing advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.

These Parliamentary Service Values and the Code of Conduct to which we will adhere are set out in the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*.





## Capability

Building on the experiences of the past three years, we will continue to be flexible and responsive in supporting the Parliament and our clients by:

- tailoring our services and support to respond to the changing requirements as identified by members while also nurturing the parliamentary institution to enhance the representative, legislative and scrutiny roles of the House;
- providing targeted information to new and continuing members and their staff;
- identifying and seeking to obtain the resources and technology needed to meet the requirements of the House, committees and the department into the future, including encouraging opportunities for innovation and efficiency by our people, and enhanced monitoring of departmental performance and capability;
- ensuring that our governance, compliance and business continuity strategies are appropriate to our circumstances, and that we manage our finances within a sound framework; and
- continuing to enhance departmental knowledge management practices.

## Skills and Knowledge Sharing

We will ensure our people have the skills and knowledge to provide high quality service and that the department is recognised as a rewarding place to work by:

- supporting training and development opportunities that both anticipate future requirements and are responsive to changing circumstances;
- emphasising in our training and the opportunities provided to staff the development of knowledge and skills in the application of parliamentary law, practice and procedure;
- fostering a culture that encourages the sharing of knowledge and experience;
- adopting strategies that attract and retain capable staff to meet the requirements of the department;
- adopting flexible work practices which nurture a healthy and resilient work environment whilst meeting the operational needs of the department;
- identifying opportunities for shared training across the parliamentary departments which foster greater consistency and quality in service provision; and
- planning for the medium and long-term future of the department in the context of changing workforce demographics and implementing necessary strategies to meet future requirements.

## Relationships and Collaboration

Robust relationships and good communication are critical to supporting our people and ensuring delivery of high quality services to a diverse group of internal and external stakeholders.

We will continue to strengthen relationships and collaboration by:

- sharing knowledge and ideas across the department on matters of common interest, and passing on to colleagues an understanding of our tradition of professional support to the Parliament;
- extending our formal and informal relationships with the other parliamentary departments to support implementation of a constructive and cooperative approach that ensures optimal delivery of all services including, where appropriate, shared services;
- continuing to develop cross-departmental governance arrangements, supported where relevant by transparent change management processes, to ensure sustainable delivery of services to meet the needs of the Parliament;
- actively engaging with individuals and organisations outside of the Parliament to increase knowledge of parliamentary processes and the opportunities to contribute to these processes in a constructive and collaborative way;
- identifying and promoting opportunities for collaboration with research organisations, non-government bodies and other groups committed to the study and strengthening of parliaments; and
- increasing opportunities to exchange ideas, experiences, skills and capabilities with our parliamentary colleagues in Australia, the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

## The purpose of our work

**To support the House of Representatives, and the wider Parliament, in the role of a representative and legislative body by providing advice and services of a high standard.**

## Leadership

We recognise that leadership within the department will be strengthened by promoting our corporate identity and culture.

We will continue to build on our demonstrated leadership capability and the resilience of our staff by:

- sustaining and communicating to our people a clear direction for the department, including enhanced priority setting;
- encouraging staff at all levels and in different situations to demonstrate leadership;
- sharing our experiences to develop leadership in others;
- continuing high quality formal leadership development;
- empowering staff to take the initiative in their relationships with others;
- reinforcing our open and accountable culture by maintaining our commitment to effective communication across all levels
- continuing to provide effective performance management through ongoing feedback.



DEPARTMENT *of the*  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



**2013-16**  
CORPORATE PLAN