



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Budget Estimates 2021–22

Report No. 21

Department of the House of Representatives

**Standing Committee on
Appropriations and Administration**

May 2021
Canberra

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ISBN 978-1-76092-227-6 Printed version

ISBN 978-1-76092-228-3 HTML version

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Membership of Committee — 46th Parliament

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Mr Chris Hayes MP

Mr Rob Mitchell MP

Mr Bert van Manen MP

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Standing Order 222A

(a) A House Appropriations and Administration Committee shall be appointed to:

(i) consider estimates of the funding required for the operation of the Department of the House of Representatives each year;

(ii) provide to the Speaker for presentation to the House and transmission to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, the committee's estimates of amounts for inclusion in appropriation and supply bills for the Department of the House of Representatives;

(iii) consider proposals for changes to the administration of the Department of the House of Representatives or variations to services provided by the Department;

(iv) consider and report to the Speaker on any other matters of finance or services as may be referred to it by the Speaker;

(v) consider and report to the House on any other matters of finance or services as may be referred to it by the House;

(vi) consider and report to the Speaker on matters relating to the provision of facilities in Parliament House affecting the House, its committees or its Members;

(vii) make an annual report to the House on its operations;

(viii) consider the administration and funding of security measures affecting the House and advise the Speaker and the House as appropriate; and

(ix) consider any proposals for works in the parliamentary precincts that are subject to parliamentary approval and report to the House on them as appropriate.

(b) When conferring with the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations and Staffing, the House Appropriations and Administration Committee may:

(i) consider estimates of the funding required for the operation of the Department of Parliamentary Services each year; and

(ii) provide to the Speaker for presentation to the House and transmission to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, estimates of amounts for inclusion in appropriation and supply bills for the Department of Parliamentary Services.

(c) The committee shall consist of nine members: the Speaker as Chair, four government Members and four non-government/nonaligned Members. A quorum shall be three members of the committee.

(d) The committee shall be assisted by the Clerk, Serjeant-at-Arms and officers of the Department of the House of Representatives appropriate to any matters under consideration.



Budget Estimates 2021–22

Role of the Committee

- 1.1 Pursuant to Standing Order 222A(a)(ii) the Committee is reporting on the ‘estimates of amounts for inclusion in appropriation and supply bills for the Department of the House of Representatives’ (the department). Further, this report is required to be provided through the Speaker to the Minister for Finance.

Proposed Appropriation for 2021–22

Departmental Annual Appropriation

- 1.2 The appropriation (as included in the Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2021–2022) for the department is calculated in accordance with Commonwealth funding policy. Under this policy, the prior year’s departmental appropriation is adjusted for the efficiency dividend, any wages and prices indices and any applicable Budget measures.
- 1.3 Supplementary departmental funding totalling \$12.4m was provided over the four-year period commencing in 2018–19 and has been used to fund two major areas of service provision.
- 1.4 Firstly, funds have been allocated to strengthen the department’s procedural capacity and provide appropriate support to meet the increasingly complex procedural advice and services required by the Parliament. This funding has enabled the establishment and continuance of the Procedure Office to assist to provide this focused level of procedural support.
- 1.5 The remaining funds have been used to bolster the support provided to departmental administered parliamentary committees.

- 1.6 The implementation of COVID-19 mitigation measures has affected the work of the department with a significant reduction in travel associated with committee and delegation support. As a result, there has been a corresponding increase in the demand to provide information communication technology (ICT) support (teleconference, videoconference and remote network access) to continue the work of the Parliament. As a result of the focus on ICT support, the department will draw down on its capital budget to provide laptops to all departmental staff to facilitate flexible working arrangements.
- 1.7 An amount of \$0.798m was provided during the 2019–20 Budget round for the 2021–22 financial year to support the Parliament to host the biennial Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth in January 2022. Planning for the conference is underway with COVID-19 travel restrictions likely to affect the format and nature of the conference.
- 1.8 In the 2021–22 Budget round the department did not seek or receive any additional funding.
- 1.9 The table below illustrates the movement in the department's Appropriation since the 2020–21 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS).

| Item | Departmental | Administered | Total |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Estimate of appropriation 2021–22 as reported in the 2020–21 PBS | 25,587 | 326 | 25,913 |
| Adjustment for prices and wages indices | 77 | 1 | 78 |
| Expense Measures | | | |
| Nil | - | - | - |
| Other movements | | | |
| Efficiency dividend increase | - | - | - |
| Other | - | - | - |
| Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2021–2022 | 25,664 | 327 | 25,991 |
| <i>Supply (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2020–2021</i> | <i>14,497</i> | <i>189</i> | <i>14,686</i> |
| <i>Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2020–2021</i> | <i>10,353</i> | <i>134</i> | <i>10,487</i> |

Departmental Capital Appropriation

- 1.10 The annual departmental appropriation includes an amount for capital expenditure of \$0.640m as disclosed in the departmental capital budget. In the 2020–21 financial year the department will use its departmental capital budget to purchase laptops. In accordance with the agreement for centralised management of ICT within the parliamentary administration, the laptops will be transferred to the Department of Parliamentary Services for ongoing management and support.

Accumulated Prior Year Appropriation and Operating Results

- 1.11 The department also has access to resources accumulated from prior years. The department can use these funds to fund liabilities (including provisions for employee expenses) and capital purchases that are not provided for in the department's capital budget. They can also be used to fund operational losses should the situation arise.

| Estimated Actuals as at Budget May 2021 | 2020–21 (\$'000) | 2021–22 (\$'000) |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Prior year departmental appropriation | 21,114 | 22,479 |
| Total comprehensive income/(loss) excluding depreciation | 1365 | 50 |

Special Appropriations (Members' Remuneration and Work Expenses)

- 1.12 Special appropriations for 2021–22 comprise the following amounts:

| Department of Finance | (\$'000) |
|--|-----------------|
| <i>Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017</i> | 44,269 |
| <i>Parliamentary Superannuation Act 2004</i> | 5,692 |
| <i>Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (section 66)</i> | 4,064 |

- 1.13 The department accesses these special appropriations through third-party payments on behalf of the Department of Finance. The

amounts are disclosed in the Department of Finance's resource statement.

Conclusion

- 1.14 The **total appropriation** to be approved by the Parliament for the department in the Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2021–2022 will be **\$25.991m** (compared to \$25.173m in 2020–21).
- 1.15 The department estimates it will draw down on **special appropriations of \$54.025m** (compared to an estimated actual of \$52.530m for 2020–21).
- 1.16 The Committee will continue to monitor the department's financial position into the future and will report to the House accordingly.

Hon Tony Smith MP
Chair
12 May 2021