



Senate Department

Corporate PLAN

2012 - 2015

Supporting the work of senators in the Senate and its committees

FROM THE CLERK

This plan outlines the objectives and work of the Senate Department for the next three years.

Over that time we expect to:

- support the work of the Senate and its committees for the remainder of the 43rd Parliament, and plan for and support the 44th
- provide procedural, administrative and logistical advice and support for the transition to a new Senate from 1 July 2014 (or at any other time following simultaneous dissolutions of the Houses)
- use the capability provided by the new parliamentary website to reach out to the Australian community in more informative ways and to support more engaging and effective communication between the community and parliamentary committees and their members
- make improvements in the services we provide to the Senate, its committees and senators and the way we provide them, working constructively with the Department of the House of Representatives and the Department of Parliamentary Services to serve the Parliament as a whole.



ENVIRONMENT

The department occupies a unique place in the machinery of government. We work together with the other parliamentary departments, but our perspectives necessarily differ. Our work is determined by the Senate and its committees. The character of that work reflects the constitutional role of the Senate as a constituent part of the Parliament, in which the legislative power of the Commonwealth is vested. Our day-to-day tasks have evolved with the processes the Senate has developed for scrutinising governments' policies, operations and legislative proposals.

The department is responsible, not to the government of the day, but to the Senate and all senators, and maintains complete impartiality in serving equally senators from all political parties and independent senators. Our approach and values arise from the need to provide non-partisan advice and support to each senator, to each committee on which senators serve and to the Senate itself.

OUR STAFF

The department's ability to provide the highest standards of advice and support to senators, the Senate and its committees is founded upon the knowledge, skill, motivation and professionalism of our staff.

These capabilities are supported by our learning and development framework; our approach to workforce planning and recruitment; our priorities in negotiating and implementing employment frameworks; and effective governance structures.

We uphold the values set out in the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* which are embedded into our systems, practices, procedures and culture, and support our relationship with the Parliament and the public.

They are essential to the department's performance and support good administration. **Our values** also underpin our relationships and behaviours and establish the way work is completed.

SENATE
OFFICERS

»

achieve
results and
demonstrate
creativity

»

demonstrate
relevant
skills and
expertise

»

nurture
productive
working
relationships

»

exhibit
personal
drive and
integrity

»

communicate
effectively



ROLE AND STRUCTURE

The department provides advisory and administrative support services to enable the Senate and senators to fulfil their representative and legislative duties. In doing so, we support the operations of the Senate and its committees, and promote public awareness of their role and work.

We provide services in four areas:

- **Senate support** – advice and secretariat support for the functioning of the Senate
- **Committee support** – advice and secretariat support for the operation of 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
- The department is organised into five offices, each of which contributes to the department's work.

Details of the resources allocated for these purposes are set out each year in our [portfolio budget statements](#).

OUTCOME

Advisory and administrative support services to enable the Senate and senators to fulfil their representative and legislative duties

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Senate support

Public education and awareness

Committee support

Senators' services

OFFICES

Clerk's Office

Table Office

Procedure Office

Committee Office

Black Rod's Office

RESPONSIBILITIES

Advice on powers, privileges and proceedings

Strategic direction and governance

Support for Procedure, Privileges and Senators' Interests committees

Procedural information

Senate Public Information Office

Programming and procedural support to the Senate

Processing of legislation and documents

Records of business and proceedings

Dissemination of information on the work of the Senate

Document distribution and inquiries services

Support for Appropriations and Staffing; Selection of Bills; and Publications committees

Legislative drafting and procedural support for non-government senators

Support for legislative scrutiny committees

Parliamentary information for the community

Parliamentary education for schools

Policy support for inter-parliamentary relations

Support for legislative and general purpose standing committees, select committees and certain joint committees

Office, chamber and committee room support

Information technology

Ceremonial services

Security advice

Financial management

Human resource management

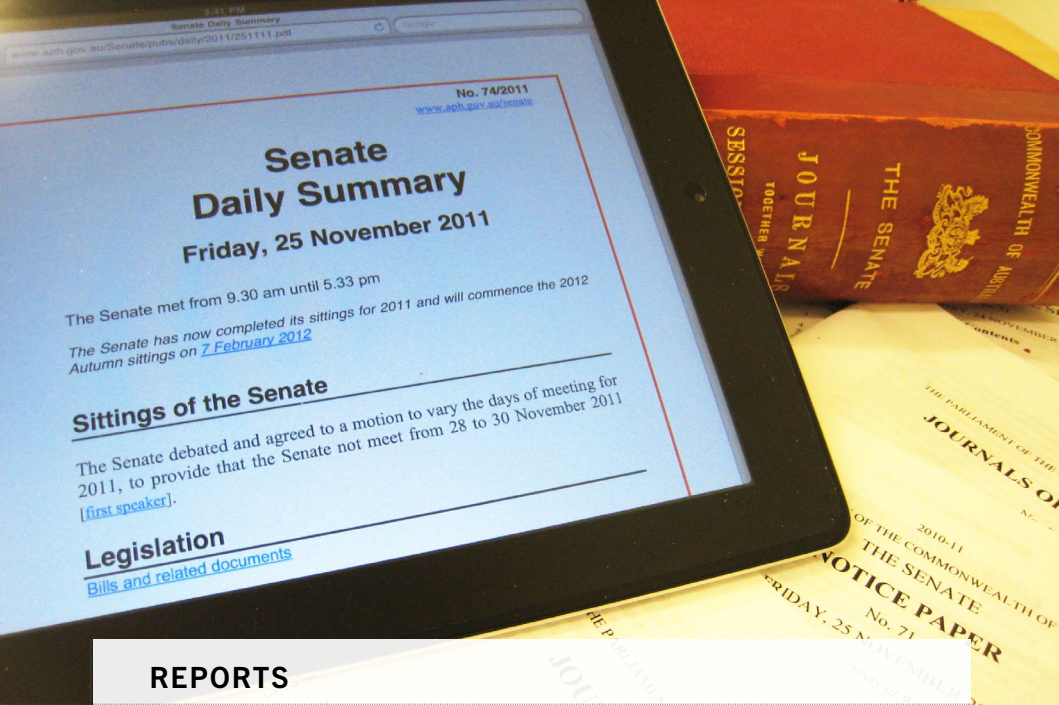
OBJECTIVES

In undertaking our work, we strive to deliver services with innovation and efficiency, and to manage risks and resources effectively and accountably. We are subject to the same financial pressures as are faced by similar agencies across the Australian Public Service. The need for innovative, productive responses to ever-shrinking budgets poses particular challenges.

Across the department, our objectives under this plan are to

- continue to develop our 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 we have a highly skilled, knowledgeable and motivated workforce.

The roles and responsibilities of each office, section and secretariat – and their approaches to achieving those tasks – are set out in **annual work plans**.



REPORTS

We report our outcomes in our **annual reports**, as well as in our appearances at **estimates hearings** and reports to the **Appropriations and Staffing Committee**.



DEPARTMENT OF THE
SENATE

www.aph.gov.au/senate/dept/corporate_plan

Images courtesy of Auspic