



# Report on Performance





## **Outcome 1— Effective provision of services**

### ***Outcome***

The Department of the Senate has a single overarching outcome.

*Outcome 1—Effective provision of services to support the functioning of the Senate as a House of the Commonwealth Parliament.*

To achieve this, the department ensures that the Senate, Senate committees, the President of the Senate, other senators, and members of the public are provided with a broad range of advisory and support services. The department is responsible to the Senate and all senators, and maintains complete impartiality in serving equally senators from all political parties and independent senators.

The department's four main areas of service provision are reflected in the following intermediate outcomes:

- effective support for the Senate chamber
- public awareness of the Senate and its work
- effective support for Senate and certain joint committees
- effective office and information technology support services for senators in their Parliament House offices.

### ***Overall performance***

The department's performance in achieving Outcome 1 is assessed using indicators that cover all the department's activities, as well as indicators that are specific to particular output groups. The department-wide assessment indicators covering quality, timeliness, quantity and price are outlined in the table below. The report on performance for each output group begins with a similar table.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTCOME 1

### Outcome 1

Effective provision of services to support the functioning of the Senate as a House of the Commonwealth Parliament

	Performance indicators	Performance results
Quality	The degree of satisfaction of the President, Deputy President and senators, as expressed through formal and informal feedback mechanisms, with the accuracy, quality and timeliness of advice and support and the achievement of key tasks.	<p>Feedback from the President, Deputy President, committee members and senators about the quality and timeliness of advice and the achievement of key tasks indicated ongoing high levels of satisfaction.</p> <p>The department's regular senators' survey—the main formal feedback mechanism—was conducted in early 2007, and confirmed senators' high levels of satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of support.</p> <p>All advices, documents, publications and draft reports remained of a high standard and none was shown to be inaccurate.</p>
Timeliness	<p>Advice or material given on request of a senator in time to be used for the purpose for which it was required.</p> <p>Key business documents for the Senate and its committees, including minutes, agendas, messages and schedules of amendments and reports, produced in accordance with predetermined requirements and the requirements of the Senate and its committees.</p>	All business documents were produced, and advice was given, in accordance with predetermined requirements and agreed timeframes, in time to serve the purposes for which they were prepared.
Quantity	On the basis of recent experience, in 2006–07 the department would expect to support the Senate on approximately 70 sitting days and committees in accordance with their requirements.	Recent reports have noted a trend to fewer than 70 sitting days each year. In 2006–07 the department supported the Senate on 62 sitting days. The department supported estimates committees on 17 days, with four committees meeting each day, and other committees in accordance with their requirements.
Price	The total price of the department's outputs in 2006–07 is estimated to be \$39.3 million (\$25.3 million departmental).	The actual cost of the department's outputs in 2006–07 was \$34.9 million.

## Analysis

### Operational performance

The department provided comprehensive, timely, high-quality and cost-effective support for the operations of the Senate and its committees during 2006–07.

Many of the performance indicators for quantity are based on the expected number of sitting days. Previous reports have noted a reduction in the number of sitting days. While the long-term average for a normal, non-election year has been around 70 days, the average in recent years has been around 60, and the figure for 2006–07 was 62.

The number of days set aside for estimates hearings and the requirements of individual committees relating to their other inquiries determine much of the demand for departmental services. Procedural and advisory support services provided by the department are highly concentrated on estimates hearing days. The number of estimates days was 17, with four committees meeting each day. The department maintained its high levels of efficiency in delivering a range of services throughout the year, including on the many days when committees met.

The department assists senators in performing their roles by providing advice on a broad range of subjects, in response to and in anticipation of senators' requirements. The quantum of advice sought and given, and the level of satisfaction with that advice, remained high. Further details are provided in the report on Output Group 1.

The department's support for the conduct of Senate business met all indicators for accuracy and timeliness. Staff produced documentation for meetings of the Senate before each sitting and published minutes and other records of proceedings promptly in accordance with requirements. Staff also produced documents to expedite the Senate's consideration of legislation, and processed that legislation to exacting standards. Amendments and private senators' bills were drafted for non-government senators, and some government backbench senators, in accordance with their requirements, as were other procedural documents.

The department also provided research services, produced information documents on the work and role of the Senate and its committees and published comprehensive statistics on the business of the Senate. In providing training and outreach programs, the department presented seminars and development programs for a wide range of internal and external audiences, developed and presented parliamentary education services and hosted delegations of officers and staff of other parliaments. A particular focus in these programs is raising public awareness of the work and the role of the Senate and its committees within the framework of Australia's parliament and system of government. These matters are reported under Output Group 2 and Output Group 3.

Much of the work of the Senate is undertaken through its extensive committee system. The department continued to support Senate and certain joint committees as they conducted and reported on inquiries, with a strong focus on legislative matters, through bills inquiries, and accountability, through the usual comprehensive program of estimates hearings. The tight deadlines and uneven workload reported in 2005–06 persisted, again requiring increased flexibility in the deployment of secretariat staff. These matters are principally set out in the report on Output Group 4.

The department continued to provide office services and information technology support to senators. Staff undertook numerous accommodation moves for senators and were involved in planning and managing refurbishments across the department. The department

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTCOME 1

undertook a review of equipment and work arrangements in the printing and desktop publishing area, while the area continued to meet tight deadlines and produce quality work. The department also undertook asset management and replacement programs, while IT innovations included improvements to senators' home pages. Further details are provided in the report of Output Group 5.

### Financial performance

The income statement discloses total operating revenue of \$24.4 million, total operating expenses of \$22.5 million and a net operating surplus of \$1.9 million. This compares to a surplus of \$3.4 million reported in the previous year. The department estimates that a fuller staffing complement and the commencement of various projects that are currently in the planning stages, will mean a much tighter financial outcome in 2007–08.

Table 1 **Total resources for Outcome 1, 2006–07**

	(1) Budget 2006–07 <sup>a</sup> \$'000	(2) Actual expenses 2006–07 \$'000	Variation (column 2 minus column 1) \$'000	Budget 2007–08 <sup>b</sup> \$'000
<b>Administered expenses</b>				
<i>Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1990</i>	1,592	343	(1,249)	1,472
<i>Parliamentary Superannuation Act 2004</i>	291	290	(1)	400
<i>Remuneration and Allowances Act 1990</i>	12,251	11,701	(550)	12,591
<b>Total administered expenses</b>	<b>14,134</b>	<b>12,334</b>	<b>(1,800)</b>	<b>14,463</b>
<b>Price of departmental outputs</b>				
Output Group 1—Clerk's Office	1,213	1,085	(128)	1,223
Output Group 2—Table Office	3,349	2,966	(383)	3,376
Output Group 3—Procedure Office	7,016	6,215	(801)	7,073
Output Group 4—Committee Office	9,362	8,294	(1,068)	9,438
Output Group 5—Black Rod's Office	4,404	3,962	(442)	4,440
<b>Total price of outputs</b>	<b>25,344</b>	<b>22,522</b>	<b>(2,822)</b>	<b>25,550</b>
<b>TOTAL FOR OUTCOME 1</b>				
(Total price of outputs and administered expenses)	<b>39,478</b>	<b>34,856</b>	<b>(4,622)</b>	<b>40,013</b>
			<b>2006–07</b>	<b>2007–08</b>
<b>Average staffing level</b>			150	157

<sup>a</sup> Full-year budget, including additional estimates.

<sup>b</sup> Budget before additional estimates.

### Evaluation

#### Satisfaction with services

The principal medium for formal evaluation of the services provided by the department is the survey of senators' satisfaction (the *senators' survey*), conducted every two years—most recently in early 2007. The survey enables structured feedback from the Senate department's key client

group: senators themselves. The survey was substantially revised in 2005 to align with the department's outcomes, and was conducted in 2005 and 2007 by Eureka Strategic Research. The report of the 2007 survey was tabled in the Senate on 13 June 2007.

The survey consistently reports high levels of satisfaction with the advice and services provided by the department, and very few negative comments are received. This year's survey very much followed that pattern, with the headline result stating '100 per cent of senators surveyed indicated that they were satisfied overall with the services provided to them by the Department'. In the 2005 survey this figure was already high at 94 per cent. The survey results are discussed in more detail in the reports on the performance of individual output groups.

Another important mechanism for evaluation is the appearance of senior departmental officers at estimates hearings, which are scheduled three times a year. These hearings are used by senators both to scrutinise, and to provide comment on, the activities of the department. Further details are provided under 'Scrutiny of activities', below.

There are also significant formal and informal feedback opportunities involving the President, Deputy President and other senators in their daily dealings with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, program managers, committee secretariats and departmental staff at all levels. This feedback also continued to indicate high levels of satisfaction.

The performance of individual staff members was evaluated through the performance communication scheme, in accordance with the certified agreement. All departmental staff were assessed overall as 'effective or better'.

### Scrutiny of activities

The department's annual appropriations and proposals for changes to the structure and responsibilities of the parliamentary departments continued to be scrutinised by the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations and Staffing.

Departmental officers were questioned on the department's activities by members of the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee at the supplementary budget estimates hearings on 30 October 2006, the additional budget estimates hearings on 12 February 2007 and the 2006–07 budget estimates hearings on 21 May 2007. Major issues considered included the cessation of the Citizenship Visits Program and the administration by the Department of Education, Science and Training of the replacement program; outcome budgeting and the ordinary annual services of the government, and the adequacy of portfolio budget statements in distinguishing between ordinary annual services and newly established programs; the workload of Senate committees and trends in the referral of bills for inquiry; advice on parliamentary privilege given by the Clerk of the Senate to the Tasmanian Legislative Council; and the transfer of senators' printing entitlements to the Department of Finance and Administration.

The department's activities also continued to be scrutinised by our internal auditors and the Australian National Audit Office. Much of the department's Audit and Evaluation Committee's work revolved around reviewing some of the department's major control mechanisms. For further details, see 'Audit and Evaluation Committee' and 'External scrutiny' in the 'Management and accountability' section.



## Output Group 1—Clerk’s Office

### Outputs

Provision of sound and timely advice on proceedings of the Senate and its committees, and provision of leadership and strategic direction for the department.

Provision of secretariat and advisory support to the Procedure Committee, the Committee of Privileges and the Committee of Senators’ Interests.

Provision of procedural information and related services to senators and the Senate department.

	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>Advice, documentation, publications and draft reports are accurate and of a high standard.</p>	<p>The 2007 senators’ survey recorded very high levels of satisfaction with advice on powers, privileges and proceedings. This result was also reflected in informal feedback from the President, Deputy President, committee members and senators.</p> <p>All advices, documents, publications and draft reports remained of a high standard and none was shown to be inaccurate.</p>
Timeliness	<p>Meetings held, documentation provided and reports produced within timeframes set by the Senate or the committee, as relevant.</p> <p><i>Odgers’ Australian Senate Practice</i> updated each six months; new printed edition produced regularly.</p> <p><i>Procedural Information Bulletin</i> produced two days after end of sitting fortnights.</p> <p>Other procedural resources updated and augmented as required.</p>	<p>All the indicators relating to timeliness were met to the satisfaction of senators.</p> <p>Supplements to the eleventh edition of <i>Odgers’ Australian Senate Practice</i> were produced at six-monthly intervals, and tabled in the Senate on 4 September 2006 and 6 February 2007.</p> <p>The <i>Procedural Information Bulletin</i> was produced within the specified timeframe.</p> <p>A manual for clerks at the table was augmented to include new duties for some clerks. All other procedural resources were kept up to date.</p>
Quantity	<p>As required, on request, or proactively, to facilitate proceedings.</p>	<p>Advices were produced in accordance with demand and proactively to facilitate proceedings.</p> <p>Sufficient copies of all publications for which the office was responsible were produced to enable access immediately after they were published or tabled, and relevant reports were published on the internet within minutes of being tabled in the Senate.</p>

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 1

### Analysis

The Clerk's Office consists of the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and their executive assistants.

The Clerk is the Secretary of the Department of the Senate and, in accordance with the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*, is responsible, under the President of the Senate, for managing the department. The Clerk is also the principal adviser to the President and senators on proceedings in the Senate, parliamentary privilege, committee proceedings and their outcomes in the chamber, and other parliamentary matters. The Deputy Clerk supports the Clerk in these roles and also chairs the department's Audit and Evaluation Committee.

The full-time equivalent staffing level for the Clerk's office in 2006–07 was 3.8, close to the long-term average of 4.0. The minor variation was due to turnover in one position following the retirement of a long-serving staff member.

The cost of the office for 2006–07 was \$1.1 million.

### Procedural advice

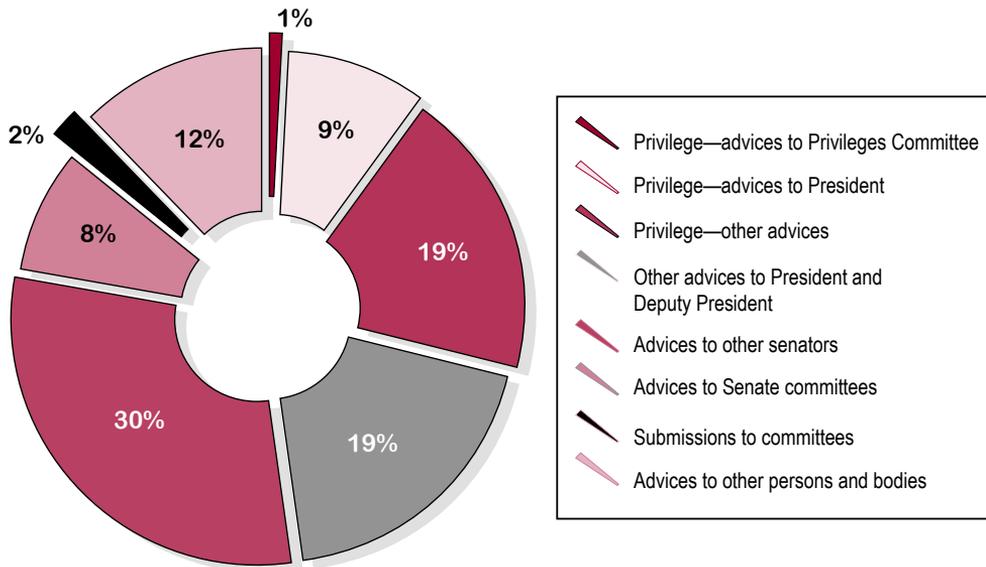
Providing procedural and constitutional advice is the primary function of the Clerk's Office. The office gives oral and written advice but records only written advice because of the difficulty of quantifying oral advice. The office may provide the advice proactively or on request.

Table 2 shows the number and kinds of written advices provided during 2006–07. Figure 3 shows each kind as a percentage of the total. The total number represents a small decline in demand but remains on a par with the above-average totals for the past two years (see Figure 4).

Table 2 **Written advices provided by the Clerk, 2006–07**

Category	No. provided
Privilege—advices to Privileges Committee	1
Privilege—advices to President	11
Privilege—other advices	24
Other advices to President or Deputy President	24
Advices to other senators	39
Advices to Senate committees	10
Submissions to committees	3
Advices to other persons and bodies	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>

Figure 3 Written advices provided by the Clerk, 2006–07, by type



Subjects of advice included appropriations for ordinary annual services of the government; proceedings of committees examining estimates, parliamentary privilege, including production of documents to a state parliamentary committee, and attempts to silence senators; financial accountability; status of committee documents; refusals by government to produce information; swearing in of senators appointed to fill casual vacancies; and rules of debate.

As in recent years, advice requested by senators was often emailed to them while they were attending estimates hearings and using networked laptops in the committee rooms. The quick turnaround time for the provision of advice was the subject of favourable comment in the 2007 senators' survey.

### Committees

The office is responsible for the administration of three Senate standing committees.

#### Procedure Committee

The Clerk of the Senate continued to serve as secretary to the Procedure Committee, which responds to references from the Senate or the President by evaluating, and recommending improvements to, Senate procedure.

The committee met twice in 2006–07 in relation to its reference on proposals to alter the structure of the Senate committee system. This included one meeting in Sydney by special authorisation of the Senate because the committee does not otherwise have power to meet away from Canberra. It presented one report, on restructuring the committee system, in August 2006.

#### Committee of Privileges

The Deputy Clerk served as secretary to the Committee of Privileges. The committee protects the integrity of Senate and committee proceedings by considering matters possibly amounting

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 1

to contempt of the Senate that are referred to the committee by the Senate as a result of concerns raised by other committees or individual senators. The Committee of Privileges also administers the right-of-reply mechanism for people seeking to respond to adverse comment made about them in the Senate.

In continuation of the reduced workload experienced in 2005–06, the committee met only six times during the year (a reduction from nine in 2005–06 and 14 in 2004–05) and held no public hearings. It received a new reference from the Senate in February 2007, and this matter remained unresolved at the end of the reporting period.

The committee presented two reports (down from five in 2005–06), both of which were right-of-reply matters referred to it by the President. A further such matter remained outstanding at the end of the year.

### Committee of Senators' Interests

The Deputy Clerk served as secretary to the Committee of Senators' Interests and Registrar of Senators' Interests, and gave assistance to senators to fulfil the requirements of Senate resolutions relating to declarations of pecuniary interests and gifts.

The committee's increased workload in 2005–06 continued in 2006–07. The committee met five times (the same number of meetings as in 2005–06) and, as required by its terms of reference, presented its annual report. The Chair, on the committee's behalf, made two oral reports to the Senate and tabled two revisions of the committee's explanatory notes. The committee also dealt with one matter involving the declaration of a gift to the Senate.

Inspections of the Register of Senators' Interests reached a record level in the early months of 2007, with one senator resigning as a minister and then as a senator as a consequence of anomalies in his statement of registrable interests.

As required by resolution of the Senate, senators continued to register alterations to their statements of interests. Volumes of alterations and new statements were prepared by the secretariat and tabled on 6 December 2006 and 20 June 2007. Updates of departmental Senior Executive Service (SES) officers' interests were tabled on the same dates.

### Procedural information

The main vehicle for procedural information is *Odgers' Australian Senate Practice*. In accordance with performance targets, the Clerk produced two six-monthly supplements during 2006–07. Issuing supplements ensures that this essential reference work is always up to date.

Issues of the *Procedural Information Bulletin* continued to be produced after each sitting fortnight or period of estimates hearings. The bulletin continued to include occasional notes on aspects of parliamentary law, procedure and practice, reported as a new feature in last year's report.

In addition to these documents, the Clerk continued to produce publications on procedures in various forms.

The Deputy Clerk augmented the in-house training manual for clerks at the table to provide for expanded table duties undertaken by SES-level clerks.

Work also began on a project to produce an annotated edition of the Senate's Standing Orders, as resources permit, and on a project to catalogue and preserve items of historical significance in the development of Senate practice and procedure.

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk contributed to training programs on parliamentary matters, including 'Parliament, privilege and accountability', the long-running program for SES officers of executive agencies.

Information about Senate officers' presentations and papers appears in Appendix 5.

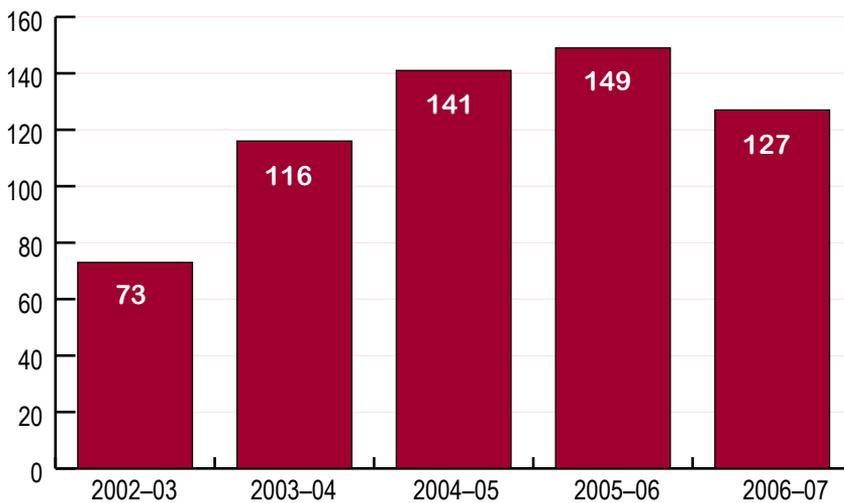
***Factors, events and trends influencing performance***

In 2006–07, the second year in which the government parties held a majority in the Senate, the first major procedural changes attributable to the government majority occurred when the Senate committee system was restructured. References and legislation committee functions were combined into a single legislative and general purpose standing committee, chaired by a government senator.

Although broadly comparable with totals for the previous two years, the 2006–07 total for the number of advices provided by the Clerk was lower. The drop in demand may be associated with the government majority and the consequent negligible success rate of non-government initiatives, ranging from committee references and orders for production of documents to legislative amendments.

Figure 4 shows the trend for the provision of written advice.

**Figure 4**      **Number of advices provided by the Clerk's Office, 2002–03 to 2006–07**



***Evaluation***

The principal medium for formal evaluation of services provided by the Clerk's Office is the biennial senators' survey, most recently conducted in early 2007.

The survey reported high levels of satisfaction with services provided by the Clerk's Office, including just over half (55 per cent) of respondents who reported having received advice indicating they were highly satisfied with the service, 41 per cent indicating they were satisfied and 3 per cent being neutral. No dissatisfaction was recorded.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 1

Advice provided by the Clerk's Office may also attract scrutiny during the estimates process, either when the Department of the Senate appears before the Finance and Public Administration Committee or when advice provided by the Clerk's Office to senators or committees is immediately tested in public. On all occasions when this occurred during 2006–07, no advice was found to be inaccurate or wanting in quality.

The continuing demand for advice, albeit at a slightly reduced level, is itself a measure of senators' continuing satisfaction with the advice they receive.

Evaluation of specific activities, such as contributions to training programs, occurs through participant feedback, usually in the form of written comments. On this measure, recipients of these services were well satisfied.

### ***Performance outlook***

Over the next 12 months, the Clerk's Office will continue to respond to the needs of the Senate and senators, providing advice as required through the upcoming election period and beyond. Support will be provided for the opening of a new Parliament. Work will be done to keep procedural publications up to date and to develop new publications and procedural resources.

## Output Group 2—Table Office

### Outputs

Provision of programming and procedural support to the Senate.

Processing of legislation.

Preparation and publication of the record of proceedings of the Senate, records of current and outstanding business, and statistical information on the business of the Senate.

Processing of tabled documents and maintenance of safe custody of Senate records, and provision of document distribution and inquiries services.

Provision of secretariat support to the Appropriations and Staffing, Selection of Bills and Publications committees.

	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>Key business documents are accurate and of a high standard.</p>	<p>The 2007 senators' survey reported high levels of satisfaction among senators who had used the services of the Table Office with the advice and support provided, consistent with the findings of earlier surveys.</p> <p>Informal feedback and direct contact between senators and staff also indicated continued high levels of satisfaction.</p> <p>Business documents remained of a high standard, with none shown to contain significant inaccuracies.</p>
Timeliness	<p><i>Order of Business</i> finalised and distributed prior to sittings and advice prepared proactively or as required.</p> <p>Running sheets available as soon as practicable; proposed amendments distributed in accordance with requirements; schedules of amendments and prints of bills available in accordance with predetermined requirements.</p> <p><i>Journals of the Senate</i> for the previous day and <i>Notice Paper</i> for the current day available prior to sittings; statistical and other documentation available as required or in accordance with predetermined requirements.</p> <p>All inquiries answered and documents stored or distributed on a timely basis.</p> <p>Meetings held, documentation provided and reports produced within timeframes set by the Senate or the committee, as relevant.</p>	<p>The <i>Order of Business</i> was distributed in advance of all sittings. Advice was given proactively or as required.</p> <p>Running sheets were available for use in the chamber as required.</p> <p>Government amendments were distributed as required.</p> <p>Schedules of amendments, prints of Senate bills and legislative support documents were available as required.</p> <p>The <i>Journals of the Senate</i> and the <i>Notice Paper</i> were available as required.</p> <p>The <i>Dynamic Red</i> was updated in a timely manner during each sitting day, and the <i>Senate Daily Summary</i> was published promptly after each sitting day.</p> <p>Statistical summaries were published after each sitting week, and comprehensive statistics were published on the website after each sitting fortnight.</p> <p><i>Business of the Senate</i> was tabled twice, in accordance with agreed timeframes. Requests for statistics were responded to promptly.</p> <p>All documents were distributed in a timely manner. All inquiries were responded to, and 96% were completed within five minutes.</p> <p>Committee meetings were held, and documents and reports provided, within agreed timeframes.</p> <p>The senators' survey confirmed high levels of satisfaction with the provision of these services.</p>
Quantity	<p>As required to facilitate proceedings; quantities meet predetermined distribution requirements or are accessible electronically or both.</p>	<p>Feedback indicated senators' continued high levels of satisfaction with the provision of documents by the Table Office.</p> <p>All distribution and electronic publishing targets were met.</p>

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 2

### Analysis

The Table Office is divided into three sections, as outlined in Figure 5. It is led by the Clerk Assistant (Table), who also performs duties as a clerk at the table in the Senate chamber, as do the two directors. Each of the sections contributed to the department’s outcome by working towards the following intermediate outcomes:

- effective support for the Senate chamber
- public awareness of the Senate and its work
- effective support for Senate committees.

Figure 5 Elements and responsibilities of the Table Office

<p><b>Executive and Programming</b>  <i>Richard Pye, Clerk Assistant</i>                      Procedural advice                      Business programming                      Production of the Senate <i>Order of Business</i>                      Secretariat services to the Selection of Bills Committee</p>	
<p><b>Legislation and Documents</b>  <i>Rosa Ferranda, Director</i></p>	<p><b>Journals and Notice Paper</b>  <i>Neil Bessell, Director</i></p>
<p>Processing of legislation and preparation of supporting documentation                      Processing and custody of Senate records                      Inquiries and document distribution services                      Secretariat services to the Publications and Joint Publications Committees</p>	<p>The <i>Notice Paper</i>, the <i>Journals of the Senate</i>, the <i>Dynamic Red</i> and the <i>Senate Daily Summary</i>                      Collection and dissemination of statistical information                      Processing of questions on notice and petitions                      Secretariat services to the Appropriations and Staffing Committee</p>

During 2006–07, the office provided effective support for the Senate chamber by:

- providing procedural and programming advice and documentation to facilitate and expedite chamber proceedings
- preparing and publishing formal and informal records of Senate business
- processing legislation and producing documents to assist in the legislative process
- processing and archiving tabled papers and other Senate records
- providing inquiries and document distribution services.

Staff worked towards increasing public awareness of the Senate and its work by:

- providing key information resources, including the *Dynamic Red*, the *Senate Daily Summary* and a range of statistical resources
- progressing the work of the digital imaging project, which aims to provide online access to all documents tabled in the Senate since 1901
- contributing to the seminar program administered by the Procedure Office (see Output Group 3) and other training and development programs.

Several of the staff in the office also contributed to project work to redevelop key information systems—ParlInfo and the Bills System—used to disseminate information about the work of the Senate.

The Table Office also supported Senate committees by providing the secretariats to three domestic committees and by liaising with Senate and joint committee chairs and secretariats to facilitate interaction between the chamber and those committees.

The cost of the Table Office in providing procedural and administrative support for the conduct of Senate business was \$3.0 million (\$2.4 million in 2005–06). The increase comprises in equal parts additional expenditure (by way of salary costs and costs related to the digital imaging project) and the attribution of higher corporate overhead costs.

### **Workload and staffing**

Requirements for advice, statistics and documentary support for the Senate are determined largely by the sittings of the Senate. Specific factors include:

- the days and hours of meeting and the nature of proceedings
- the legislative workload and the number of documents tabled
- the number and complexity of questions and notices from senators
- the number and complexity of inquiries and information requests from clients.

Previous reports have commented on the reduction in the number of sitting days below a long-term average of around 70 in a non-election year. This year, the Table Office supported the Senate on 62 sitting days, up from 58 last year, possibly confirming that the new average is about 60 days.

The full-time equivalent staffing level for the office was 17 (15.8 in 2005–06). In recent years, to help tighten staff numbers, the office has carried vacancies through long adjournments, but there were no such vacancies this year. The office remained staffed to meet peak work periods.

The Director, Journals and Notice Paper, continued to perform duties as Secretary to the Australian delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, funded under Output Group 3.

### **Programming and procedural support**

The Table Office provided programming and procedural support for the operation of the chamber, and met the needs of senators and others for accurate and timely documentation and assistance by:

- providing procedural advice to ministers, government and other senators, party whips and committee chairs, in response to requests and proactively as required
- preparing 969 procedural scripts for use in the chamber, an average of 16 each sitting day (18 in 2005–06)
- providing advice in the chamber as required
- preparing a draft *Order of Business* (or daily program) for briefing whips' meetings in advance of each sitting and publishing the final *Order of Business* before sittings commenced
- maintaining the roster of temporary chairs of committees
- providing a broadcasting captioning service for Senate proceedings
- liaising with committee chairs and secretariats to facilitate interaction between the Senate and its committees.

Staff also arranged for the presentation of documents by ministers, the Auditor-General and committees when the Senate was not sitting. This once exceptional procedure has developed into an increasingly useful avenue for the timely publication of material of interest to the

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 2

Parliament. A total of 205 documents were presented in this manner during 2006–07. A variation on the procedure enabled the presentation during a non-sitting period of a private senator's bill, and its timely consideration by a Senate committee.

In September 2006 the office produced a new edition of the *Standing orders and other orders of the Senate*, to coincide with the restructure of the Senate committee system. This was published in hard copy and online, with annotations explaining the changes. The Senate Programming Officer also began assisting the Deputy Clerk in a project to produce an annotated edition of the standing orders by tracking historical changes to them.

An important role of the Table Office is the provision of advice to the Manager of Government Business and other senators to assist in the efficient conduct of the business of the Senate. During the year, the office advised on a range of matters, including:

- the operations of the Selection of Bills Committee
- the swearing-in of senators to fill casual vacancies
- legislative amendments empowering ministers to increase expenditure
- the recall of the Senate during a scheduled adjournment.

Staff provided advice both in response to requests and proactively, and produced accurate, high-quality documents on or ahead of time. The 2007 senators' survey revealed that 56 per cent of respondents were satisfied, and another 40 per cent highly satisfied, with programming services, including provision of procedural scripts, broadcast captions and the *Order of Business* (the 'Red'), while 4 per cent were neutral. Similar results were recorded in relation to the provision of advice (see Output Group 1).

### Legislation

The office responded to the legislative requirements of the Senate and the needs of senators and others for related information by:

- processing all bills considered in the chamber, meeting accuracy and timeliness standards in all cases
- preparing legislative documents, including procedural scripts, running sheets, messages, schedules of amendments and third reading prints
- recording the progress of legislation
- preparing assent and Act prints, and processing assent messages and proclamations
- maintaining information systems to assist in processing legislation and providing online access to legislative documents.

The charts in Figures 6 to 9 indicate the level of legislative activity in recent years and the effect this has had on the work of the office. The figures for this year are comparable to the averages in recent non-election years, although there was a noticeable increase in the number of bills that passed both Houses.

Figure 6 Senate legislative activity, 2002–03 to 2006–07

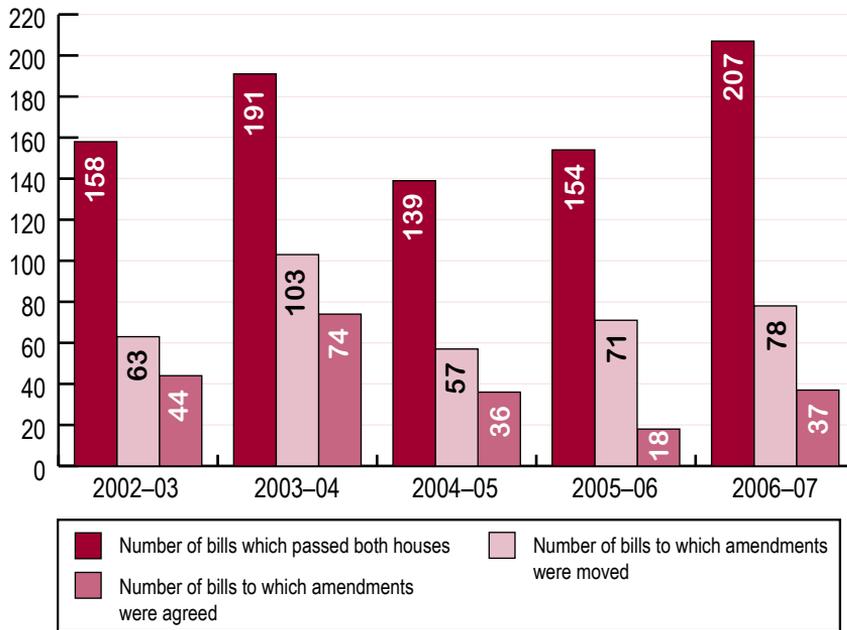
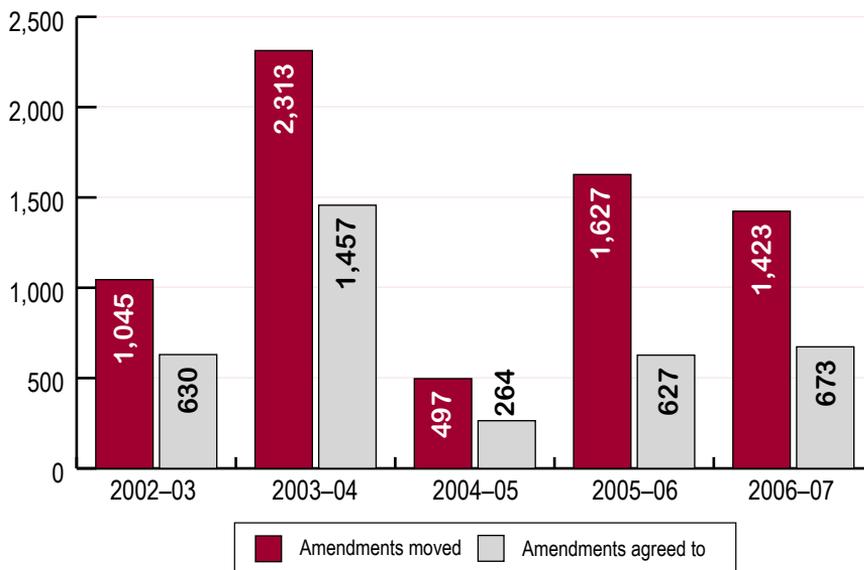


Figure 7 Amendments moved and agreed to by the Senate 2002–03 to 2006–07



Note: The figures for amendments also include requests for amendments and proposals to omit clauses or items from bills.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 2

Figure 8 **Running sheets, 2002–03 to 2006–07**

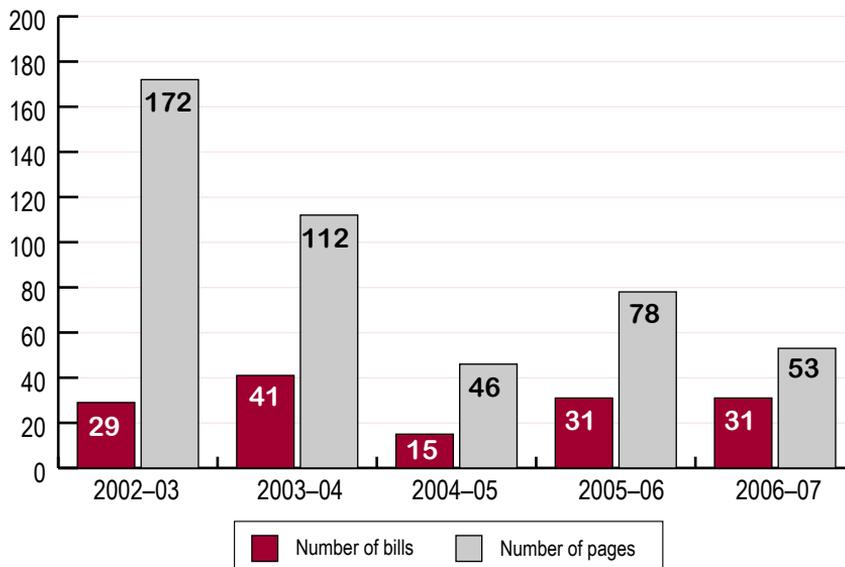
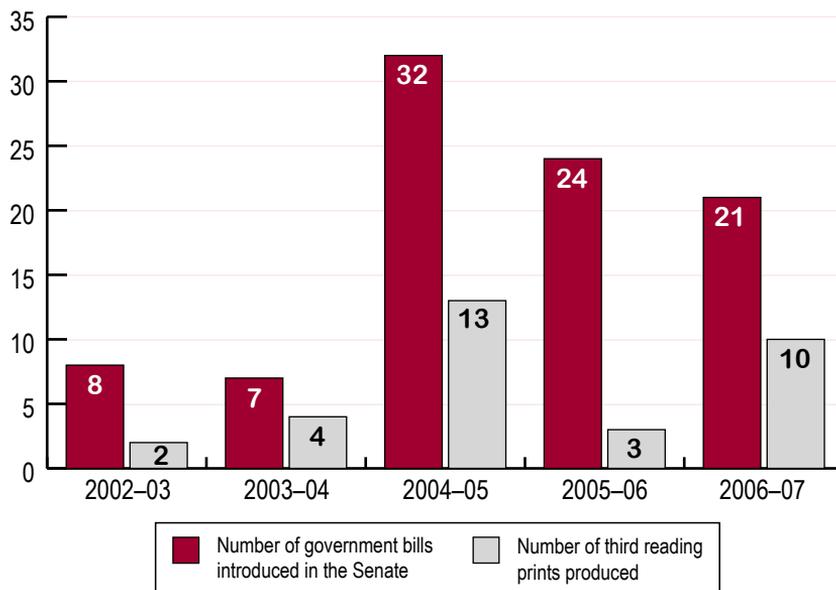


Figure 9 **Government legislation introduced in the Senate, 2002–03 to 2006–07**



The government party majority, described in the 2005–06 report, continued to affect the legislative decisions of the chamber and influence the work of the office. Only seven non-government amendments were agreed to during the year, and there was only one legislative

disagreement between the Senate and the House of Representatives. This again reduced the number and complexity of schedules and messages prepared.

Other business requirements remained at usual levels. Messages, third reading prints, schedules of amendments and assent prints of bills accurately reflected the decisions of the Senate, and the office met all deadlines for the preparation and use of those documents.

*Bills Lists* and *Daily Bills Updates* detailing the progress of legislation were produced in response to chamber sittings and distributed in accordance with agreed timeframes. A survey undertaken by the Table Office indicated that clients were satisfied with the provision of those documents in their current form in hard copy and online.

All bills and related documents were made available online through the Bills System, BillsNet and ParlInfo. Staff participated in two ongoing projects to redevelop these systems. It is expected that the projects will be completed in 2007–08.

According to the 2007 senators' survey, 50 per cent of respondents were satisfied, and 31 per cent highly satisfied, with support for the legislative process, including the provision of running sheets, while 15 per cent were neutral and 4 per cent (one respondent) indicated dissatisfaction. Although there were no related comments lodged with the initial questionnaire, interviews suggested '[i]t is generally accepted by senators that often the provision of running sheets is affected by the senators themselves and departmental staff act as best they can within these constraints'. The timely distribution of accurate running sheets remains a key goal for the office.

### Formal and informal records of business

The office met the needs of senators and others for accurate and timely documentation and information by:

- producing and publishing the *Notice Paper* and the *Journals of the Senate*
- maintaining the *Dynamic Red* and publishing the *Senate Daily Summary*
- compiling and publishing statistical information relating to the Senate
- responding to requests for statistics on the work of the Senate
- maintaining information systems to help produce Table Office documents.

#### Formal records

To meet the requirements of senators and others, the Table Office publishes the Senate's principal parliamentary documents online—both on the Senate website and through the parliamentary information database—and in hard copy.

The *Notice Paper*—the formal agenda of Senate proceedings—provides essential information on current and future business of the Senate and on committee matters. A full *Notice Paper*, comprising on average 210 pages, was published online for each sitting day and was also printed on the first day of the autumn and spring sittings. A printed *Notice Paper*—an abridged version averaging 58 pages—was published before each sitting day. The *Notice Paper* expands during the course of each Parliament as unfinished business accumulates and the number of unanswered questions on notice increases. During the previous reporting period, the full online version averaged 156 pages.

The *Journals of the Senate* are the 'minutes of the meeting' and record decisions made by the Senate. During 2006–07, proof *Journals* were made available online shortly after the end of each sitting day, and printed versions were distributed the next morning. Staff produced and

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 2

published 62 proof *Journals* with an average of 27 pages, compared with 58 *Journals* averaging 26 pages in 2005–06.

After a prompt but thorough check of proof *Journals* and relevant source documents, final *Journals* were published and compiled into bound volumes.

All respondents to the 2007 senators' survey indicated satisfaction with the preparation of the *Journals* and *Notice Paper* (68 per cent satisfied; 32 per cent highly satisfied).

### Informal records and statistics

The office has produced the *Dynamic Red* as an in-house publication for three years and, in May 2006, completed a project to publish it on the Senate website for external users. The *Dynamic Red* provides real-time information on the progress and outcomes of business on each sitting day. This assists senators, parliamentary staff, government departments and agencies, and the general public to monitor Senate proceedings. Web usage statistics show that the application has established a solid external audience.

From July 2006, the office assumed responsibility for producing the *Senate Daily Summary*, a more considered summary of the previous day's proceedings in the Senate and in estimates hearings. The summary contains links to primary sources such as the *Journals*, bills before the parliament and committee reports.

The department made broad productivity gains by having the *Journals* and *Notice Paper* team produce both the *Dynamic Red* and *Senate Daily Summary*. The development of tools to transfer material directly from the *Dynamic Red* also improved the timeliness of publishing the summary. It continued to be an indispensable tool for those who work in, or observe, the Senate.

Statistical summaries of business conducted by the Senate were produced after each sitting week. A more comprehensive set of statistics was also maintained online, providing timely access to the most commonly sought statistics on the work of the Senate. Staff also produced two volumes of *Business of the Senate*, a publication which has for more than 30 years recorded statistics on the work of the Senate.

The office promptly met requests for statistics from senators, parliamentary staff and other clients. There continued to be significant interest in statistics comparing Senate business patterns and outcomes before and after the government assumed its current majority position in the Senate. In 2006–07, the Table Office produced comparative statistics on matters such as:

- rejection of non-government amendments to legislation
- numbers of bills and other matters referred to committees, the length and timing of committee references and the operation of the Selection of Bills Committee
- the outcome of motions seeking the production of documents and information
- the use of 'guillotine' motions in relation to urgent bills.

The statistics that the Table Office compiled on these and other matters were comprehensive, accurate and timely.

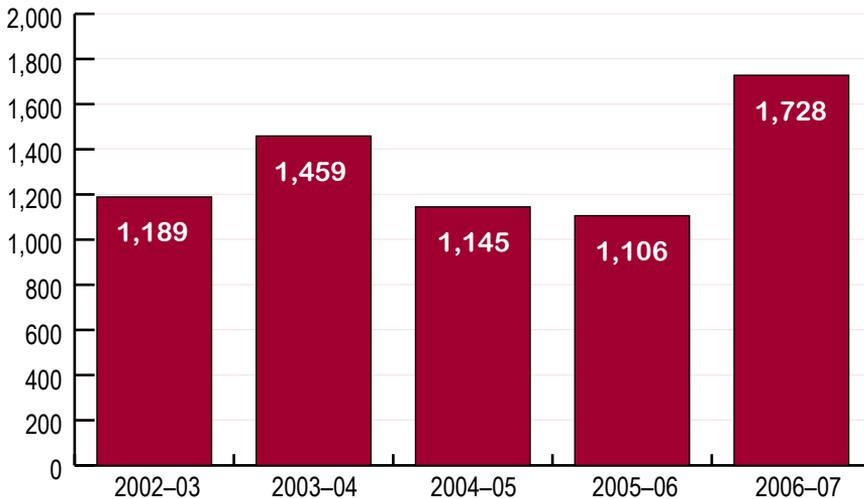
The 2007 senators' survey revealed that 55 per cent of respondents were highly satisfied with the provision of resources such as the *Dynamic Red*, *Senate Daily Summary* and statistical information, while 41 per cent were satisfied and 3 per cent neutral. No dissatisfaction was recorded.

## Questions on notice

Senators continued to use questions on notice—written questions to ministers concerning the administration of public policy matters—as an important accountability mechanism.

During 2006–07, staff processed 1,728 questions on notice—a record number for any year, eclipsing the 1,459 questions lodged by senators in 2003–04. Figure 10 shows the trend in the number of questions on notice in recent years.

Figure 10 Questions on notice, 2002–03 to 2006–07



The Table Office ensured that questions on notice lodged by senators conformed to standing orders and were consistent in format and style. On sitting days, questions were published in both hard-copy and online versions of the *Notice Paper*. When the Senate was not sitting, questions were forwarded to relevant ministers and departments, and the online *Notice Paper* was updated each week to ensure timely publication. These questions were also printed in the *Notice Paper* for the first sitting day in the next period of sittings.

Ministers provided 1,142 answers to questions on notice. Staff processed the answers, circulated them to senators and arranged for their publication in Hansard.

Questions and answers were processed accurately, within agreed timeframes and to the satisfaction of senators. Statistics on questions on notice were collated and published in the *Questions on Notice Summary* in August 2006 and February 2007.

## Petitions

During 2006–07, senators presented 136 petitions from 251,646 signatories. All petitions that conformed to the standing orders were processed promptly and presented in the Senate on the first sitting day after their receipt.

All respondents to the 2007 senators' survey indicated their satisfaction with the processing of petitions, notice of motion and questions on notice, with 52 per cent satisfied, and 48 per cent highly satisfied, with these services.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 2

### Documents and inquiries

The Table Office processed all documents presented to the Senate during 2006–07 and recorded them in the *Journals of the Senate* and the *Index of Papers Presented to the Parliament*. Copies of documents were made available throughout Parliament House and publicly through our inquiries and documents distribution services.

The original documents were added to the records of the Senate. The record archives include all documents presented to the Senate since its first meeting in 1901.

The documents and inquiries workload depends largely on the number of documents presented to the Senate. One class of documents in particular—legislative instruments—continues to grow at a significant rate, a consequence of the enactment of the *Legislative Instruments Act 2003*. There is no sign of the rate of increase abating. In 2006–07, more than 8,200 documents were presented. Almost 6,700 of these were instruments, approximately 30 per cent more than in 2005–06.

All processing, inquiries and distribution requirements were appropriately met, as reflected in the responses in the senators' survey. Staff respond to and record about 7,000 inquiries each year; in 2006–07 the figure was 6,756. Statistics maintained by the office record that 96 per cent of inquiries were dealt with within five minutes, further improving on the already high standards achieved in recent years. More complex inquiries are dealt with by staff in timeframes negotiated with clients.

The 2007 senators' survey revealed that 61 per cent of respondents were satisfied and 30 per cent highly satisfied with the inquiries service and document distribution, with 4 per cent (one respondent) neutral and 4 per cent (one respondent) indicating dissatisfaction. No comment explaining the reason for dissatisfaction was made.

### Digital imaging project

A major initiative in the Office, now in its 13th year, is a project to copy, preserve and ensure access to the collection of all documents presented to the Senate. The project now encompasses two elements: first, to make digital images directly from the documents presented to the Senate since 2002; second, to create digital images from the microfilm record of the documents from the Senate's first century.

During 2006–07, staff scanned almost 8,000 documents and undertook associated preservation and indexing work.

While preliminary work has been undertaken on the conversion of the microfilm record, technical problems have continued to delay the conversion process, which is now expected to commence in 2007–08.

### Secretariat support for various committees

During the year, the Table Office provided secretariat support for all meetings and reports of the Selection of Bills Committee, the Standing Committee on Appropriations and Staffing, and the Senate Publications Committee.

All meetings were held, and documents provided, within agreed timeframes.

The office began working towards implementing the recommendations of the Joint Publications Committee report on the Parliamentary Papers Series, involving the investigation of options for creating a permanent online repository of all documents in the series.

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

Factors influencing workload and staffing levels are set out above.

Information technology issues continued to be of considerable importance in the Table Office, and staff have been involved in projects to improve the infrastructure and applications used to facilitate its work. A project to provide appropriate backup and restart options for the main server supporting Table Office applications was all but finished in 2006–07. Projects to redevelop the Parliamentary information database and to update the online management of, and access to, legislative documents continued during the year. The fruition of these projects will improve productivity in the office and reduce the need for workarounds in many document management and publishing activities.

## **Evaluation**

The 2007 senators' survey again revealed high levels of satisfaction among senators with the advice, documents and services of the office, comparable with levels reached in earlier surveys, and did not suggest any areas of major concern.

Particularly high levels of satisfaction—above 95 per cent—were recorded in relation to the preparation of records of business; the processing of procedural material, such as notices and questions; and the provision of procedural documentation and advice. More than 90 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the inquiries service and document distribution, while 81 per cent were satisfied and 15 per cent neutral in respect of support for the legislative process. Low levels of dissatisfaction with these last two areas were recorded (one respondent, in each case), but the associated commentary did not reveal any underlying difficulties.

The survey results for particular services and documents have been noted elsewhere in this section of the report.

The office also monitors its own performance—for example, by keeping track of response times for inquiries and surveying users of its bills information documents. This monitoring also indicated a high level of client satisfaction during 2006–07.

Finally, much of the work of the office involves direct contact with senators, their staff and other clients. This presents an ongoing opportunity for feedback about the office's services. Informal feedback continued to be very positive.

## **Performance outlook**

In 2007–08, the Table Office will continue its core work relating to the sittings of the Senate. In particular, staff will provide advice and produce documents to facilitate chamber proceedings and the legislative process; prepare formal and informal records of Senate business; process and archive table documents; provide inquiries and document distribution services; and support the work of committees.

A reduced number of sitting days is expected because of the election period, and staff will undertake a range of practical and administrative tasks associated with the end of one parliament and the opening of another.

The office will produce a revised edition of the *Pocket Guide to Senate Procedures* and the accompanying *Brief Guides to Senate Procedure*, as well as a new edition of the standing orders. More staff will become involved in the project being overseen by the Deputy Clerk to produce an annotated version of the standing orders.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 2

Staff will contribute further to projects to redevelop ParlInfo and the Bills System, and the projects' implementation should yield tangible productivity benefits. The office will also audit and, as appropriate, update its other information technology applications to develop more intuitive database applications, improved document management and more direct online publication.

Further progress will be made on the digital imaging project, and a sample of the tabled papers archive will appear online as part of a pilot program to seek feedback.

## Output Group 3—Procedure Office

### Outputs

Provision of advisory and 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.

	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>Procedural advice is accurate and covers all foreseeable eventualities.</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>Education Centre teaching and other Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) projects accurately reflect the Parliament and its work.</p>	<p>The 2007 senators' survey revealed high levels of satisfaction with the group's outputs. Advice was evaluated as 'excellent', with survey interviews revealing a generally high level of satisfaction with the accuracy of advice. Survey responses labelled performance as professional, non-partisan, efficient and willing.</p> <p>Procedural advice was assessed as accurate and comprehensive, and as anticipating senators' requirements. A survey response noted, 'Chamber and procedural support is excellent on the whole'.</p> <p>The survey showed that the level of satisfaction with drafting services was 83% but commentary indicated that, while drafting was of a high standard, more resources were needed. Backbench government senators who used the services also expressed a high level of satisfaction.</p> <p>The group's comprehensive continuing survey program revealed consistently high levels of satisfaction with this output, with many users of the training program seeking additional training modules.</p> <p>The senators' survey indicated that senators were highly satisfied with the work of the PEO (89%). In other assessments conducted by the PEO, its clients indicated high levels of satisfaction.</p>
Timeliness	<p>Procedural advice is timely. During sitting periods, amendments drafted as soon as possible after receipt of instructions.</p> <p>Scrutiny committee meetings held, documentation provided and reports produced within timeframes set by the Senate or the committees, as relevant.</p> <p>Seminars and lectures held on time and in accordance with advertised schedule; public information projects delivered according to programmed schedule.</p> <p>PEO teaching programs held on time and in accordance with booking schedule.</p> <p>PEO projects delivered according to programmed schedule.</p> <p>Information available on the internet and in publications is up to date and available as soon as practicable.</p>	<p>Procedural advice was assessed in the survey as prompt.</p> <p>All meetings of the scrutiny committees were held as scheduled and documentation was provided within the timeframes set by the committees.</p> <p>All seminars and lectures were held on time and in accordance with advertised schedules. Additional seminars were held in response to increasing demand.</p> <p>All programs were held in accordance with schedules. 58 additional classes were held in response to popular demand.</p> <p>Projects were delivered on schedule.</p> <p>Internet timetables for the provision of information were met. A new website was launched for the PEO (see 'Parliamentary education services').</p>

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 3

### Analysis

As shown in Figure 11, the Procedure Office is divided into six functional areas to assist with the efficient management of the services it provides to senators. The office is headed by the Clerk Assistant (Procedure), who manages the office, provides procedural, advisory and drafting services, makes a large number of presentations on Senate procedure, and performs duties as a clerk at the table in the Senate chamber.

Figure 11 Elements and responsibilities of the Procedure Office

<b>Executive and Legislative Drafting</b> <i>Cleaver Elliott, Clerk Assistant</i> Procedural advice and training Legislative drafting of amendments and private senators' bills				
<b>Biographical Dictionary Unit</b>  <i>Ann Millar, Director</i>	<b>Parliamentary Education Office</b>  <i>Chris Reid, Director</i>	<b>Regulations and Ordinances Committee</b>  <i>James Warmenhoven, Secretary</i>	<b>Research Section</b>  <i>Anthony Marinac, Director</i>	<b>Scrutiny of Bills Committee</b>  <i>Cheryl Wilson, 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	Provision of seminars, exhibitions, and research on matters of parliamentary significance	Secretariat, advisory and administrative support to the committee

### Legislative drafting and procedural advice

The Procedure Office met the requirements of senators for procedural advice and legislative drafting services 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, both in the chamber and for use in the chamber
- drafting amendments to bills, primarily for non-government senators but also for backbench government senators, as required, in response to instructions received from senators and senators' staff
- drafting private senators' bills for non-government senators and also for backbench government senators as required, in response to instructions received from senators and senators' staff.

The office also prepared an average of six procedural scripts per sitting day, one more than last year's average. These scripts included notices of motion, terms of reference for committee

inquiries and related documents for senators’ use in the chamber and in committees. The tendency of senators and their staff to seek this advice at very short notice continued during the year.

The Procedure Office drafted and processed all non-government amendments and private senators’ bills required by senators for use in the Senate, to assist with Senate committee work and for the purpose of discussions and negotiations with interested constituents. In 2005–06, there was a small increase in the number of requests from government senators for drafting assistance; a similar number of requests were made in 2006–07.

There was a further increase in the number of requests for drafting private senators’ bills during 2006–07, with 41 bills prepared and 20 introduced, compared to 34 prepared and six introduced in 2005–06. The most notable drafting tasks during the year under review were for the Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT) and Related Research Amendment Bill 2006 and Prohibition of Human Cloning for Reproduction and the Regulation of Human Embryo Research Amendment Bill 2006. After initial drafting, work on the latter bill was greatly assisted by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and a seconded departmental officer with expertise in this area. The briefings required for both bills involved considerable work for the office.

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 2006–07. A summary of the legislative drafting and procedural advice services provided by the office in recent years is shown in Table 4.

**Table 3 Bills generating significant workload, 2006–07**

<b>Bill</b>	<b>No. of circulated amendments</b>	<b>No. of sets of circulated amendments</b>
Inspector of Transport Security Bill 2006	68	1
Medibank Private Sale Bill 2006	53	2
Native Title Amendment Bill 2006	88	3
Workplace Relations Amendment (A Stronger Safety Net) Bill 2007	64	6

A core function of the office is the provision of procedural advice to meet a wide range of senators’ requirements. 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. 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.

The reduced number of sitting days in 2006–07—continuing a trend noted in recent reports—affected the work of the office, with senators concentrating their legislative work into the available time.

The 2007 senators’ survey revealed an 83 per cent level of satisfaction with the legislative drafting service. Survey commentary indicated that drafting services provided to

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 3

non-government senators were of an impressively high standard. Government senators who had used these services were also either highly satisfied (four senators), or satisfied (one senator).

Responses in the survey also reflected a familiar concern about over-strained resources in the area. This has been a continuing area of attention, which can most effectively be addressed by a wider acknowledgment of the root cause, as one Senator commented in the survey: ‘The [problems with drafting] are only usually caused because of last minute decisions by individual senators, by members of parties and advisers. Sometimes there is a rush of legislation, a rush of last minute legislation’.

Additional staff resources were provided to the legislative drafting task with the Director, Research increasing the proportion of legislative drafting undertaken by the Research Section for the Procedure Office. The Research Section continued with its research support for the Clerk Assistant’s legislative drafting workload, particularly for private senators’ bills where policy development is required.

Table 4 **Legislative drafting and procedural advice services provided to non-government senators, 2002–03 to 2006–07**

Service	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
Committee of the whole amendments	2,078	1,715	607	736	1,524
Second reading amendments	76	99	56	56	111
Private senator’s bills prepared	23	20	14	34	41
Private senators’ bills introduced	17	11	8	6	20
Procedural scripts prepared	372	568	287	274	353

### 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 fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with their standing orders. This work included:

- publishing the required reports and digests each Senate sitting week
- publishing the *Delegated Legislation Monitor* (every Senate sitting week) and the *Disallowance Alert* and *Scrutiny of Disallowable Instruments Alert* (updated online as required)
- preparing disallowance notices.

The two committees are responsible for examining all bills and disallowable instruments within their jurisdiction. The secretariats, assisted by their legal advisers, completed the necessary administrative work to assist the committees to undertake these tasks. The Regulations and Ordinances Committee staff processed 2,349 instruments during 2006–07 (2,449 in 2005–06). The Scrutiny of Bills Committee secretariat processed 241 bills during 2006–07 (185 in 2005–06) and the committee commented on 112 bills (91 in 2005–06).

The secretaries of the scrutiny committees briefed an international delegation from the Interparliamentary Study Group on the role and work of the committees.

## Public information and parliamentary research

The Research Section of the Procedure Office continued to coordinate and deliver parliamentary information services for the community during the year through lectures, exhibitions, seminars, publications, programs for other parliaments in Australia and overseas, and internships and fellowships. Highlights included the provision of an additional 18 seminars in response to high levels of demand and the provision of assistance to the legislatures of Indonesia, the People's Republic of China, Vietnam and the Cook Islands.

### Biographical Dictionary

The Biographical Dictionary Unit of the output group continued its work on *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate*.

Work on the manuscript of the third volume, covering 1962 to 1983, was completed at the end of the reporting period, meeting the timeframe established with the Clerk of the Senate. The work was undertaken in accordance with the accepted standards and procedures for multi-author works of reference, as outlined in last year's annual report.

The extensive research and writing required in the unit included the verification of 33 entries, the editing of 54 entries, and the compilation of extensive endnotes.

The crucial task continued to be genealogical research about senators and clerks and their families, and acquisition of documents to confirm the facts. One hundred birth, marriage and death certificates were ordered from Australian states and from other countries and overseas cities (ranging from Scotland and Ireland to Shanghai and Hong Kong), as was one shipping record for a birth at sea. Twenty-eight burial records were accessed through online cemetery databases. The search for several divorce decrees began.

Work continued on the 108 entries for Volume 4, which will cover 1983 to 2003. A further 20 authors were allocated, to make a total of 37, and some editorial work commenced. A date has not yet been set for publication of Volume 4.

### Lectures

During 2006–07, the Department of the Senate continued to host lunchtime lectures as part of the popular occasional lecture series, a drawcard both for repeat attendees and for visitors to Parliament House. Topics ranged from the relationship between the media gallery and Parliament, presented by prominent SBS television reporter Karen Middleton, to the importance of an independent electoral administrator, presented by renowned Australian political scientist (and the first Australian Electoral Commissioner) Professor Colin Hughes.

The Research Section publishes lecture transcripts in its free *Papers on Parliament* series and, since the start of 2007, has made audio recordings available on the departmental website, increasing the audience for, and accessibility to, the lectures.

### Exhibitions

The department completed a new exhibition in the lobby to the public galleries of the Senate chamber. The exhibition provides orientation for visitors to the galleries and gives them an introduction to the role of the Senate and the work of senators. The Research Section also developed material for a new audiovisual display, enabling the public to select short sequences depicting the work of Senate committees, women in the parliament, Prime Ministers, and cartoons illustrating the Senate.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 3

### Seminar series

The department's seminar series, administered by the Research Section, continues to expand, giving a greater number of executive branch public servants an opportunity to understand parliamentary operations and the accountability relationship between the Parliament and their own departments. A total of 1,558 people attended 43 seminars this year, almost 400 more than last year.

The seminar series remains an integral part of most graduate training programs within the Australian Public Service. As graduate recruitment programs continue to expand, so has the demand for Senate seminars.

The range of tailored seminars available to the public service and other groups has also expanded. In 2006–07, this included a seminar for a group of Indigenous graduates and tailored programs for a lobbying/consulting firm, for the Journalists Fellowship Program and for the Defence Industry Study Course.

The seminars are effective because they are conducted by senior departmental staff actively involved in supporting the operations of the Senate and its committees. It may be that the limit of the department's capacity to produce these seminars has almost been reached, as expert staff can only be drawn on to a certain extent.

A series of procedural training seminars continued to be offered for the staff of senators, with continuing good attendance. These seminars, delivered by senior officers, provide detailed applied explanations of the operations of the Senate and its committees.

### Publications

The Research Section edited and published two editions of the department's journal, *Papers on Parliament*, during 2006–07. The first, *A Light of Reason*, focused on the Senate Select Committee on Superannuation and a seminar on its work held in August 2005. The second, *Images, Colours and Reflections*, contained papers from the occasional lecture series of 2005–06.

The section issues a range of free publications raising awareness of the Senate and the parliamentary process. In 2006–07, the *Senate Briefs* series was revised and reissued in hard copy and in an improved online version.

Two new brochures were also produced this year. The first provides a simple explanation of the Senate, its function and its operations for people who want a basic understanding without the detail offered by the *Senate Briefs*. The second, *Your Senate Online*, provides step-by-step instructions to enable people to access the range of information available on the Senate through the Parliament House website.

### Information inquiries, internships and fellowships

During the year, the Research Section responded to requests for information and research support from a range of sources, including senators, the Clerk, the academic community and the general public.

The Australian National Internships Program was again run successfully in partnership with the Australian National University. Interns continued to see Parliament House as an outstanding venue in which to be placed. More than a thousand students have participated in the program since its inception in 1993, and 77 students were placed in Parliament House in 2006–07. The Research Section coordinated an induction seminar for each group of interns and organised some of the functions associated with the program.

The section also manages the Senate Fellowship program, which gives scholars access to the department and Parliament House to conduct their research. The program costs the department nothing, as it provides no fees or allowances.

During the year, Professor John Halligan of the University of Canberra concluded his fellowship when, with his co-authors, he completed *Parliament in the 21st Century: Institutional Reform and Emerging Roles*, a book published by Melbourne University Press.

**Parliamentary education services**

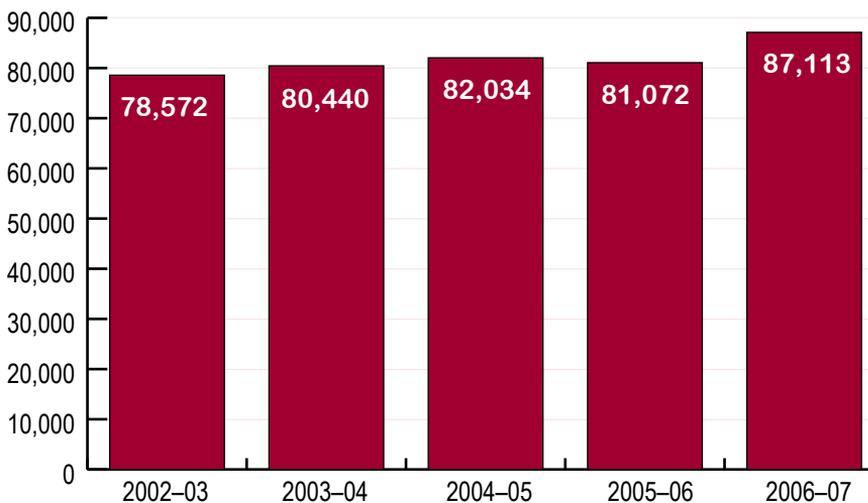
The Parliamentary Education Office (PEO), through its programs, publications and resources, educates Australians about the work of the Parliament of Australia. The PEO provides services both at Parliament House and through outreach activities. During 2006–07, the office continued to deliver a high level of parliamentary educational services to schools, teachers and students.

**Parliament House activities**

Through its Education Centre (a modified committee room representing a parliamentary chamber), the PEO delivered its pre-booked one-hour role-play program to more than 87,000 students in about 2,500 groups during the year. This continues a steady increase in the number of students attending, as shown in Figure 12. The role-play involves simulations of chamber and committee proceedings of the Senate and the House of Representatives. This popular and successful educational experience has been replicated in classrooms Australia-wide and in state, territory and overseas parliaments.

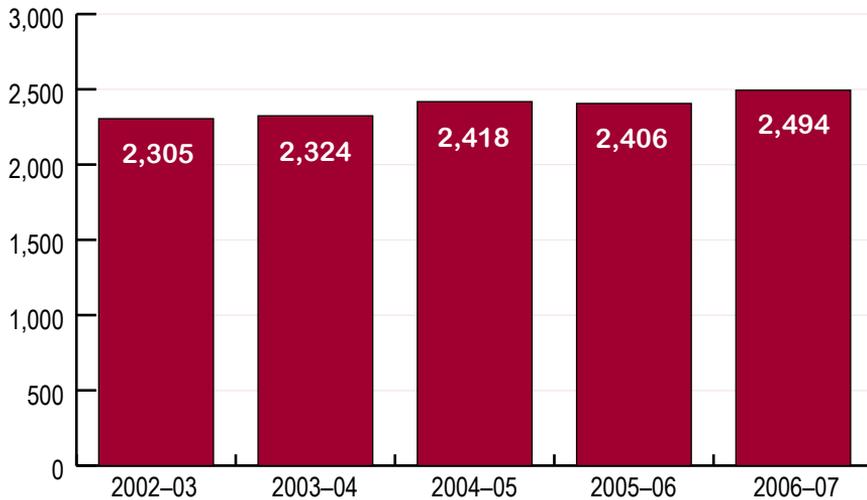
As foreshadowed in last year’s report, hours of operation for the program were extended to meet demand, resulting in more than 2,000 additional students participating in the program. In June 2007, the Education Centre installed chamber benches with reversible red and green cushions, to match the colours of the two chambers. This provides an even more authentic chamber experience for students, and potential to expand PEO services from the Education Centre using a range of multimedia visual technologies. The office also conducted market research surveys of classroom teachers visiting the Education Centre.

Figure 12 **Students who visited the PEO Education Centre, 2002–03 to 2006–07**



## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 3

Figure 13 School groups that visited the PEO Education Centre, 2002–03 to 2006–07



The Little Lunch Sitings for Senior Citizens program was again delivered during available periods at Parliament House.

The PEO also contributed to the annual National Schools' Constitutional Convention by taking participants through a simulated parliamentary sitting that considered a constitution alteration bill tailor-made for the purpose.

### Outreach activities

The PEO continued to develop systems and programs for teachers in schools, universities and the TAFE sector. As part of a national 'teaching teachers' program, the PEO focused on South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. The PEO also conducted its long-running and successful Fellowship program, which in 2006–07 brought in experienced teachers and officials from the schools sector in South Australia. A follow-up strategy, assisted by a new 'Friends and Colleagues' communication initiative using the PEO website, is ensuring that PEO Fellows are supported and encouraged to maintain PEO programs in South Australian classrooms. More generally, this communication system is designed to keep PEO in touch with all its friends and colleagues in the education sector.

In 2006–07, the PEO participated in activities in:

- New South Wales—Bega, Cooma, Eden, Newcastle
- Victoria—Melbourne (several different programs)
- Western Australia—Perth
- South Australia—Berri, Gawler, Gilles Plains, Noarlunga, Port Adelaide, Port Augusta, Regency Park, Salisbury
- Tasmania—Launceston
- Australian Capital Territory—Canberra and surrounding region
- Northern Territory—Alice Springs, Darwin.

No major activities were undertaken in Queensland during 2006–07, as extensive work was done in that state in 2005–06. However, Queensland students continued to be a major presence, making up 15 per cent of participants in the role-play.

An important feature of PEO outreach activities is the involvement and assistance of senators and members from the relevant state or electorate.

The PEO continued to work with the National Museum of Australia to produce *Talk Back Classroom*, a program in which senior secondary school students interview distinguished guests in front of a live audience in a recording studio. In 2006–07, interviewees included Dr Peter Shergold, Ms Julia Gillard MP, the Honourable Mal Brough MP, the Honourable Julie Bishop MP and the Honourable Malcolm Turnbull MP.

The Rotary-sponsored ‘Adventure in Citizenship’ program brought 50 Year 11 students to Canberra to take part in a week-long program run by the PEO and other partners. Delegates experienced the operation of Parliament through various role-plays within the structured format of parliamentary and committee processes, through involvement with parliamentarians and through debates on some of the key current issues being considered by the Parliament. Delegates returned home to share these experiences with their peers and communities.

As in past years, the PEO assisted the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in producing the *Heywire* program for rural youth by giving 36 participants from across Australia an understanding of the way Parliament functions, with an emphasis on lawmaking and scrutiny.

### Professional networks

During 2006–07, the PEO continued to forge strong and useful networks within the Parliament and beyond by:

- meeting with the PEO Advisory Committee
- working closely with senators and members
- attending the Australian Primary Principals’ Association Conference
- continuing to monitor state and territory curriculum developments
- keeping abreast of parliamentary education developments internationally
- monitoring chamber and committee developments throughout the year.

### Staff training and development

In 2006–07, the PEO introduced a training module for staff and prospective staff, to increase its teaching capacity during busy periods and to increase staffing flexibility by providing additional resources to cover staff absences. Qualified applicants from the department’s casual employment register undertook development based on observation, team teaching and mentoring, and were given intermittent teaching opportunities within the PEO. The training module will be repeated and refined in 2007–08.

### Website and resources

The new PEO website went on line in March 2007 after more than a year of planning, consultation, testing and implementation. Added interactivity, including video learning and face-to-face communication, and the promotion of the website form the next phase of the larger website project.

The PEO continued to produce new and updated resources. These included the draft stage of a poster series, *Parliament in Pictures*, and the new teacher CD resource, *Parliament of Wizards*, which introduces primary school students to the work of parliament through the world of magic.

To cater for continuing high levels of interest, the PEO reprinted the pocket-sized *Australian Constitution*, *Peeling Back Parliament* and *Unravelling the Role Play*.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 3

### Parliament and Civics Education Rebate

The Citizenship Visits Program (CVP) provided subsidies for school groups travelling more than 1,000 kilometres to Canberra to visit the Education Centre. From 1 July 2006, the CVP was transferred to the Department of Education, Science and Training and subsumed into the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) scheme. The department ceased its involvement with the CVP from that time. However, Senate estimate committee hearings explored the effect of PACER on the PEO's education program. Statistics for the PEO program at Parliament House revealed that overall bookings increased in the year following PACER's introduction, but bookings from remote states such as Western Australia, South Australia, the Northern Territory and Tasmania—for which the CVP had been devised—remained the same or declined.

### Interparliamentary activities

The Procedure Office provides support to parliaments around the world by:

- hosting visiting delegations from overseas legislatures
- training members and officials of other legislatures
- supporting the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- giving administrative and research support to Australian parliamentary delegations visiting other countries' legislatures.

In March 2007, the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) produced a consolidated report of parliamentary training provided by staff of the department to overseas parliaments. Fifteen tailored missions to 13 countries (with some countries requesting follow-up training) had been conducted during a 10-year period. The report was tabled in the Senate by the President on 29 March 2007.

The Senate and its committees continued to be regarded as role models for legislatures around Australia and the world. In 2006–07, the Senate hosted visitors from nations including Indonesia, Pakistan, South Africa and Niue. As in previous years, the program was tailored to meet the specific needs of the visitors.

The Clerk Assistant (Procedure) and the Director, Research continued to provide training opportunities for members and staff of legislatures in the region, including the National Assembly of Vietnam and the Parliament of the Cook Islands. The office also worked to develop further the close relationship between the Australian Senate and the Indonesian upper house, the Dewan Perwakilan Daerah.

### Inter-Parliamentary Union

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) brings together representatives of the parliaments of sovereign states throughout the world. It fosters contacts, coordination and exchanges of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries and contributes to a better knowledge of the working of representative institutions.

During 2006–07, the department continued to support the important work of the IPU by:

- funding the attendances of senators and members from the Australian Group of the IPU at the 115th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, in October 2006 and at the 116th Assembly in Bali, Indonesia, in May 2007
- providing administrative support and advice to the Australian delegation.

In July 2006, the leader of the Australian IPU delegation, the Hon. Judi Moylan MP attended meetings in Geneva, convened by the President of the IPU, Mr Pier Ferdinando Casini, to

develop proposals to further consolidate reform of the IPU. Several of her proposals were adopted and are being implemented.

The Director, Journals and Notice Paper, Table Office, continued to serve as secretary to the Australian IPU delegation, providing administrative support and advice, and help with preparing reports to the Parliament.

**Delegation secretariat support**

In addition to its support of IPU activities, the department provided experienced officers as secretaries to five parliamentary delegations conducting bilateral visits to Portugal; Cambodia; the Republic of Malta and Spain; the United Kingdom and Poland; and Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America. The secretaries provided administrative and research support throughout the visits and during the preparation of reports for tabling in the Parliament.

**Significant changes in functions and services**

The Citizenship Visits Program, an administered item providing a subsidy for school children visiting Parliament House from remote areas of Australia, was terminated and transferred to the Department of Education, Science and Training. The program ceased to be administered by parliamentary departments on 1 July 2006.

See ‘Parliament and Civics Education Rebate’, above, for more details.

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

The core business of the Procedure Office—its legislative drafting and procedural advice services—continued to be used extensively by senators and their staff.

Demand for procedural advice and training for senators’ staff remained high, partly driven by high turnover among staff, many of whom are casual or temporary employees.

Public service demand and demand from overseas parliaments for training services continued to be very strong. This led the office to provide many additional training seminars, often at short notice.

***Evaluation***

In addition to monitoring the evaluative commentary received in the senators’ survey, the Procedure Office continually monitors all its activities through formal and informal appraisal, including through letters, emails, phone calls, seminar evaluation forms and direct advice from Senators, their staff and members of the public. All these evaluation methods helped the office to finetune output activities during 2006–07, and all indicated high levels of satisfaction with the office’s services. Figure 14 gives examples of comments.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 3

Figure 14 **Typical feedback on Output Group 3 programs**

Program	Feedback	User
<b>Legislative drafting service</b>	'Thanks so much for your super-efficient help on this.'	A senator's staffer
	'Thanks for your great work on this—I've received many compliments on the effort from here and overseas.'	A senator on the drafting of a private senator's bill
	'Thanks for the work on the bill; everyone is very happy with it.'	A senator's staffer
	'I believe the draft is so good that if there is neither time nor interest to "potter", where it is now is a splendid example of its genre.'	A constituent on the drafting of a private senator's bill
	'Thank you both again for your willingness to help me in a rush ... again!'	A senator's staffer
	'Thanks—once again your service excels!'	A senator's staffer
<b>Seminar program</b>	'You're a miracle worker. Very much appreciated. Will be a bit more timely next time.'	A senator's staffer
	'Excellent and entertaining. Kept my interest.'	Seminar participant
	'My sincere thanks for your quick response and enthusiasm.'	An organiser of a seminar
	'[The Senate] session was the hit of the week—and rightly so.'	Student of the Advanced Military Administrative Law course, ANU
	'Appreciated the focus on providing advice to ministers.'	Seminar participant
	'Excellent and very informative. Practical knowledge highlighting both intellectual and physical reality. A fantastic learning experience.'	Seminar participant
	'That was the most interesting and insightful seminar so far out of all the seminars offered in the program. I was already familiar with the brief role of the Senate, but its reasons and rationale for Senate processes was informative to me.'	Seminar participant
	'This was a great introduction to the Senate—clear, well organised and very interesting.'	Seminar participant
	'Well presented, well thought out, clear and concise.'	Seminar participant
	'Well presented and informative. Very useful information in our folders.'	Seminar participant
	'It was very worthwhile and covered both the necessary detail and the "mystery" of the legislative process.'	Seminar participant
	'Speakers were very knowledgeable—it was clear they were experienced in the topics.'	Seminar participant
	'Good, useful and well-presented explanation of the Senate and role of public servants.'	Seminar participant
'I really enjoyed the presentations. All of the presenters are very knowledgeable about their topics. I really appreciate that all the presenters offered tips and used current issues to highlight the points of the presentation. Having a current senator as a presenter was also invaluable.'	Seminar participant	

Program	Feedback	User
<b>Parliamentary Education Office programs</b>	'The Parliamentary Education Office does a wonderful job.'	A senator
	'The mock parliament session has certainly educated and enriched students' understanding of the operation of Parliament and made them more aware of the importance of debates ...'	A member of the House of Representatives
	'I enjoyed learning more about the outreach program of the PEO ... so much dedication, energy and passion towards educating students about the Australian Parliament.'	A visiting official
	'My classroom has already benefited from PEO resources. When talking about aspects of Parliament, I simply turn to the posters, maps & diagrams on the wall ...The website is excellent.'	A teacher and PEO fellow
	'This was absolutely brilliant. Using situational learning is a very successful strategy ... fantastic!'	A TAFE student

Specific evaluation of the work of the PEO appeared in the senators' survey within the section headed 'Public awareness of the Senate and its work'. The report stated that the PEO was 'most prominent in the minds of Senators', with survey results indicating that 67 per cent of senators were satisfied with the PEO and 22 per cent were highly satisfied. The overall approval rate of 89 per cent shows that the outputs of the office are hitting the mark. After the PEO Advisory Committee meeting in March 2007, before the survey results were published, all senators were provided with a list of the schools from their state that had booked into the PEO program at Parliament House to 31 December 2007. This service will soon be permanently available through the senators' computer network portal.

### **Performance outlook**

In 2007–08, the office will continue to give priority to providing legislative drafting support for non-government senators, drafting support for legislative amendments and private senator's bills, and procedural advice and training.

The scrutiny committees' secretariats will continue to provide full and effective support to the Regulations and Ordinances Committee and the Scrutiny of Bills Committee.

The Biographical Dictionary Unit will publish Volume 3 of the dictionary and continue its work on Volume 4.

The PEO will continue to focus its efforts on an established 'teaching and reaching' strategy. This will include substantial moves towards implementing a national agenda designed primarily to educate all students of school age in Australia about the Australian Parliament. It will use technology to support its aims, including additions to its new website and a video production facility called Moving Image.

The PEO will also work closely with the Australian Primary Principals' Association and the Australian Secondary Principals' Association (including sponsoring a part of their joint national conference). Teacher training initiatives, plus programs in schools, universities and the TAFE sector, will also continue.

All senators and members will be given access to PEO school bookings data, specific member of parliament services and the PEO website through their network portal.

In 2007–08, the PEO expects to educate a near-capacity number of students in the Education Centre, as it did in 2006–07. The PEO will continue to further its position as a leading authority on, and exponent of, parliamentary education.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 3

The Research Section will continue to provide training for senators and their staff, for the members and staff of other parliaments and for officers of the Australian Public Service.

During the coming year, the Research Section will replace the exhibition 'For Peace, Order and Good Government' with a new exhibition focusing on the constitutional, legislative, representative and accountability functions of the Parliament. The section will also maintain the popular series of occasional lectures.

## Output Group 4—Committee Office

<b>Outputs</b>		
Provision of secretariat support to the Senate legislative and general purpose standing committees, select committees and certain joint committees.		
	<b>Performance indicators</b>	<b>Performance results</b>
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>Advice, documentation, publications and draft reports are accurate and of a high standard.</p>	<p>Formal and informal feedback mechanisms continue to show that senators consider the support provided by the Committee Office to be effective.</p> <p>Both in the 2007 senators' survey and when debating committee reports, committee chairs and senators recognised the high quality of services provided by secretariats in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• drafting reports</li> <li>• dealing effectively with witnesses and clients</li> <li>• organising committee meetings and hearings</li> <li>• producing quality committee briefings</li> <li>• providing sound procedural advice</li> <li>• liaising closely with senators' offices.</li> </ul>
Timeliness	<p>Meetings held, documentation provided and reports produced within timeframes set by the Senate or the committee, as relevant.</p> <p>Tabling deadlines met in all but extraordinary circumstances</p>	<p>Committee secretariats organised meetings, hearings, briefings and inspections in accordance with committee requirements and within constraints arising from the availability of members.</p> <p>Reports were drafted and presented to the Senate in accordance with the timelines set by committees and deadlines set by the Senate.</p>
Quantity	<p>Documentation is sufficient for committee purposes and material available to the public is available promptly, electronically or in hard copy.</p>	<p>Committee staff provided committee members, witnesses and others with documents in accordance with secretariat procedures, orders of the Senate and committee requirements.</p> <p>Upon tabling, reports were promptly made available to senators and others in both printed and electronic forms.</p>

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 4

### Analysis

During 2006–07, the Committee Office provided secretariat support to Senate and certain joint committees by:

- giving accurate and timely procedural advice and administrative support to facilitate and expedite the work of committees
- arranging responsive and timely meetings and hearings in accordance with committee decisions
- providing comprehensive and timely briefings and research papers
- drafting quality reports which accurately canvassed and analysed the evidence from submissions and hearings and reflected the requirements of committees (and assisting, as necessary, in the drafting of minority reports)
- communicating effectively with witnesses and members of the general public
- being proactive in anticipating requirements of committees and chairs.

Senate committees continued to focus on bills inquiries. In 2006–07, 44 per cent of bills introduced into the Parliament were referred to Senate committees, compared to 47 per cent in 2005–06. This corresponds to an increase in the number of bills introduced into the Parliament (Table 5) and reflects an increase in the number of inquiries conducted.

Table 5 **Bills referred to Senate committees, 2005–06 and 2006–07**

	2005–06	2006–07
Number of bills introduced into Parliament	165	243
Number of individual bills referred	78	107
Percentage of individual bills referred	47%	44%
Packages of bills referred	59	79
Percentage of packages of bills referred	36%	33%

The reporting timeframes for bills inquiries remained tight, with a 30-day average reporting deadline, a slight increase on the average of 27 days for 2005–06. This figure is based on a timeline commencing from the date the bill was referred and concluding with the date the committee reported (Table 6). In 2006–07, 12 bills were referred by the Senate contingent on their introduction into the Parliament. For example, the Workplace Relations Amendment (A Stronger Safety Net) Bill 2007 was referred to the Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee for inquiry on 10 May 2007, with a reporting date of 14 June 2007, but the bill was not introduced into the House of Representatives until 29 May 2007. For 19 days of its inquiry, the committee was therefore not in a position to examine the detail of the bill, presenting difficulties for the committee, staff and witnesses.

Table 6 **Bills inquiries and average reporting deadlines**

	2005–06	2006–07
Packages of bills referred	59	79
Reporting deadline (total number of days)	1,619	2,360
Average (days)	27.44	29.87

The Committee Office conducted a number of recruitment processes to ensure that staffing levels were sufficient to meet the demands made of secretariats. In October 2006, staff numbers were at their lowest level, with 49.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. Unfortunately, this coincided with a period of high activity for committees (13 bills referred for eight inquiries with short reporting timeframes). Although the selection processes for most vacant positions had been finalised, there were delays in the appointed staff taking up positions. The FTE staff figure for 2006–07 was 52.1, reflecting in part the low staffing levels earlier in the year. FTE staffing numbers have hovered between 53 and 55 since January 2007.

The Community Affairs Committee and the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee each conducted a large number of inquiries in 2006–07. The average FTE staff numbers for these committee secretariats (5.2 and 5.0, respectively, for the year) reflect this workload and compare with the average FTE staff (3.4) employed for the Finance and Public Administration Committee, which had a lighter workload.

Last year’s annual report highlighted the variability in work patterns, and this persisted during 2006–07. The Committee Office continued the system under which the busiest secretariats borrowed additional staff from those with lighter schedules.

The average cost of supporting the legislative and general purpose standing committees was \$480,000, compared to \$458,000 in 2005–06 and \$520,000 in 2004–05. The slight increase on the 2005–06 figure principally reflects increases in salary costs.

**Table 7 Legislative and general purpose standing committees  
—workload trends**

	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07
References to:			
Legislation committees	45	61	5 <sup>a</sup>
References committees	28	12	1 <sup>a</sup>
Standing committees (from 11 September 2006)			84
Total	73	73	90
Reports presented	90	84	94
Meetings held	249	252	267
Hearings held	143	164	161
Witnesses heard	1,419	1,895	1,860
Extensions of time granted	35	55	33

Note: Statistics for legislation committees exclude those relating to legislation committee work on the estimates and consideration of annual reports.

a To 11 September 2006.

For the second consecutive year, no select committees operated.

During the year, the Committee Office continued to support two ongoing statutory committees—the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services.

The *Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act 2006* commenced on 30 December 2006, heralding the establishment of a new parliamentary joint committee early in 2007—the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity. The committee, which is supported by the Committee Office, held its first meeting on 10 May 2007.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 4

The cost of the Committee Office in 2006–07 was \$8.3 million (\$8.2 million in 2005–06). The costs included staff travel, accommodation and venue hire, and the costs of some non-government witnesses. Committees administered by the Committee Office did not use the services of any consultants during the year. The costs of senators attending hearings are paid by the Department of Finance and Administration.

Figure 15 shows the structure of the Committee Office.

Figure 15 **Elements and responsibilities of the Committee Office**

<b>Executive</b>	
<i>Maureen Weeks, Clerk Assistant</i> <i>Roxane Le Guen, Senior Clerk</i> Procedural advice Planning and coordination Secretariat staffing and resources Statistics and records	
<b>Legislative and general purpose standing (legislation and references) committee secretariats</b>	<b>Joint statutory committee secretariats</b>
Community Affairs <i>Elton Humphery</i>	Australian Crime Commission <i>Jacqui Dewar</i>
Economics <i>Peter Hallahan</i>	Corporations and Financial Services <i>David Sullivan</i>
Employment, Workplace Relations and Education <i>John Carter</i>	Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity <i>Jacqui Dewar</i>
Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts <i>Ian Holland</i>	
Finance and Public Administration <i>Stephen Palethorpe</i>	
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade <i>Kathleen Dermody</i>	
Legal and Constitutional <i>Jackie Morris</i>	
Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport <i>Jeanette Radcliffe</i>	

Note: Secretaries for committees are shown as at 30 June 2007.

## Procedural changes and advice

Secretaries continued to provide procedural and strategic advice to committee chairs and members. Higher level advice was provided by the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Clerk Assistant (Committees) and Senior Clerk of Committees. The advice, both oral and written, covered many parliamentary privilege issues and matters such as the power of committees to call witnesses, adverse reflections on persons made in evidence and protection of witnesses. Advice was also provided on a number of matters arising out of estimates hearings, including the extent of questioning allowed under the orders of the Senate and the bases on which information can be refused to committees.

In 2005, standing order 74 was amended to introduce a new accountability mechanism to address the late provision of answers to questions taken or placed on notice during the estimates process. Amended standing order 74(5) enables a senator, 30 days after the date an answer is due, to ask the relevant minister in the chamber why an estimates question on notice has not been answered. It was used on three occasions: 14 August 2006, 7 September 2006 and 10 May 2007. Estimates reports and questions at hearings also continued to highlight concerns about the provision of answers long after the due date.

The Chairs' Committee, established under standing order 25(10), met on two occasions (13 and 20 June 2007) to consider the Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration's report, *Transparency and accountability of Commonwealth funding and expenditure*. Recommendation 18 of that report was that the Chairs' Committee consider the proposals made by the Auditor-General during the inquiry to provide assistance to the legislative and general purpose standing committees in their consideration of estimates. The Chairs' Committee reported to the Senate on 21 June 2007.

## Legislative and general purpose standing committees

Last year's annual report foreshadowed a change to the structure of the Senate's committee system. On 11 September 2006, changes to the structure of the legislative and general purpose standing committees, agreed by the Senate on 14 August 2006, took effect. Previously, 16 committees operated: two for each portfolio grouping (one legislation and one references). The twin committees were amalgamated and membership of the new committees increased from six to eight, with a government senator as committee chair. The responsibilities of the two committees were blended so that the one committee now examines matters referred by the Senate (usually subject-oriented matters), in addition to inquiring into and reporting on bills, estimates of proposed expenditure, annual reports and the performance of government departments and agencies. Outstanding inquiries were continued by the new committees. The committees are established under amended standing order 25 as permanent committees and continue for the life of the parliament. They are re-established at the commencement of each new parliament, with their membership determined by the Senate.

Prior to the structural amendments of September 2006, legislation committees were referred four bills or packages of bills, and one other matter. The committees tabled 10 reports, excluding seven reports on annual reports.

In the other nine months of the year, the new committees had 84 matters referred, 74 of which were bills or packages of bills. As a result of all inquiries, 81 reports, excluding annual reports and estimates reports, were tabled.

In total, 78 bills inquiries were conducted by Senate committees during the year, resulting in 73 reports on legislation. Senate committees also tabled 21 reports on other matters.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 4

Comparisons with previous years are difficult because the committee structure has changed and work previously undertaken by two committees is now the responsibility of one. However, during 2005–06, legislation committees had 61 matters referred to them, including 59 bills or packages of bills, and tabled 65 reports, excluding the 15 reports on annual reports.

All legislative and general purpose standing committees are required by standing order 25(20) to report regularly on the annual reports of departments and agencies within their portfolio responsibilities. The new committees met this requirement in March 2007 with the tabling of reports by all eight committees. In early September 2006, under the previous committee structure, seven committees presented reports on annual reports in accordance with the standing orders. The Community Affairs Committee did not present a report, as it had no annual reports to consider. The total of 15 reports in 2006–07 is comparable with the 2005–06 figures.

Table 8 **Legislation committees—activity from 2002–03 to 11 September 2006**

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006
<b>Meetings (number)</b>					
Public	57	79	41	74	9
Private	140	173	118	151	20
Inspections/other	2	0	0	0	0
<b>Meetings (hours)</b>					
Public	395	248	131	304	55
Private	45	43	28	45	13
<b>Matters referred</b>					
Bill/provisions of bills	51	53	45	61	4
Other (inc. annual reports)	17	22	9	16	8
<b>Reports presented<sup>a</sup></b>	54	77	64	65	17
<b>Submissions received</b>	3,019	1,545	734	8,319	163
<b>Witnesses</b>	583	773	412	1,093	133

<sup>a</sup> Excludes estimates.

Table 9 **Standing committees—activity from 11 September 2006 to 30 June 2007**

2006–07	
<b>Meetings (number)</b>	
Public	119
Private	230
Inspections/other	9
<b>Meetings (hours)</b>	
Public	499
Private	113
<b>Matters referred</b>	
Bills/provisions of bills	74
Other (includes annual reports) <sup>a</sup>	18
<b>Reports presented<sup>a</sup></b>	89
<b>Submissions received</b>	2,594
<b>Witnesses</b>	1,371

*a Excludes estimates.*

Committees considering the estimates of proposed expenditure of Australian government departments and agencies sat for 715 hours in the budget cycle. The cycle commenced in May–June 2006 with the budget estimates, with supplementary hearings being held in October–November 2006 and additional estimates in February 2007. Under the new committee structure, 16 reports on estimates were prepared and tabled by committees. For details, see Table 10.

Table 10 **Committees considering estimates**

Budget cycle	Hours of estimates hearings held			No. of witnesses	No. of pages of evidence
	Budget estimates (hours)		Additional estimates (hours)		
	Main hearings May–June	Supplementary hearings October–November	February		
2007–08	333:00			1,832	4,004
2006–07	334:07	187:05	194:17	4,329	9,335

At the May–June 2007 budget estimates hearings for the 2007–08 budget cycle, committees sat for a total of 333 hours and senators asked an estimated 34,800 questions. The figures for the 2006–07 budget estimates hearings were similar (334 hours and about 33,700 questions).

Due to the large volume of answers received at the last moment, difficulties in processing answers to questions on notice from estimates hearings continued. Many departments and agencies provided answers just before, or during, the next scheduled round of estimates hearings, which limited the ability of senators to follow up issues. Prior to the Budget estimates hearings, the Department of Health and Ageing, Austrade, AusAID, the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and Export Finance and Insurance

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 4

Corporation were the only agencies to have provided all answers by 11 May 2007. On that date, the Department of Veterans' Affairs had not responded to any of the 93 questions that were on notice from the additional estimates hearings held in February 2007, despite a deadline of 29 March 2007.

In the two and a half months that references committees operated, only one matter was referred to them. Forty-one meetings (both public and private, together with inspections) were held and three reports were tabled. Following the restructuring of the committees, reference work outstanding was completed by the new committees.

Table 11 **References committees—activity 2002–03 to 11 September 2006**

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006
<b>Meetings (number)</b>					
Public	136	115	85	75	22
Private	112	133	131	101	17
Inspections/other	44	21	17	16	2
<b>Meetings (hours)</b>					
Public	518	528	347	334	106
Private	41	72	55	38	4
<b>Matters referred</b>					
Bill/provisions of bills	23	11	26	12	0
Other (inc. annual reports) <sup>a</sup>	1	2	2	0	1
<b>Reports presented<sup>a</sup></b>	10	21	41	19	3
<b>Submissions received</b>	1,953	3,954	891	1,117	271
<b>Witnesses</b>	1,719	1,294	1,007	802	356

Note: Meeting hours have been rounded to the lowest whole hour.

<sup>a</sup> Excludes estimates.

### Select committees

A select committee is an ad hoc committee created to inquire into and report on a specific matter. It usually has a limited life and ceases to exist when it presents its final report.

No select committees were established during 2006–07; nor did any select committee report and thus expire.

### Joint committees

Joint committees comprise senators and members of the House of Representatives. They are established by resolution of each House and, in the case of statutory committees, in accordance with the provisions of an Act.

At 30 June 2007, the Committee Office was supporting three statutory joint committees: Corporations and Financial Services, the Australian Crime Commission, and the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity. However, for most of 2006–07 it supported only two committees, as the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Commission for Law Enforcement Integrity did not hold its first meeting until 10 May 2007.

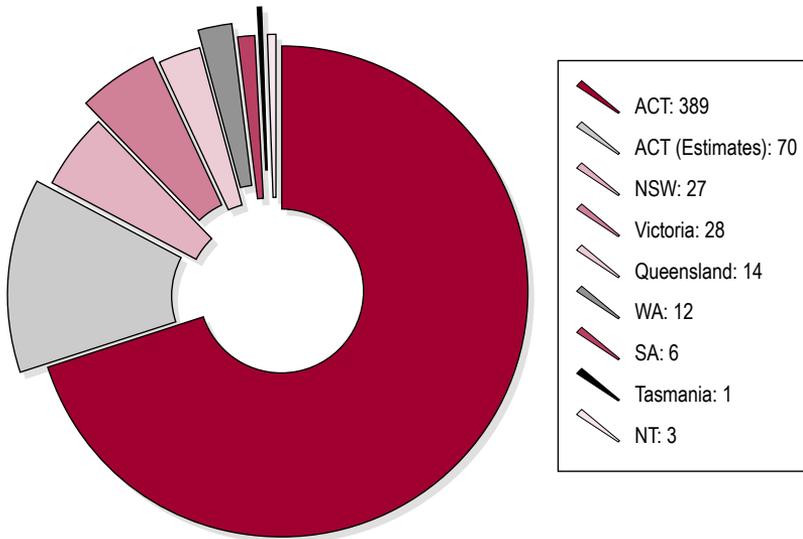
The committees held 52 meetings (public and private, and inspections), for a total of 93 hours. They received 160 submissions and heard 178 witnesses. The comparable figures for 2005–06 were 73 meetings, 130 hours, 187 submissions and 306 witnesses.

## Meetings

Senate committee secretariats supported 550 meetings, hearings and site inspections during the year, compared with 536 in 2004–05 and 597 in 2005–06. These figures include statistics relating to estimates hearings held by the committees.

Committees have continued to reach out to communities by travelling interstate, including to regional centres, to hold hearings and site visits. A breakdown of meetings by location appears in Figure 16.

Figure 16 **Committee meetings by location, 2006–07**



## Significant changes in functions and services

The debate over the government’s proposal to restructure the Senate’s committee system and the ensuing inquiry by the Procedure Committee gave the Committee Office clear notice of the impending changes. The office took that time to prepare, resulting in a smooth transition. Committees were reappointed and conducted their first meetings in a routine manner. Other necessary adjustments, such as updating websites, were identified and managed in order to minimise potential problems arising from the restructure. The restructure did not result in any significant changes to the structure of the Committee Office.

Work continued on the development of a web-based information system. In 2006–07, the objectives of the proposal were refined. The Senate Centralised Information Database project will include an increase in the use of dynamically generated website information, reducing workloads within secretariats and providing greater flexibility in delivering committee information. It is expected that this phase of the database project will be implemented by early 2008.

As flagged in the 2005–06 annual report, the procedural manual was finalised and distributed to all Committee Office staff in October 2006. The administration manual, which provides advice on administrative matters relating to committee activities, is substantially completed and will be circulated to staff after consultation.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 4

Work on guidelines to assist committees when making decisions on privacy and other matters related to publishing submissions, particularly on the internet, has progressed.

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

Committee workloads continued to be uneven throughout 2006–07. While some committees struggled with a large number of active inquiries, others received limited work. The practice of reallocating staff from underutilised secretariats to those with heavier workloads was continued. This reallocation of staff extended to creating sub-secretariats where an inquiry was moved from a particularly busy secretariat to an underutilised one. Staff recognise the benefits to personal and corporate development from being exposed to the work practices of other committees. Requests from busy secretariats for assistance are now routine, and the response is ready, willing and cooperative. Although some concern is still expressed at the loss of ‘corporate knowledge’ for some inquiries, committee members have accepted that the process is managed so that any such loss is minimised and they appreciate the willingness of ‘guest’ staff.

The constriction of timeframes for inquiries, particularly legislation inquiries, also influenced the performance of the Committee Office. Some reporting dates preceded the passage of bills through the House of Representatives. The limited time to consider complex and often controversial legislation was noted by committees in reports and by senators in debate.

The committee also notes the complexity of copyright law and the issues raised by the Bill which, in the context of the short timeframe, has made the committee’s task challenging.

(Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Report—*Provisions of Copyright Amendment Bill 2006*, November 2006, p. 38)

We gave people so little time to prepare their comments on the legislation. We gave the committee itself and the secretariat a ridiculously short time to present the report.

(Senator Moore, Child Support Legislation Amendment (Reform of the Child Support Scheme—New Formula and other Measures) Bill 2006 debate, transcript, 8 November 2006, p. 124)

The short timeframes for inquiries often required committee staff to work long hours and, on occasion, weekends to ensure that committees met the deadlines and provided reports that canvassed and analysed the issues raised by witnesses. Nonetheless, committees sometimes expressed frustration that the reporting deadlines meant that some issues could not be addressed.

... the Committee wishes to record that this very short inquiry has provided insufficient time to analyse the specifics of some concerns raised in evidence, especially in relation to longer term possible impact of these reforms.

(Community Affairs Committee Report, National Health Amendment (Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme) Bill 2007 [Provisions], June 2007, p. 1)

The impact on staff morale is particularly significant when there are substantial delays between the presentation of a report and the Senate debating the legislation.

## Evaluation

The principal means of evaluating the performance of the Committee Office in supporting Senate and certain joint committees is the biennial senators' survey. The survey was conducted early in 2007 and showed high levels of satisfaction with the work of secretariats. The level of satisfaction can be determined from the views expressed in the open-ended comments in Figure 17.

Comment made in the chamber when a committee's report is tabled or debated is another source of evaluation. As was the case in 2005–06, senators were highly positive in their comments, some of which are again listed in Figure 17.

Informal feedback from witnesses also indicated satisfaction with their dealings with secretariat staff.

Figure 17 **Senators' comments on Output Group 4 secretariats**

- 'Service is excellent.'
- '... [the secretariat] had extensive work to do in preparation, research, analysis and organisation. Their input has been valuable.'
- 'Support provided is of a very high standard.'
- '... the unsung heroes of course are the secretariat staff who deal with the complexities of this kind of legislation.'
- 'I think the secretariat services that are provided by the committee are critical. There are plenty of things that couldn't and wouldn't function anywhere near as well as they do if it weren't for the experience and knowledge and professionalism of the staff.'
- '... the committee staff ... It is not easy when you get an exercise of this magnitude and you pull it all together in six months.'
- '... to thank the committee secretariat, who once again have done a fabulous job in bringing together all of the evidence and submissions that contributed to this report.'
- '... how important it is to have the assistance of qualified, talented advisers in performing the duties which both the parliament and the Australian public expect the committees of the Senate and the parliament to do.'

## Performance outlook

A continuing challenge for the Committee Office is the uneven spread of work among committees. The key to responding to these fluctuating workloads is the staff.

The office will continue its flexible approach to allocating staff to best meet the needs of committees and ensure that draft reports are prepared to the highest quality possible within the timeframes set by the committees and the Senate. Training and development will be ongoing to encourage the retention of motivated staff with the skills necessary to meet these demands. The election period and the relatively quiet period at the commencement of a new parliament both present opportunities for such training. The election period is also an ideal time for staff to take extended leave.

The strong skills base of existing staff will be matched, where necessary, by recruiting staff with strong research, administrative, writing and procedural skills.

The office will continue to explore innovative ways of using information technology to reduce routine processing work and improve productivity.



## Output Group 5—Black Rod's Office

### Outputs

#### *Senators' services*

Provision of office support and information technology support services for senators and Senate office-holders in their Parliament House offices.

Provision of support services, in conjunction with the Department of the House of Representatives, to the Former Members' Association.

#### *Administered items*

Administration of senators' printing entitlements.

Payment of parliamentary salaries and allowances to senators and office-holders of the Senate.

	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>Advice, documentation and publications are accurate and of a high standard.</p>	<p>The 2007 senators' survey indicated that senators were satisfied or highly satisfied with the provision of support services, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office support 91%</li> <li>• Mail freight delivery 87%</li> <li>• Information technology support 90%</li> <li>• Payment of salaries and allowances 91%</li> </ul> <p>High levels of satisfaction were also recorded for the work of the chamber support staff.</p> <p>Feedback on the quality of advice, documentation and publications remained positive. Changes to the List of Senators were published on the internet within 24 hours of notification. New senators provided excellent feedback on the senators' handbook, which outlines the services, entitlements and facilities available to them.</p>
Timeliness	<p>All support services delivered in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Salaries and allowances were delivered to senators and office-holders on time.</p> <p>Some projects were delayed because of the department's dependence on the Department of Parliamentary Services to provide support in delivering those projects.</p> <p>The office successfully completed accommodation moves for 24 senators.</p> <p>Printing services continued to be provided during the refurbishment of the print room and the transfer of senators' printing entitlements, which involved decommissioning the two-colour press.</p>
Quantity	<p>All support services and supplies delivered in accordance with entitlements on request.</p>	<p>All support services were delivered in accordance with relevant legislation. The administration of senators' printing entitlements was transferred to the Department of Finance and Administration, resulting in a reduced workload.</p> <p>The number of accommodation moves for senators (24) was significantly higher than average.</p>

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 5

### *Analysis*

To provide effective senators' services and corporate and other services for the department, the Black Rod's Office is divided into five functional areas, as shown in Figure 18. The office is headed by the Usher of the Black Rod, who, along with the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod, performs duties in the Senate chamber.

The office provides a range of support services to the Senate chamber, committees and senators in their Parliament House suites. The Senators' Services Section provides messengerial support to the chamber, assists the President and Clerk on ceremonial occasions, and delivers support services in a variety of areas, including mail, committee room servicing, transport, printing, accommodation, assets management and desktop publishing.

The Information Technology Section provides senators with information technology support services in their Parliament House offices and limited support services and equipment when they are away from Parliament House.

The full-time equivalent staffing level for the Black Rod's Office for 2006–07 was 46, up from the 2005–06 figure of 44.

The cost of providing support services to the Senate chamber, committees and senators in their Parliament House suites was \$4.0 million (\$4.6 million in 2005–06).

**Figure 18 Elements and responsibilities of the Black Rod's Office**

<b>Executive</b>			
<p><i>Andrea Griffiths, Usher of the Black Rod</i>                      Procedural, ceremonial, security and administrative advice                      Membership of the Security Management Board                      Advice to the Presiding Officers' Information Technology Advisory Group,                      and to the House and Broadcasting Committees</p>			
<b>Senators' Services Section</b>	<b>Information Technology Section</b>	<b>Human Resource Management Section</b>	<b>Financial Management Section</b>
<i>Nick Tate, Deputy Usher of the Black Rod</i>	<i>Joe d'Angelo, Director</i>	<i>Denise Gordon, Director</i>	<i>Joe d'Angelo, Chief Finance Officer</i>
Accommodation Assets management, purchasing and disposals Chamber support Committee room support Desktop publishing Fire and emergency warden administration Mail and freight Office equipment (not including information technology) Printing and photocopying Protective security—advice, keys, access approvals, containers and security clearances Transport and fleet management	Information technology equipment, including personal computers Internet publishing Support for departmental information technology applications Coordination and liaison with other parliamentary departments on information technology matters	Recruitment and staffing Pay and conditions Workforce planning Training and development Occupational health and safety Rehabilitation management Industrial relations Corporate planning Records management Fortnightly information bulletin	Budget management and advice Financial reporting and systems management Accounting policy development and advice Accounts processing, general ledger maintenance and advice Strategic procurement advice Support for management decision making

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 5

### Senators' services

#### Office services

The senators' survey indicated high levels of satisfaction with the provision of office services. There was some dissatisfaction with the new stationery requisition system. Clients are now encouraged to order stationery by email instead of using the counter service. An improved customer interface for ordering stationery, along the lines of an internet shopping cart, is being investigated.

One senator raised concerns about delays in the transfer of mail to the electorate office. The problem has since been rectified.

During 2006–07, the office:

- completed accommodation moves for 24 senators, in addition to 12 refurbishments for both senators' suites and departmental areas
- stripped, and subsequently reset, the reception areas of 27 senators' suites to enable Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) contractors to undertake soundproofing work
- managed the refurbishment of the Senate print room, completed in February 2007
- managed the refurbishment of the chamber lobby kitchens, including installation of a commercial glass washer for chamber glasses
- managed the refurbishment of leather chairs in committee rooms
- assisted with the purchase and installation of Parliamentary Education Office classroom benches
- participated in planning for the chamber gallery seating and air-conditioning upgrade
- replaced ageing equipment, including departmental photocopiers, exchanged VCRs in office-holders' suites with VCR/DVD combination units, purchased new refrigerators for senators' offices (for installation in July 2007), and called for tenders to replace televisions throughout the Senate wing (to be rolled out in the first quarter of 2007–08)
- provided the usual support for Senate estimates hearings in November 2006, February 2007 and May–June 2007
- cleaned up the bulk warehouse and disposed of surplus and obsolete equipment.

#### Printing and desktop publishing

There were considerable changes in the printing and desktop publishing subsection during the year. Senators' printing entitlements were transferred to the Department of Finance and Administration at the end of September 2006. Accordingly, no new printing work for senators was accepted after that date.

Senators' printing requests accounted for the majority of work on the department's Heidelberg two-colour press. With the transfer of printing entitlements, the office reviewed equipment requirements and work arrangements and determined that the colour press was excess to requirements. It was disposed of by tender, and one press operator was made redundant.

In order to meet the department's needs for full-colour printing, the office undertook a trial of a colour photocopier and is currently assessing the results. It will continue to monitor the changes in work patterns and ongoing equipment and staff requirements.

During 2006–07, the subsection completed a total of 1,435 jobs. Of these, 297 were for senators, with the balance spread across the department, including 380 for committees.

The total value of work done was \$778,203, of which \$214,995 was allocated to senators' work, \$245,201 to committees' work and the remainder to other departmental work. This is a substantial reduction on the 2005–06 total (\$1.76 million) and reflects the transfer of senators' printing entitlements.

The subsection continued to provide a high-standard reprographic service to committees and the department; it met tight deadlines and produced quality work, which received positive feedback from clients. Other areas of the Parliament, including the Parliamentary Library and DPS, also used its services.

In December 2006 and January 2007, the Senate print room was refurbished to improve occupational health and safety conditions, productivity and performance. The desktop publisher has relocated to the new area and taken on a greater role in the production process, which has also improved productivity.

### **Information technology**

The 2007 senators' survey revealed that 47 per cent of those surveyed were highly satisfied, and 43 per cent were satisfied, with the services provided by the Information Technology Section.

The section undertook some major asset replacement programs throughout the year, providing:

- new laptop computers to all eligible senators
- 114 personal computers to senators and departmental staff
- new dictionary and thesaurus software
- USB storage keys to all senators, their staff and departmental staff.

The section continued to provide a high level of support to Senate estimates hearings and met with DPS to discuss further improving the service by installing wireless network access.

The section began to develop the Senate Centralised Information Database and supporting web-based applications to make the management of committee inquiries more efficient and effective. Other web-based activities included the implementation of active server pages for the dynamic delivery of senators' homepages, dramatically reducing the manual intervention required to build these pages. An online contact form was offered to all senators for their homepages to assist in managing email and reducing spam. The section continued its efforts to maintain a high level of metadata and W3C compliance on the Senate website.

Other high-priority activities for the section included the development of an online version of the Senate exhibition 'For Peace, Order, and Good Government', an extensive customised training program for executive assistants in the Committee Office and an online 'shopping cart' application for stationery orders.

The section provided input to two tender processes during 2006–07, both managed by DPS. The first, the Web Analytics tender, was to select new software to provide statistical information on the Parliament's internet and intranet sites. A product was chosen and implemented in late June 2007. The second tender was for printers. The department had planned to replace its ageing fleet of printers, but DPS has not yet finalised the tender process. This was the subject of questioning at the May 2007 budget estimates hearings of the Finance and Public Administration Committee.

## REPORT ON PERFORMANCE – OUTPUT GROUP 5

### *Significant changes in functions and services*

Senators' printing services were transferred to the Department of Finance and Administration from September 2006, resulting in the redundancy of one staff position and the disposal of the two-colour press, as it was no longer needed. A large colour photocopier is now used to fulfil committee and departmental requirements for colour reproduction. The need for desktop publishing services has significantly decreased.

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

Although significant effort has gone into negotiating with DPS over service levels, more work is needed. DPS is implementing a new project approval process to improve the ways it prioritises and selects projects, which is a positive step. An improvement in response times for maintenance and minor works is still required.

### *Evaluation*

The principal medium for evaluating Black Rod's Office services is the biennial senators' survey. The survey, conducted in 2007, reported high levels of satisfaction.

Much of the work of the office involves frequent direct contact with senators, their staff and other clients. This presents an ongoing opportunity to receive feedback on the office's services. This informal feedback continued to be very positive.

Section heads met weekly with the Usher of the Black Rod to discuss operational matters relating to the whole office and met regularly with their teams to discuss performance and other work-related issues.

### *Performance outlook*

In the year ahead, the Black Rod's Office will:

- prepare for the opening of the 42nd Parliament
- provide support to new senators elected at the next general election, whose terms of service commence on 1 July 2008, and to those senators retiring on 30 June 2008
- progress the tender process for senators' printers/multifunction devices with DPS
- install new televisions in senators' suites
- network corridor photocopiers in the Senate wing and review printer numbers
- roll out new laptops to senators
- further develop the Senate Centralised Information Database
- combine the mail and freight function into one facility
- improve the stationery store electronic ordering system
- review furniture requirements for senators' suites.