Senate Public Information Office

Outputs

Produce, publish and manage information resources about the activities of the Senate and its committees.

Liaison with the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) and others in relation to the ICT systems and resources that underpin the support provided to the Senate, including system enhancement and development.

Performance information	Performance results
Manage the production of: *Dynamic Red* (ParlWork); *Senate Daily Summary*; *The Week Ahead*; *StatsNet*; and *Senate Discovery*.	All publications were published within agreed timeframes set out in the 2018—19 office work plan.
Coordinate the Senate's public information resources and produce and publish material for the department in multiple formats.	Current, accurate and relevant information was available about the role and work of the Senate and its committees as required. Ongoing improvements were made to the availability and accessibility of information resources.
Develop, manage and participate in projects to improve information dissemination.	A number of projects to streamline work practices and to improve the delivery of information were successfully implemented.
Liaise with DPS and the other parliamentary departments on ICT matters.	The requirements of the Senate and the department were effectively represented in the ICT priorities of the Parliament.
Manage the Senate's Twitter account.	Through @AuSenate, the department engaged with and informed followers about the work of the Senate.

Overview

The Senate Public Information Office (SPIO) is led by the Clerk Assistant (Table) and the Director, SPIO, Matt Keele. The Director and the SPIO team work closely together to deliver services to the Senate, the public and the department. The Clerk Assistant (Table) is also responsible for strategic leadership in relation to the department's ICT dependencies, including liaison with the Department of Parliamentary Service's Information Services Division.

SPIO produces and publishes an array of information resources so that people can understand and engage in the work of the Senate and its committees. This work is undertaken against the strategic goal of improving the department's approach to publishing and sharing information and being responsive to the evolving ways in which senators and the public expect to find and consume information.

SPIO also coordinates the department's involvement in forums and projects affecting the production and dissemination of Senate and departmental information resources. In October 2018, the office underwent a strategic realignment by combining its project and web administration support functions, to build capacity and streamline and consolidate a number of work practices. The cost of the office for 2018–19 was $1.4m ($1.2m in 2017–18), with staffing levels maintained at an average of 10 full time equivalent.

Information resources

SPIO supported each of the 37 sitting days in this reporting period by producing and publishing the following information resources relevant to the meetings of the Senate, with corresponding performance results met:

- *The Week Ahead* – 10 editions
- *Dynamic Red* (and ParlWork web-application) – 37 editions with an average of 121 updates per day
- *Senate Daily Summary* – 37 editions
- *Senate Discovery* – 7 episodes, and
- compilation and publication of statistics about the work of the Senate: *StatsNet* and *Statistical Summary.*

In this reporting period, the office's work to develop and publish information resources also included:

- a redesigned *Order of Business* ('the Red')
- *Guides to Senate Procedure* (PDF, ePub and online) and related pocket guides
- *Senators' Handbook* and other resources to support the induction of senators' following the general election
- producing video, print and web resources for the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO); notably *Teaching Civics and Citizenship – A classroom guide* and new visual aids that support video conferencing activities
- production of the department's corporate reporting and planning documents, and
- ongoing development of the *Senate Connect* (Senators' intranet) and SEN*NET* (departmental intranet).

SPIO also managed the Senate's Twitter account, @AuSenate, providing regular and frequent updates about the work of the Senate and its committees. Through Twitter, the department is able to increase its outreach, engage with citizens and others and respond quickly to requests for information.

Projects and support

During the reporting period, SPIO continued to collaborate with DPS and the Department of the House of Representatives (DHR) on a number of ICT projects to enhance the systems that underpin our work and to create new resources. During this period six projects were completed:

- redevelopment of the department's statistical collection, *StatsNet* – completed July 2018

- enhancements to the Shared Committees Information Database – completed August 2018

- development of *Estimates Live*, which provides live update on estimates hearings – completed October 2018

- enhancements to *Dynamic Red* and ParlWork to improve user experience – completed October 2018

- implementation 'Report Builder', a tool for preparing committee reports – completed June 2019, and

- implementation of a digital workflow for senators' declarations of interests – completed June 2019.

Other significant work during 2018–19 which is expected to be completed in the next reporting period includes:

- improvements to Senate business information resources and redesign of the *Notice Paper* and *Journals*

- *Procedural Hub*, an online resource for senators to assist their engagement with Senate proceedings

- PEO website redevelopment project

- Online Tabled Documents project (with DPS, DHR and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet), a system to receive and publish digital copies of tabled documents

- enhancement of Committee Office systems that support the estimates questions on notice process, and

- participation in the Common Data Access Platform project, a project to improve the information and data management capabilities of the Parliament.

Performance outlook

In 2019–20, SPIO will continue its information resource production, projects and support programs and ICT liaison, in line with the department's strategic aims and to achieve its service delivery to senators and the public.

The office will play a key role as the *Australian Parliament Digital Strategy 2019–22* is implemented, including the development of the underpinning 'road maps', by representing the department in various governance forums and providing input reflecting the needs of the Senate. The office will continue to work with DPS and others to progress various ICT projects designed to strengthen and streamline the systems and resources

that enable the departments' work, and being responsive to DPS' increased emphasis on 'agile' delivery methodology. As well as the ongoing projects mentioned above, others include the creation of a digital platform for recording and publishing voting outcomes in the Senate, a new document management and publishing system to support the legislative scrutiny committees and the consolidation of the Senate digitised historical records collection.

In addition, SPIO will have a renewed focus on capacity building throughout the department to support digital innovation and change, with the purpose of mitigating the department's strategic risks in relation to ICT systems and resources and workforce capability.