



DEPARTMENT
OF THE SENATE

2023–24

Annual Report



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Letter of transmittal



DEPARTMENT
OF THE SENATE

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D24/87787

8 October 2024

Senator the Hon Sue Lines
President of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

President

Pursuant to section 65 of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*, I give you a report for presentation to the Senate on the activities of the Department of the Senate for the year ended 30 June 2024.

The report includes the department's audited financial statements, prepared under section 42 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, and an annual performance statement as required by section 39 of that Act.

In addition, and as required by paragraph 17AG(2)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*, I certify that: a fraud and corruption risk assessment and a fraud and corruption control plan have been prepared; the department has in place appropriate fraud and corruption control mechanisms that meet its needs; and all reasonable measures have been taken to deal appropriately with fraud and corruption relating to the department.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Pye'.

(Richard Pye)
Clerk of the Senate

About this report

This annual report of the Department of the Senate documents the department's performance for the financial year ending 30 June 2024.

The report is presented in six parts.

Overviews	Commentary by the Clerk on performance and significant matters that affected the department, and a description of the role, aims, structure and functions
Report on performance	A summary of overall performance, the department's annual performance statement, and a description of each office's contribution to the department's outcome
Management and accountability	A report on corporate governance and the management of resources
Financial statements	The auditor's report and audited financial statements
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Resources2. Staffing3. Contact details
References	Tools to assist the reader: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a glossary and abbreviations list• an index showing how the report complies with annual reporting requirements• an alphabetical index

The report is presented for tabling in the Senate pursuant to section 65 of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*. It is also produced to meet the information needs of interested people, including:

- senators and their staff
- the Australian community
- staff of the Department of the Senate and other parliamentary departments
- staff of other legislatures
- staff of executive government departments and agencies, and
- the media.

The report is available on the department's website:
www.aph.gov.au/senate/dept/annreps/2024

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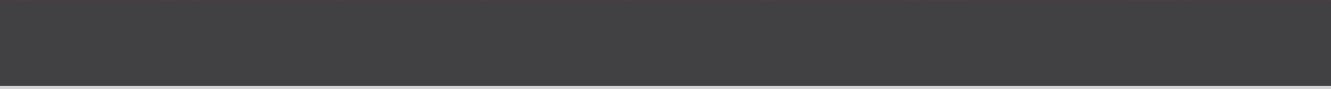
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Clerk's review

This reporting period saw the Senate department continue to support elevated levels of legislative and committee activity, and a further increase in demand for legislative drafting services. A number of important ICT projects were implemented, a new enterprise agreement was negotiated and the Parliamentary Education Office continued to increase delivery of digital programs. These activities are described in more detail in the balance of this report.

Legislative and committee activity

The focus of this review for the last few years has been on the entrenched level of demand for the advice and support we provide to senators in the context of their legislative and committee work. The department provides the secretariat for the Senate and for dozens of parliamentary committees. Much of this work requires us to manage unpredictable workloads and changing deadlines. Demand for our services is overwhelmingly driven by decisions of the Senate, its committees and senators themselves. This year – the second year of the 47th Parliament – followed the usual pattern of the electoral cycle which sees committee and legislative activity increase before an expected decline in the third year of the Parliament (primarily due to reduced demand during the election period). One key factor in how parliamentary activity translates to demand for our services lies in the party composition of the Senate. Compared to the previous Parliament there are fewer government senators, more opposition senators and a larger, more diverse crossbench. This means there are more senators seeking to express a greater variety of views through their committee work and by seeking to introduce and amend legislation. In 2023-24, this has resulted in a significant increase in demand for legislative drafting services and continued elevated levels of demand for secretariat support for committees.

Taking these matters in turn, levels of legislative activity in the past year were similar to the previous year. For example, there were 59 sitting days in 2023-24, compared with 56 days in 2022-23, supported through the usual levels of procedural advice and support from the Table Office (for the President, government senators and committee chairs) and the Procedure Office (for non-government senators). The Table Office and Senate Public Information Office also produced a suite of formal documents and informal guides in support of those sittings. However, the Senate passed more bills than the previous year (134 compared with 114 in 2022-23) and amended more of them (44 compared with 32).

The trend of increasing demand for the legislative drafting work undertaken by Procedure Office staff continued with 334 sheets of committee of the whole amendments (comprising almost 1,050 amendments) drafted and circulated, compared with 228 sheets (almost 750 amendments) in the previous year. On top of this, the office drafted almost 150 additional sheets of amendments, which senators did not ultimately circulate to the Senate (compared to 86 sheets in 2022-23). In addition, more private senators' bills were introduced in 2023-24: 31 compared with 26 in 2022-23. The office also progressed numerous other bills to different stages of drafting in accordance with instructions from senators. It is notable that the demand for drafting continued to trend

higher, with the office receiving requests for 67 bills, compared with 63 in 2022-23. This trend is unusual. It is often the case that the demand for private senators' bills is strongest in the first year of a new Parliament and then falls away. This has not happened in the current Parliament, with demand continuing to rise. The department took steps to bring more resources to bear on legislative drafting services including by allocating some of this work to additional positions. However, this high demand means that not all requests for private senators' bills have been met within the timeframes originally proposed by senators.

Demand for secretariat support for committee inquiries remained elevated, including through the appointment of additional select committees. I commented last year on the large numbers of select committees seen in both the 46th Parliament and the current Parliament. This financial year saw an increase on the number of select committees over the 2022-23 figures with Committee Office staff supporting 31 distinct committees, including nine Senate select committees and two joint select committees. They processed almost 9,000 submissions, arranged 252 public hearings and 532 private meetings, and drafted 189 reports. What these numbers do not capture is the complexity of some of this work, particularly where inquiries deal with highly sensitive or contentious matters. Despite these challenges, senators frequently took the opportunity in debate on committee reports to record their appreciation of the support provided to committees by secretariat staff.

While most secretariats are provided by the Committee Office, staff in other offices also undertake committee work. For instance, staff in the Procedure Office supported the Parliament's three legislative scrutiny committees to examine bills and instruments against a set of scrutiny principles or, in the case of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, for compatibility with human rights. Notably in 2023-24, the secretariat to the Committee on Human Rights also supported the committee's inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework and the initial stages of an inquiry required by statute into compulsory income management.

Enhancing ICT systems

An important component of the department's capacity to meet the demand for its services in the future is working with the Department of Parliamentary Services to ensure we can harness ICT in ways that effectively support senators, maximise the efficiency of our processes and ensure others are able to engage with the Parliament and its committees. Pleasingly, the last few years have seen a maturing of these relationships and the systems for managing ICT projects. During 2023-24, the results of this collaborative work included implementation of a redeveloped version of the Committee Office's bespoke drafting program, *Report Builder*, and the roll out of the *Online Tabled Documents* system to all executive departments; work completed in partnership with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The department welcomes the government's recognition of the importance of this work through additional funding in the 2024-25 budget for a collaborative project to modernise parliamentary business systems. This work is being led by the Department of Parliamentary Services and will be a key focus over the next two years.

Public information and parliamentary education

While these Clerk's reviews have rightly focused on our tasks of supporting the Senate, its committees and certain joint committees, another important area of the department's work is public information and parliamentary education. During this period, the Parliamentary Education Office consolidated work to deliver its programs via videoconference. The office delivered over 370 digital programs while maintaining the number of onsite programs (approximately 2,100) as well as its work on outreach and teacher professional learning programs. It has been a long-term aspiration of the office to ensure education programs can be delivered to students unable to travel to Canberra so that such programs are accessible to all young people. It is very satisfying to see this work come to fruition, particularly as it represents a silver lining to the disruptions the office experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. If demand to deliver digital programs continues its current trajectory, in the absence of additional funding, the department will face some difficult decisions about the balance between onsite, video and outreach programs but these are amongst the best type of problems to have.

Human resource management

Another key task for the year was the negotiation of a new enterprise agreement for staff. There was a high level of engagement in these negotiations as well as the vote on the agreement with 96% of those who voted supporting the new agreement.

We also participated in the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) census, having adopted the approach of taking part every second year. The results continued to demonstrate that our staff are motivated, inspired and enabled to deliver our services, have high regard for their managers and view the Senior Executive as a cohesive team. Participation in the survey (77% of staff) was higher than the 2021-22 survey however – although our results continue to exceed the APS results by a healthy margin – they are not as high as they were in the previous survey. We will discuss with our team how we reverse that trend and use that feedback to gauge where we can usefully focus our efforts to improve our policy settings and workplace practices.

Work continued under our refreshed diversity and inclusion policy and associated action plans. The development and implementation of these plans has seen high levels of engagement from our teams no doubt driven by a shared understanding that attracting and retaining the best officers, and creating the conditions for them to perform, requires flexible and inclusive policies and practices.

We also continued to work with our colleagues across the Parliamentary Service to implement the remaining recommendations of the *Set the Standard: Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces* report. Implementation of these recommendations has been led by a taskforce, comprising eight members and senators drawn from around the Parliament and an independent chair. We continued to engage with the work of the taskforce through various working groups and leaders' forums. This included working closely with the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS) as it expanded its operations and was established as an independent statutory agency.

Looking ahead

Shortly before the tabling of this report, legislation to establish an Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission (IPSC) was passed by the Parliament. The establishment of the IPSC was a recommendation of the *Set the Standard* report and represents the closing stages of the work to implement those recommendations.

It appears that the elevated levels of demand for our services experienced in the first two years of the 47th Parliament will be sustained into the final year of the Parliament. The election period will provide the department with the opportunity to update the core procedural and practice resources we use to support institutional capability. We will also strengthen that capability by giving staff the opportunity to rotate to new positions which helps to broaden the pool of officers with the more technical skills we require as well as contributing to their professional development and career satisfaction.

The year ahead will see preparations for the federal election and the opening of the 48th Parliament. This will include providing an orientation program and administrative support to newly elected senators.

The political dynamics of the Senate, its legislative workload and program of sittings, and the number of committees and their workload are the key factors which drive demand for our services. We will closely monitor that demand following the election and the implications of this for the sustainability of the department's budget position over future years, with a view to positioning the department to meet whatever level of demand there is for our services.

Departmental overview

The Senate secretariat

The Senate department provides secretariat support for the Senate and its committees, and advice and support to enable senators and others to participate in their meetings. Its work is substantially driven by the requirements of the Senate and senators.

The department provides services and undertakes activities in the following areas:

- advice about Senate and committee proceedings
- secretariat support for the Senate
- secretariat support for committees
- administrative advice and support for senators
- public information and parliamentary education, and
- capability, governance and accountability.

In undertaking its functions the department is responsible not to the government of the day but to the Senate and all senators, maintaining complete impartiality in serving equally senators from all political parties and independent senators.

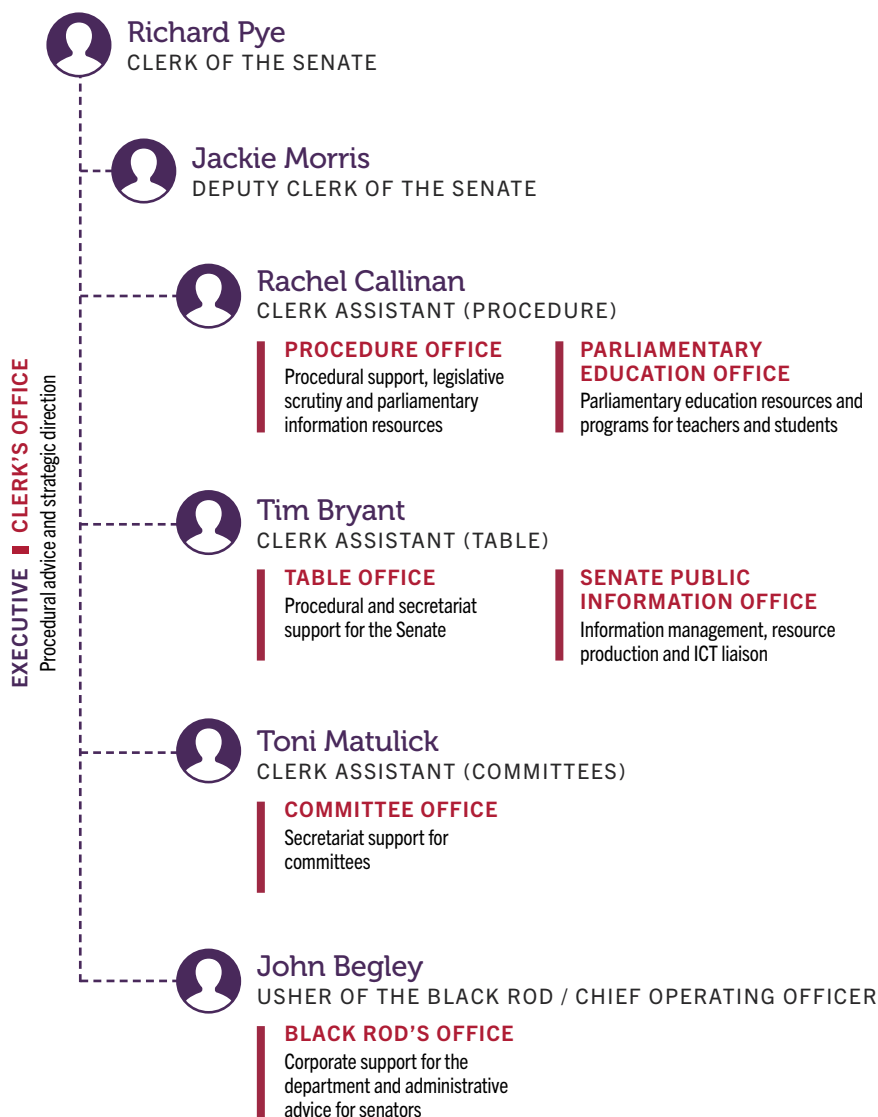
Before turning to the department's performance during 2023–24, this overview sets out the department's organisational structure, program structure and objectives.

Organisational structure

The department is responsible to the Senate through the President of the Senate, Senator the Hon. Sue Lines, who was elected President on 26 July 2022.

The accountable authority for the department is the Clerk of the Senate, Mr Richard Pye, who was appointed to a 10 year term on 9 March 2017. Figure 1 shows the structure, roles and responsibilities of each office, and the department’s senior managers at the time of publication.

Figure 1 – Organisational structure



Outcome and program structure

The department is one of four departments of the Australian Parliamentary Service established under the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*. We work collaboratively with our colleagues in the Parliamentary Service to support the parliament. To achieve this, the department adheres to the guiding objectives of the strategic framework for the Parliamentary Service, namely:

- providing services and support to enable the Houses and their committees to function effectively
- ensuring parliamentarians are supported in their work and we are responsive to future needs
- enhancing engagement in the work of the Parliament
- building and maintaining international and regional relationships, and
- ensuring Australian Parliament House operates as a safe and accessible workplace and national institution.

In order to coordinate common and joint activities with the other parliamentary departments, the department participates on a range of interdepartmental committees. Chief among these are regular meetings of:

- the department heads
- the Parliamentary Administration Advisory Group
- the Security Management Board
- the Parliamentary ICT Advisory Board (and its subordinate ICT committees), and
- numerous bodies managing joint projects and endeavours such as the implementation of the Parliament's Reconciliation Action Plan and the management of shared workplace health and safety duties.

Within the broader role of the Parliamentary Service, the department's planned outcome is to provide advisory and administrative support services to enable the Senate and senators to fulfil their representative duties and exercise the legislative power of the Commonwealth. The department delivers its outcome through a single program, which is described in the next chapter.

Reporting on performance

The next chapter contains the annual performance statements for 2023–24. It also contains a performance report for the seven offices of the department, each of which commences with a table reporting results against the criteria contained in the department's portfolio budget statements and in office work plans.

A report on the department's financial performance is included in the '*Management and accountability*' chapter.



Report on performance

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Annual performance statements

As the accountable authority of the Department of the Senate, I present the department's annual performance statements for 2023–24, as required by subsection 39(1) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. In my view, these statements are based on properly maintained records, accurately reflect the department's performance and comply with subsection 39(2) of that Act.



(Richard Pye)
Clerk of the Senate
4 September 2024

Performance reporting framework

Overview

In 2023–24, which covered approximately the second year of the 47th Parliament and the electoral cycle, the department achieved its purpose of facilitating and supporting all parliamentary meetings required under decisions of the Senate and its committees. In doing so, the department provided comprehensive, timely and high-quality support to senators, the Senate and committees, as well as prompt and accurate procedural advice and legislative support.

Throughout the year the department also:

- published a range of materials on the role and work of the Senate and the Parliament, and delivered effective education and information programs
- managed its staff in accordance with its enterprise agreement and settled a new enterprise agreement with staff
- provided its staff with learning and development opportunities, and
- delivered its services in a cost-effective manner and in accordance with accountability requirements.

The department worked closely with the other parliamentary departments and other entities in the broader parliamentary environment to deliver its services, to improve support for the Parliament and the work of its members, and to support collaborative and efficient parliamentary administration. During the reporting period this collaborative work included implementation of the remaining recommendations of the *Set the Standard* report and a number of joint ICT projects such as implementation of a system for online tabling and publication of documents.

The department's financial result for the year was a deficit of \$1.1m (excluding asset-related adjustments). In part this reflected the increasing costs of supporting international

parliamentary delegations. However, as with the previous financial year, a significant factor was the continuing elevated level of support required for committees. In this regard, the department anticipates that reduced demand for these services during the election period will decrease pressure on the department's budget in 2024–25. However, the department will closely monitor demand for its services following the election and the implications of this for the sustainability of its financial position over the forward estimates. The department also welcomes the non-ongoing funding agreed to in the 2024–25 Budget to modernise parliamentary business systems.

An analysis of the department's financial performance and the financial statements is located at the '*Management and accountability*' and '*Financial statements*' sections of this report.

These annual performance statements record the department's results against the planned performance table in figure 2 (on page 17), which is derived from its 2023–24 Corporate Plan and 2023–24 Portfolio Budget Statements. They are based on records of services provided by the department, feedback recorded by departmental staff and comments made by relevant groups and committees.

In summary, this data shows both a high level of demand for the department's services and advice, and high levels of satisfaction with what is provided. The Senate's requirements at the mid-point of the 47th Parliament continued to be driven by a large crossbench and sustained high levels of committee and legislative activity. Factors influencing demand are analysed further throughout this report.

Before addressing the department's performance in detail, this year's report once again includes a case study, this time examining the support the department provided in relation to the sitting week of 18–21 March 2024 (see figure 3, on page 16). The case study was selected early in the financial year and builds on previous case studies by demonstrating the support the department provides to the Senate and to senators to enable them to participate in the sittings of the Senate.

Figure 2 – Planned performance

The department is responsible not to the government of the day, but to the Senate and all senators. In planning terms, the department's purpose is expressed as a single outcome to provide advisory and administrative support services to enable the Senate and senators to fulfil their representative duties and exercise the legislative power of the Commonwealth.

PROGRAM 1

Advice and support – Secretariat support for the Senate and its committees, and advice and support to enable senators and others to participate in their meetings.

DELIVERY

The department's outcome is delivered under a single program, comprising services and activities in the following areas:

- Advice about Senate and committee proceedings
- Secretariat support for the Senate
- Secretariat support for committees
- Administrative advice and support for senators
- Public information and parliamentary education, and
- Sustaining capability, governance and accountability.

ASSESSMENT

The department's activities enable the Senate and its committees to meet in accordance with their decisions.

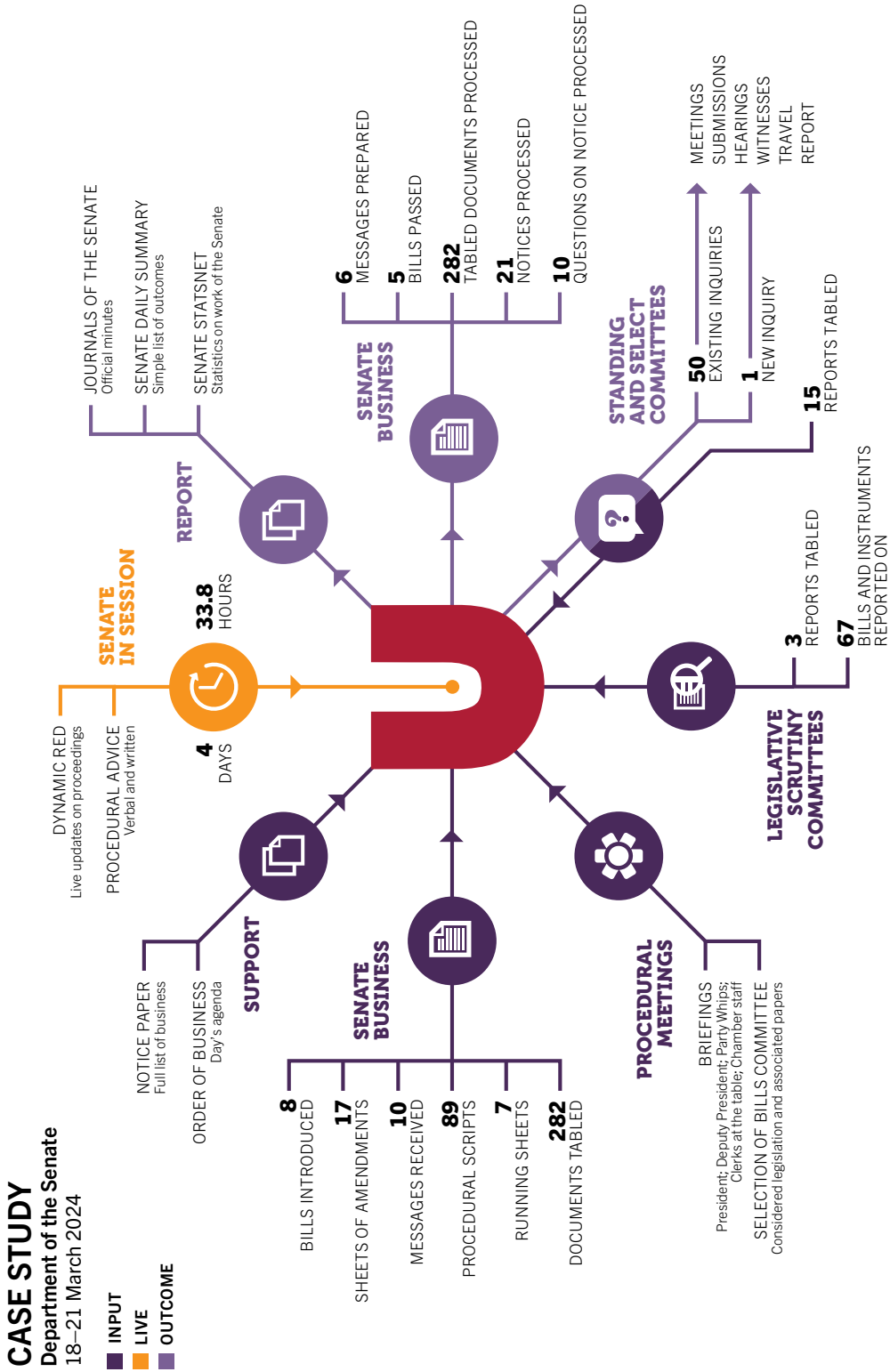
Senators (and others) have the advice and support they require to participate in meetings of the Senate and its committees.

Senators are satisfied with the administrative advice and support they receive from the department.

Public information about the work and role of the Senate and its committees and parliament education programs are current and accessible to all.

These services are delivered through a single program.

Figure 3 – Case study infographic



Case study narrative – Sitting week 18–21 March 2024

Case studies have been used to illustrate the kinds of support the department provides to the Senate, its committees and senators. This is the second case study to examine a single sitting week for this purpose (the 2019–20 Annual Report examined a sitting week in 2020). As the case study includes most of the department’s key activities over a short span of time, it relates to most of the department’s performance measures.

The sitting week of 18–21 March 2024 was chosen early in the financial year because it would generally be a typical week in terms of the volume and type of legislative and procedural support provided by the department.

Sadly, Senator Linda White, a senator for the State of Victoria, died before the sitting week. As a result, the Senate set aside Tuesday, 19 March for a condolence motion. Following the usual practices of the Senate, no other business was conducted on that day and the Senate adjourned as a mark of respect.

In other respects, the week proved to be a typical one in terms of the volume and quality of the work performed by the department.

The department prepared a range of documents and provided written and oral advice to support senators performing their roles during a meeting of the Senate. Documents prepared for each sitting day included:

- the Notice Paper and Order of Business (the matters on the Senate’s agenda)
- procedural scripts to support senators chairing the Senate and those who are participating in the proceedings (for example by introducing legislation or proposing that the Senate suspend its standing orders to depart from its scheduled program), and
- the Journals and the Senate Daily Summary (which record the decisions of the Senate including any legislation agreed to, amended or rejected).

An important aspect of supporting the Senate is providing live tracking of the meeting so that senators and their staff, ministerial offices, departments providing support to ministers, the media and the general public can follow the proceedings; this occurred via the Dynamic Red which is supported by a team of staff monitoring proceedings closely throughout the day. Similarly, advice provided by the clerks in the Senate was done at short notice, sometimes instantaneously, to support the President and senators acting as chairs to apply the rules of the Senate consistently.

The oral and written advice provided by Senate officers during the week also included advice about the powers and practices of committees and orders for production of documents. This advice assisted senators to utilise the procedural mechanisms available to them to inquire into issues (particularly to support their role in holding the government accountable for its administration of policies and programs), to debate issues of concern to the people they represent and to propose changes to government bills or their own legislation. For example, the department provided support to senators by drafting, circulating and publishing 17 sheets of amendments (containing 38 individual amendments) for non-government senators. Once bills were dealt with by the Senate, a message was drafted by the Table Office and its physical delivery to the House of Representatives coordinated with the Usher of the Black Rod’s office.

The department also supported a minor party senator to introduce a bill which proposed amendments to the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* to give courts the power to make divestiture orders against corporations that have misused their market power. This was one of 31 private senators' bills introduced during the year. The drafting of such bills often involves several months of highly technical work with a senator and their staff which culminates in the administrative tasks required to finalise the private senator's bill and supporting documents for introduction and publication.

The department provides secretariat support to three legislative scrutiny committees which examine bills and legislative instruments from the perspective of their compatibility with the protection of individual rights, principles of parliamentary oversight, the rule of law and human rights. Legislative scrutiny of bills and instruments supports senators in several ways: it may highlight issues with a bill and form the basis of a non-government senator's instructions for amendments, or it may identify concerns in relation to a legislative instrument which lead to a senator lodging a proposal that the Senate disallow (or veto) the instrument. The legislative scrutiny committees tabled three reports which reported on 67 bills and instruments during the week. These committees almost invariably table a report during sitting weeks in order to ensure their analysis is available to inform debate on bills and consideration of any proposed disallowance of a legislative instrument.

Senate standing and select committees were supporting 50 inquiries at the commencement of the week: the tasks involved in providing secretariat support to those committees are detailed on page 21. Those committees tabled 15 reports during the week. Senators are able to 'take note' of a tabled report which provides an opportunity for them to highlight the findings of inquiries and often discuss areas where they may have diverged from the majority committee view. During the case study week, senators spoke to reports on child exploitation and additional estimates as well as a government response to a committee report on the capability and culture of the National Disability Insurance Agency.

The department also provided secretariat support to an all-party committee, the Selection of Bills Committee, which meets every sitting week to recommend whether bills should be referred to committees for detailed consideration. On 21 March, the Senate accepted its recommendation for a new inquiry into a package of government bills dealing with biosecurity levies. Subsequently, secretariat staff supported the committee to which the bills were referred to advertise the inquiry, identify potential submitters, and suggest a proposed approach to the inquiry including a timetable to meet the reporting deadline set by the Senate.

Interestingly, the results of this case study are largely consistent with those of the 2020 sitting week despite that earlier sitting week coinciding with a period of significant legislative responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Three key differences to the earlier case study are apparent:

- fewer 'notices of motion' (21; 75) and procedural scripts (89; 145) than in the equivalent case study in 2020—largely reflecting the introduction of more restrictive rules governing notices of motion

- a much larger number of documents processed (282; 85) which likely reflects the difficulties presented by staff working remotely during the early stages of the COVID pandemic, and
- a larger number of committee reports tabled (15; 0)—this may reflect the sustained high volume of committee work but, given the number of current inquiries was very similar (50; 47), it is more likely to be a random fluctuation.¹

Results

The balance of these annual performance statements reports on the department’s performance in each of its key areas of service delivery and activity.

Advice about the operations of the Senate and its committees

ASSESSMENT

Senators (and others) have the advice and support they require to participate in meetings of the Senate and its committees



One of the key responsibilities of the department is providing advice about the operations of the Senate and its committees. This advice is often given orally and immediately by the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and other senior officers in the Senate, and by committee secretaries and their staff during committee meetings. These officers also provide procedural advice to senators and their staff at other times, both orally and in writing. Committee secretaries are supported to provide advice by the Clerk Assistant (Committees) and the Senior Clerk of Committees, ensuring advice to committees is consistent, timely and accurate.

Senators and other recipients of written advice continued to acknowledge its value, and advice was invariably provided within agreed timeframes to meet the purposes for which it was sought. On occasion during the year, recipients of advice published it as a contribution to public debate, at the same time subjecting it to public scrutiny.

When committees seek the Clerk’s advice it is often for the purpose of publishing it, to show the basis on which committees may have taken particular decisions or reached particular conclusions. No committee expressed dissatisfaction with advice received and several senators expressed their satisfaction with such advice in contributions in the Senate or informally.

Advice about the programming of business in the Senate is the responsibility of the Clerk Assistant (Table), as is the provision of advice and support to government Senate office holders. Procedural advice and support for non-government senators is the particular responsibility of the Deputy Clerk and the Clerk Assistant (Procedure). Senators continued to acknowledge the value of their advice. The Procedure Office drafted large numbers of procedural scripts, legislative amendments and private senators’ bills, helping senators participate in legislative proceedings. Amendments and bills accurately reflected the drafting instructions and were prepared to the satisfaction of senators.

¹ Figures in brackets compare the outcomes of the current case study with those of 2020.

Advice provided by the department was also tested during estimates hearings and in other Senate proceedings and senators relied on such advice throughout the year. In addition to comments made by senators recorded in *Hansard*, feedback from senators and their staff provided directly to the Table Office and the Procedure Office indicated high levels of satisfaction with both advice and the levels of administrative support provided.

Procedural briefings among senior officers and the publication and dissemination of procedural resources assisted in maintaining the department's institutional knowledge and the capacity of officers to provide advice and support. This strengthening of institutional capability was also delivered through senior officers training additional staff to provide support and advice to senators as clerks at the table.

Secretariat support for the Senate and its committees

ASSESSMENT

The department's activities enable the Senate and its committees to meet in accordance with their decisions



This outcome has been met during 2023–24 through two program components.

1. Secretariat support for the Senate

The department provided secretariat support for the Senate on each of its 59 sitting days (an increase on the 56 sitting days in the previous financial year).

During the sittings the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and senior officers provided advice in the Senate to the President, Deputy President and other occupants of the chair, as well as to other senators and their staff. The Table Office and the Procedure Office provided procedural scripts and advice to assist senators participating in proceedings. Feedback from senators and their staff acknowledged the value and accuracy of this advice and support.

The Black Rod's Office provided formal and ceremonial support for sittings, including the swearing in of four new senators who filled casual vacancies during the year.

The Table Office and the Senate Public Information Office (SPIO) published the Senate's formal records as well as informal guides to its work. These resources were accurate and timely, and produced to meet the needs of senators and Senate deadlines. Documents supporting the Senate's legislative work were also uniformly accurate and timely.

Documents received for tabling were processed, recorded in procedural documents and archived. A growing proportion of documents and other information is published online, enhancing the ability of senators and others to follow and participate in Senate proceedings, and further improvements to digital publishing processes were implemented during the reporting period.

2. Secretariat support for committees

The department provided secretariat support for all committee meetings required under decisions of the Senate and of committees themselves, including those joint committees to which the department provides support. This support was primarily provided by the Committee Office, although other offices also supported a number of standing committees. Secretariat support for committees encompasses:

- procedural advice for the chair and other members, including advice and support to new senators and training for new chairs of committees
- logistical support for meetings (which includes arranging and attending interstate hearings and meetings via videoconference and site visits)
- preparation of meeting documents, including briefing documents, minutes and agenda
- managing and publishing submissions, and organising witnesses
- research, analysis of evidence and briefings to members, and
- preparation of draft reports, and their finalisation for tabling.

The Committee Office experienced another sustained period of high workload. The office supported 16 legislation and references committees, nine Senate select committees, two joint select committees and four other joint committees, undertaking between them, at one point, 66 separate inquiries.² Secretariat staff in the Committee Office processed 8,831 submissions and arranged 252 public hearings, including 82 estimates hearings (which heard from 7,184 witnesses), and 532 private meetings. The Senate made 97 references during the year and the office drafted 189 reports.

Advice, documentation and draft reports were provided to committees in accordance with their requirements. Reports were drafted and presented to the Senate in accordance with the timeframes set by committees and by the Senate.

Secretariat staff work closely with senators and their staff to support committees. In particular, they work with the chair to guide and plan the committees' inquiries and collection of evidence and prepare draft reports. This provides an opportunity for direct and immediate feedback about senators' satisfaction. Importantly, these open lines of communication allow the Committee Office to be responsive to feedback, and to make improvements to service delivery whenever it is required. Secretariat staff continue to tailor their service delivery to respond to feedback received from senators and their staff during the year.

Despite the workload, this direct feedback continues to indicate high levels of satisfaction with the service provided to chairs and other committee members. On numerous occasions during debate on committee reports in the Senate, senators took the opportunity to provide highly complimentary feedback about the support they received from secretariat staff.

² Further committees are supported by other offices of the department.

Administrative advice and support for senators

ASSESSMENT

Senators are satisfied with the administrative advice and support they receive from the department



The department, principally through the Black Rod's Office, provides support services to the Senate, to Senate committees and to senators at Parliament House. These services include preparing and supporting the Senate chamber for each sitting day, general office support, asset management, maintenance of equipment and furniture, and stationery services. The office also paid senators' salaries and allowances as required, organised office accommodation within the Senate wing and provided other services such as arranging transport and delivery services.

The Usher of the Black Rod provided security advice and support to the President, committees, senators and the department. The Usher of the Black Rod and Deputy Usher of the Black Rod also worked with colleagues in the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) Security Branch and the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, and with the Australian Federal Police, providing the Senate's perspective on security matters.

One focus of the office during 2023–24 was preparing systems to implement legislation which provided for senators to be paid fortnightly instead of monthly, consistent with the wider Commonwealth service, from 1 July 2024. The office also facilitated 11 suite moves during the year.

The Usher of the Black Rod's office assisted with the organisation of events and facilitated ceremonies including preparation for the swearing-in of Australia's 28th Governor-General, Her Excellency Sam Mostyn AC, in the Senate chamber on 1 July 2024.

Services were delivered within established timeframes and met relevant legislative requirements. This aspect of the department's work involves regular and direct contact with Senate office holders, senators and their staff, and other stakeholders, all of whom provided regular informal feedback which was very positive. Positive comments were also recorded in *Hansard* about the quality of the support for senators provided by the office and the department.

Public information and parliamentary education

ASSESSMENT

Public information about the work and role of the Senate and its committees and parliamentary education programs are current and accessible to all



The department delivers public information and parliamentary education in a number of ways, primarily through the publication of information on the Parliament's website (aph.gov.au) and the delivery of seminars, training and education programs to senators and their staff, the public service, community groups and school students.

In this reporting period, the Procedure Office delivered 21 seminars for public service officers and community groups, 21 training sessions for senators and their staff, and

six public lectures, as well as publishing material on the role and work of the Senate and its committees to both internal and external audiences. Formal and informal feedback about these services, for example from senators, training participants and our seminar audience, indicates that the programs effectively met their objectives.

The Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) continued to deliver high quality education programs to students, in person at Parliament House, in classrooms through its outreach program and via videoconference across Australia. Nearly 2,100 education programs were provided to school groups at Parliament House and over 370 programs were delivered via videoconference. Feedback collected indicated high levels of satisfaction with all programs. The PEO website (peo.gov.au) continues to be well utilised, with approximately 1.35 million instances of individual users accessing the site. Feedback about the educational information and resources on the website was very positive.

The Senate Public Information Office (SPIO) develops and publishes a range of public information resources to support the operation of the Senate, including on sitting days the *Dynamic Red* (a live update on proceedings) and *Senate Daily Summary* (an informal summary of each day's proceedings). SPIO also manages the department's social media presence. The office collates statistics on Senate activity and in this reporting period continued to refine the Senate's online statistical collection, *StatsNet*.

These resources were provided on all sitting days, and accurate, reader-friendly public information resources were delivered within established timeframes.

Capability, governance and accountability

ASSESSMENT

All identified accountability obligations to the Senate are met



Senate committees provide opportunities for senators and others to monitor the department's performance. The department met its accountability obligations to the Senate during the year, including through its appearance before estimates hearings in October 2023 and February and May 2024. The Clerk provided the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee with a briefing on the department's support to committees prior to each round of Senate estimates.

These activities provide an important accountability mechanism by which senators may test advice provided by departmental officers and evaluate the department's performance. The department also responded to 167 questions on notice which were published on the committee's website.

The Appropriations, Staffing and Security Committee also has a specific role in relation to the department's appropriations as well as matters concerning the department's structure, staffing and ICT, and security arrangements. Reports on the department's financial performance were provided to the President of the Senate and the Appropriations, Staffing and Security Committee, as was the annual report of the department's Audit Committee. Regular reports on other departmental matters are also provided to the President.

Analysis

The department reports against the performance indicators contained in its portfolio budget statements, tabled in the Senate in May 2023, and those in its Corporate Plan for 2023–24. Those indicators have two dimensions, comprising an assessment of the demand for the department’s services and an evaluation of the department’s performance in delivering those services.

Factors influencing demand

A constant in the department’s planning and reporting has been the recognition that much of the demand for its services shifts in line with levels of Senate legislative and committee activity. Demand is overwhelmingly driven by the requirements of senators, and the decisions and activities of the Senate and its committees. Each year, significant factors include:

- the political dynamics of the Senate
- the number of days and hours, and distribution, of its sittings
- the legislative workload of the Senate
- the number of committees on which senators serve, and
- the number and complexity of committee inquiries.

Each of these is in turn affected by the electoral cycle. 2023–24 was the second year of the 47th Parliament and the Senate’s large and diverse crossbench continued to affect the level of demand for advice, and the character of advice and support required.

The Senate sat on 59 days. High levels of committee activity continued, with nine Senate select and two joint select committees supported during the year (in addition to the standing and statutory committees supported by the department). There was also high demand for legislative drafting services.

Performance in delivering services

Evaluation of the department’s performance is based upon the degree to which its services meet the requirements of the Senate and its committees, and senators, principally measured against criteria centred on:



accuracy—frequently assessed by considering whether advice or documents were demonstrated to be inaccurate



timeliness—particularly whether advice, documents or services were provided in time to meet the purpose for which they were sought



satisfaction of senators (including committees of senators) with the advice, documents or other services provided—the assessment of which is considered further below.

The particular criteria which apply are described in the department’s portfolio budget statements and in the performance summary tables for each office contained in this chapter.

Monitoring and assessing satisfaction

Much of the department's work involves contact with senators and their staff, presenting the most direct means of eliciting (often informal) feedback about services and performance, and an avenue for addressing concerns as they are raised. During 2023–24, direct feedback was very positive across all service areas, particularly in relation to core advisory, drafting and secretariat support roles. Senators' comments about the department and its staff, placed on the public record during Senate and committee proceedings, constitute another valuable source of performance information. These comments continued to be resoundingly positive during 2023–24. The department also monitors its performance through formal and informal channels, including letters, emails, phone calls, seminar evaluation forms and outputs from management information systems. Again, these sources were positive. The direct accountability of the department to the Senate through its committees was noted above.

The department's program managers have adopted a formal process for recording and providing feedback to the Clerk to provide assurance for his certification of the annual performance statements. These measures have been provided to the department's Audit Committee, which has provided advice that the measures and these annual performance statements are appropriate.

The subsequent parts of this chapter report on the activities and performance of the department against the criteria contained in the departmental work plans.

Clerk's Office

Outputs

Advice on, and support for, proceedings of the Senate and its committees. Leadership and strategic direction for the department.

Secretariat and advisory support to the Procedure and Privileges Committees. Procedural information and related resources for senators and the department.

Performance information

Performance results

Advice and support are sound and timely, and provided to the satisfaction of the President, other officeholders, Senate committees and senators so that they are able to fulfil their roles.

Senators and other recipients of advice on powers, privileges and proceedings continued to acknowledge its accuracy and value.

Advice and support was invariably provided in time to meet procedural and operational requirements.

The capacity of the department and its employees to provide advice and support meets operational requirements.

Activities under the learning and development framework underpinned the department's advisory and support capacities. New clerks at the table were trained.

Governance structures advance the department's accountability and the achievement of its outcome.

Governance forums achieved all significant targets for the year, including managing budgeting and staffing targets.

Contributions to interdepartmental forums supported collaborative and efficient parliamentary administration.

Advice, documentation, publications and draft reports are accurate, of a high standard and produced to meet the required timeframes.

All advice, documents and the draft report produced in support of a committee supported by the office were of a high standard and met required timeframes; none were shown to be inaccurate.

Odgers' Australian Senate Practice is updated to reflect significant changes in the Senate.

The *Procedural Information Bulletin* is produced after each sitting period and other procedural resources are updated and augmented as required.

The *Procedural Information Bulletin* was produced promptly after sitting periods and estimates hearings. Procedural and administrative information for senators was published to the intranet site, *Senate Connect*. Work commenced on transferring advice provided by the office into more functional databases.

Overview

The Clerk of the Senate, Richard Pye, manages the department in accordance with the Parliamentary Service Act and other legislation. The Clerk is also the principal adviser to the President of the Senate and senators on proceedings in the Senate, parliamentary privilege, and committee proceedings and their outcomes in the Senate. The Deputy Clerk of the Senate supports the Clerk in these roles and, with the Clerk Assistant (Procedure), provides procedural and legislative advice and support to non-executive senators. The Deputy Clerk also has particular corporate governance roles, including as the department's senior adviser to the Audit Committee and as chair of the Program Managers' Group. The cost of the office for 2023–24 was \$1.0m (\$1.0m in 2022–23).

Advice and information

The provision of advice, particularly to the President, senators and parliamentary committees, is a core function of the department and a priority for the Clerk's Office.

A key responsibility of the office was providing briefings and support to the President, Senator the Hon. Sue Lines, the Deputy President, Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC, and other senators who act as temporary chairs of the Senate.

The Presiding Officers concluded negotiations for a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding the exercise of covert investigative powers where parliamentary privilege may be involved. The Deputy Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives provided secretariat support to a working group of parliamentarians led by the Presiding Officers to negotiate the terms of this MOU with the Australian Federal Police and the Attorney-General's Department.

More generally, advice to senators and committees was often provided immediately, particularly in the Senate chamber, in private meetings of committees, and to senators who sought advice in person. Such verbal advice is impossible to quantify in any meaningful way, but the number and kinds of written advices provide some indication of work undertaken.

Written advice

The number of requests for written advice returned to a level consistent with previous financial years following the increased demand in the last financial year. Advice addressed a diverse range of matters, predominantly concerned with either Senate or committee procedure, and included requests related to parliamentary privilege, the procedures for considering legislation and claims of public interest immunity by the executive. Figure 4 shows the number of written advices provided by topic, while figure 5 shows demand over recent years. The Clerk's Office continued to provide succinct, less formal advice, where appropriate, with a view to directly addressing the needs of the senator requesting the advice.

Figure 4 – Types of written advice provided by the Clerk, 2023–24

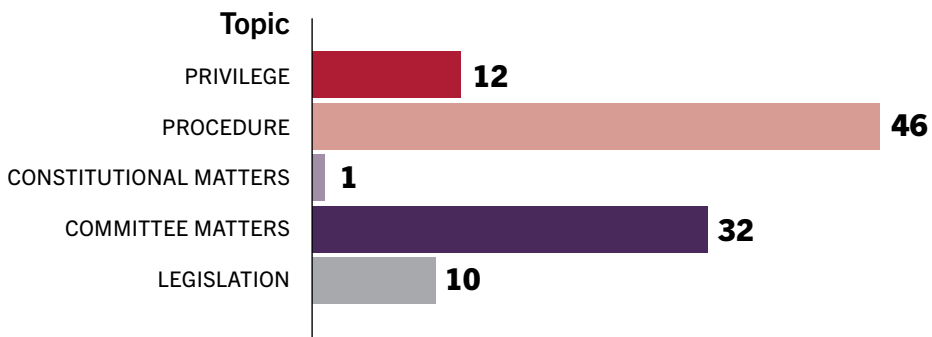
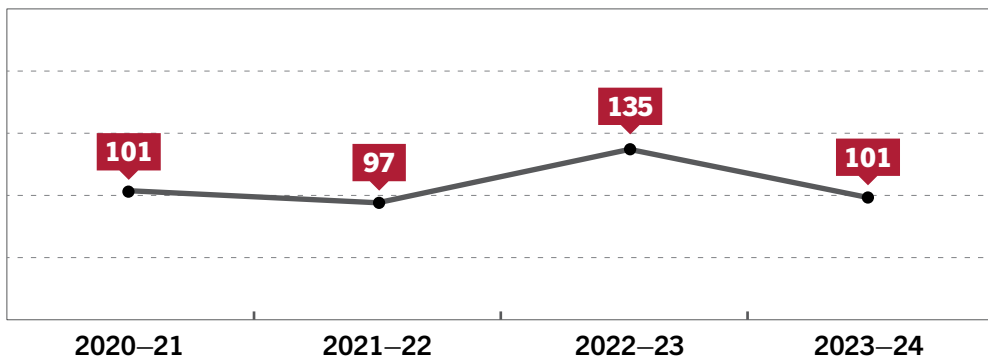


Figure 5 – Number of advices provided by the Clerk’s Office, 2020–21 to 2023–24



Performance indicators for provision of advice focus on timeliness and accuracy. Senators and other recipients of advice continued to acknowledge its accuracy and its value. All advice was provided in time to meet the purposes for which it was sought. Most advice is provided on a confidential basis and it is for the recipient to decide whether to release it, and if so, on what basis. On several occasions during the year, recipients of advice published it which allows it to be tested through public scrutiny. The reliance of senators and committees on unpublished advice also allows its accuracy and utility to be tested (though not publicly demonstrated). As this advice can inform the actions of senators, the Senate and its committees, as well as public debate, all advice is prepared to the highest standards.

Procedural information

The Clerk produced nine issues of the *Procedural Information Bulletin* summarising the major procedural developments and matters of procedural interest arising during each sitting period and the three rounds of estimates hearings. Updates on procedural and administrative matters affecting senators were also published to an intranet site for senators and their staff: *Senate Connect*.

Significant work was completed on a project to transfer advice provided by the Clerk's Office into more functional databases. This has improved the capacity to search previous advice which supports both consistency and efficiency when preparing new advice on related matters. The project will be completed in 2024–25.

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk prepared and presented sessions in the department's learning and development program, and in other forums for parliamentary staff and officers from Commonwealth agencies. They also provided 15 procedural training sessions to senators and nine training sessions to senators who took on the role of temporary chair of the Senate. In response to feedback, the office also produced four short guides, incorporating video examples, to support temporary chairs to perform their role.

Committees

The office provided secretariat support to two Senate standing committees. Advice and support was acknowledged as meeting the needs and timeframes of the committees and their members.

Procedure Committee

The Clerk served 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 presented one report during the year. The report tabled in September 2023 and examined a range of procedural matters including a recommendation of the *Set the Standard* report relating to the rules governing language and behaviour in the Houses.

Committee of Privileges

The Deputy Clerk served as secretary to the Committee of Privileges, which met three times in 2023–24 (8 in 2022–23) but did not present any reports. The committee protects the integrity of Senate and committee proceedings by inquiring into matters which may amount to contempt of the Senate. Those matters, which arise from concerns raised by other committees or individual senators, are referred to the committee by the Senate.

Strategic direction and governance

A key responsibility of the office and the department's senior executive is to set the strategic direction of the department. The long-term priorities of the senior executive remained maintaining workforce capability and enhancing the ICT systems which support the department's capacity to perform its core functions. In relation to workforce capability, the department developed a suite of diversity and inclusion action plans for different cohorts. The department has commenced implementation of those plans and completed the last of the action plans early in 2024–25. This work helps to ensure the department recruits and retains the strongest possible team and all officers are supported to best contribute to our work.

We worked closely with our ICT colleagues in the Department of Parliamentary Service on various projects including rolling out the new *Online Tabled Documents* system for use by executive departments and development of a new document management system for the legislative scrutiny committees. These projects improve the efficiency of the department's operations by improving integration of information technology systems into the processes of the Senate and its committees. Further details of these projects are set out in the chapters detailing the activities of the office which led each project.

The Deputy Clerk was the department's senior adviser to its Audit Committee and chaired the Program Managers' Group. A key area of work for Program Managers was negotiating a new enterprise agreement with staff and updating the department's policies and practices to reflect the terms of the new agreement.

During the financial year, the Clerk attended four meetings of the Heads of the Parliamentary Departments. This group provides a forum to support coordination across the parliamentary service on administrative matters and to set the strategic direction of the service.

The Clerk and other senior officers continued to collaborate with their counterparts in the other parliamentary departments in relation to parliamentary administration. This collaboration is essential for the departments to provide effective support to the Parliament and its committees but it also delivered efficiencies particularly for the smaller departments in the parliamentary service. Where appropriate, the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service is also included in these arrangements.

More information on governance is in the '*Management and accountability*' chapter.

Performance outlook

The next reporting period is the final year in an electoral cycle. It is likely to see sustained high levels of committee and legislative activity. However, the number of requests for procedural advice is likely to be consistent with 2023–24.

Work will continue on training officers to act as clerks at the table. Over the last four years, this training has resulted in an additional nine officers developing these skills (not including officers who perform this role as part of their core duties). Given the specialised nature of the role, this represents a significant element of the department's workforce planning as well as deepening the procedural knowledge officers bring to their current roles.

Work will begin on a collaborative project to modernise parliamentary business systems. This work is being led by the Department of Parliamentary Services and will be a key focus over the next two years.

While the precise election period timing is unknown, this period will provide the department with an opportunity to rotate staff with the benefit of broadening their skills, contributing to their professional development and career satisfaction, and maintaining our institutional capability.

Table Office

Outputs

Programming and procedural support to the Senate and the legislative process. Publication of formal and informal records of Senate business.
 Receipt, dissemination and storage of documents.
 Secretariat support for the Publications, Selection of Bills and Senators' Interests committees.

Performance information	Performance results
Procedural advice and legislative documents are accurate and timely.	Advice was given as required. Legislative documents were accurate and produced within required timeframes.
<i>Order of Business, Notice Paper</i> and <i>Senate Journals</i> are accurate and published within required timeframes. Other publications are accurate and timely.	All information resources were accurate and published according to required timeframes.
Tabled documents are processed and stored, and available online wherever possible.	Senate records were accurately recorded and safely stored and documents were distributed in a timely manner.
Committees are supported; advice, documentation, publications and draft reports are accurate and timely.	Committee meetings were held, documents provided and reports prepared within agreed timeframes.

Overview

The Table Office is led by the Clerk Assistant (Table) and has three functional areas, as shown in figure 6.

Figure 6 – Elements and responsibilities of the Table Office

Executive and programming

Tim Bryant, Clerk Assistant

Procedural advice to government senators, programming support and production of the *Order of Business*.

Secretary to the Selection of Bills and Senators' Interests committees, and Registrar of Senators' Interests.

Legislation and Documents

Journals and Notice Paper

Ivan Powell, Director (to 24/05/24)

Shaun Hayden, Director (from 27/05/24)

Processing legislation

Processing and custody of documents

Inquiries services

Secretary to the Publications Committee

Records management

Production of the Notice Paper and

Senate Journals

Processing questions on notice, orders for the production of documents and petitions

The Table Office provided support for the Senate on each of its 59 sitting days in this reporting period – a slight increase on the 56 sitting days last year. All performance results, as outlined in the table on page 33, were achieved within established timeframes. Project work was completed or has continued, as forecast.

Much of the work of the Table Office involves direct contact with senators and their staff, as well as other clients. This presents an ongoing opportunity to receive and respond to feedback about the services provided by the office. Ad hoc feedback received during the year from senators, their staff and others was almost invariably positive. Formal surveys of satisfaction levels are undertaken at regular intervals, with the next proposed to be undertaken in 2026–27.

Staff numbers remained steady during the reporting period, with an average full-time equivalent level of 14.1. The cost of the office was \$2.2m (\$2.1m in 2022–23).

Programming and procedural support

The Table Office supported the operation of the Senate by providing programming support, preparing procedural scripts for use in the chamber (1,281 in 2023–24, averaging 22 per sitting day) and providing a broadcast captioning service of Senate proceedings. The *Order of Business* (the program for each day's sitting) was prepared in draft form to assist senators (especially the whips) and published as a final edition prior to each sitting.

The Clerk Assistant (Table) and other staff of the office provided procedural advice to government office holders in relation to programming and the management of government business in the Senate, and also worked closely with the Parliamentary Liaison Officer (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet) to facilitate government business in the Senate.

Formal records

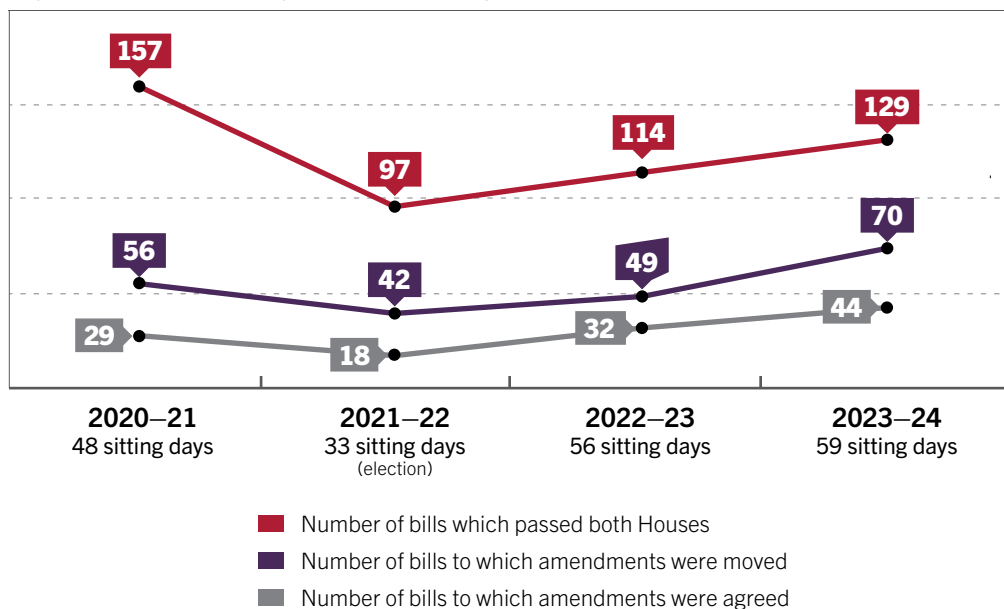
The *Notice Paper* is the formal agenda of the Senate. The *Notice Paper* was produced and published by the Table Office in advance of each sitting day. The *Senate Journals* is the official record of decisions made by the Senate. Proof *Senate Journals* were published online shortly after the end of each sitting day, and printed versions distributed the next morning. Final *Senate Journals* were subsequently produced following thorough checking of source materials.

Legislation

The office facilitated the legislative work of the Parliament by processing all bills considered in the Senate, preparing legislative documents including third reading and assent prints of bills passed, and processing assent messages.

The office also prepared the formal messages by which the two Houses communicate on legislative and other activity. In 2023–24, 157 messages were prepared, of which 137 related to the passage of bills (the remaining related to matters such as committee memberships). These figures compare to 156 messages, of which 116 related to the passage of bills, in 2022–23. Figure 7 reflects the level of legislative activity in recent years.

Figure 7 – Senate legislative activity, 2020–21 to 2023–24



In addition, the office provided administrative and procedural support in relation to the division of two government bills, the first such instances since 2002.

Questions on notice, notices of motion, petitions and orders for documents

Senators continued to use the questions on notice process – written questions to ministers on the administration of public policy – as an important accountability mechanism. Throughout the reporting period, 1,275 questions were asked on notice. These, along with answers to questions received from government departments, were processed and published to a searchable database on the Parliament’s website within established timeframes.

In 2023–24, the office processed all notices of motion received for inclusion in the *Notice Paper* – 435 for this reporting period compared to 386 in the previous period. These notices signal senators’ intentions to move particular motions on specified days. The office also processed five petitions which senators had lodged for presentation to the Senate (compared to three petitions in 2022–23).

Another frequently used means of obtaining information about matters of concern to the Senate are orders for documents. When an order for documents is agreed to, the office communicates the order to the relevant minister, and subsequently processes documents tabled in response to the order. During 2023–24, the office processed 118 orders for documents agreed to by the Senate, compared to 105 and 51 in the previous two years, respectively. This demonstrates a trend of increasing numbers of orders for documents being agreed to.

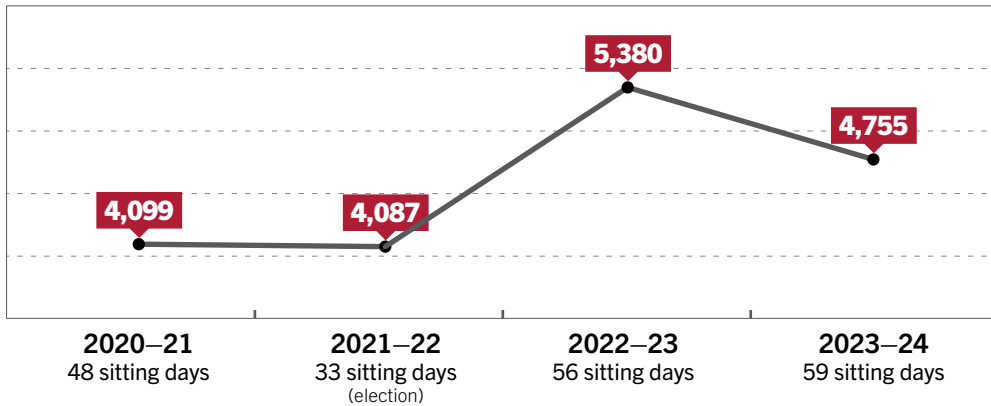
Documents

The office received and processed 4,755 documents presented (or tabled) in the Senate in the reporting period, recorded their details in the *Senate Journals*, and archived them. This figure is a slight decrease on the 5,380 documents tabled in the previous period. Figure 8 shows the number of documents tabled in the Senate in recent years.

All documents presented to the Senate in the reporting period were digitised and made publicly available on the Parliament’s website, except for those documents already made available on the Federal Register of Legislation by the Office of Parliamentary Counsel.

Significant work continues to be undertaken to organise and rationalise the office’s holdings of hard copy materials to ensure the preservation of historically important material and the efficient use of the office’s document storage areas. A new website to facilitate the receipt and publication of documents electronically was also implemented.

Figure 8 – Documents tabled in the Senate, 2020–21 to 2023–24



Support for committees

During the year, the office provided secretariat support to three committees.

All committee meetings were convened, papers prepared (including draft reports as required) and other administrative support provided within the timeframes required by the committees.

The Clerk Assistant (Table) is secretary to the Selection of Bills Committee which meets and reports each sitting week on recommendations to refer bills to the legislation committees for inquiry. He is also secretary to the Senators' Interests Committee and is the Registrar of Senators' Interests, with responsibility for, among other things, administering the Register of Senators' Interests and the Register of Senators' Qualifications, both of which are published online.

In addition, the Table Office provided secretariat support to the Senate Publications Committee.

Records management

The Table Office is also responsible for the administration of departmental records and the department's information management system. During the reporting period, the Records Management Unit continued to provide induction training for new staff on recordkeeping obligations, and undertook work to facilitate a move to electronic tabling of records associated with committee inquiries.

Performance outlook

In 2024–25, the Table Office will continue to serve as the secretariat to the Senate, and to certain committees.

The existing timeframes set for the provision of various services remain appropriate. The office will continue to monitor its performance through the collation of a range of statistics and feedback and exception-based reporting of non-compliance.

During the next reporting period, the *Online Tabled Documents* system will be rolled out to government departments as the sole method of receiving tabled documents in a digital format. This promises significant efficiencies, and the Table Office will provide support to departments in the roll-out period.

The office will continue to support various ICT-related activities, including contributing to the ongoing maintenance, enhancement and testing of existing systems that support the work of the office and the Senate. Work will also commence on modernising parliamentary business systems, many of which will assist the office in the provision of secretariat support to the Senate, including the production and publication of key procedural information. The Table Office will play a key role in the development of these systems, with a view to improving accessibility of key Senate information and further reducing cost associated with printing of documents.

The key staffing focus for the next reporting period remains the sharing of skills and knowledge to ensure sufficient back-up is available to fill in for staff who are on leave, as well as bringing in staff from other areas of the department from time to time, to ensure that expertise in relation to specific tasks is not unduly concentrated. Further work will be undertaken to enhance the support provided by the office in relation to the Department's recordkeeping function.

Senate Public Information Office

Outputs

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

Liaise 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 video resources.

All publications were published within agreed timeframes set out in the 2023–24 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 social media presence and associated information resources.

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 (DPS) 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.

The cost of the office for 2023–24 was \$1.3m (\$1.3m in 2022–23), with staffing levels maintained at an average of 8.1 full-time equivalent.

Information resources

SPIO supported each of the 59 sitting days in this reporting period by producing and publishing the following information resources relevant to the meetings of the Senate, and meeting corresponding performance results:

- *The Week Ahead* – 15 editions
- *Dynamic Red* (and ParlWork web-application) – 59 editions with an average of 125 updates a day
- *Senate Daily Summary* – 59 editions, 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:

- producing video, print and web resources for the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO), including new online interactive games, and an update to both the content management system and the website hosting arrangements for ongoing security and stability
- producing videos relating to aspects of Senate processes and procedure, including the Sixty Seconds in the Senate series
- updating video training resources
- producing the department's corporate reporting and planning documents
- implementing new page designs across a range of Senate web pages, notably the redesign of the department's employment pages on the Parliament website
- management and maintenance of Navigate Senate Committees, a website providing a record of the work of Senate committees, and

- ongoing enhancements to *Senate Connect* (senators' intranet) and *SENNET* (departmental intranet) including the development of internal resources to expand departmental digital literacy skills.

SPIO also continued to manage the Senate's X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube accounts, while also expanding its social media presence to Instagram and Threads. During the reporting period the focus was on creating engaging and informative content for Instagram and YouTube, with external factors resulting in a strategic reduction in X engagement.

Projects and support

During the reporting period, SPIO continued to collaborate with DPS and the Department of the House of Representatives on a number of ICT projects to drive efficiencies and to create new resources. During this period 11 projects were completed with several of these being redevelopment and maintenance of existing applications for Windows 11 and cloud compatibility. Other significant projects completed include:

- Legislative Scrutiny Unit (LSU) document management system phase 1, completed July 2023
- *Report Builder* Online phase three – implementation of a digital workflow and integration with the *Online Tabled Documents* system, and redesign and implementation of webpage templates for reports to improve accessibility and user experience, completed January 2024, and
- *Online Tabled Documents* roll out – in partnership with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the online system to facilitate digital submission of reports and documents for presentation to Parliament was rolled out to executive departments, completed June 2024.

Other significant work during 2023–24 which is expected to be completed in the next reporting period is phase two of the LSU document management system, which will provide improved reporting and publishing functionality.

Performance outlook

In 2024–25, SPIO will continue its information resource production, and will support the newly established Digital Innovation Team with the management of projects, support programs and ICT liaison, in line with the department's strategic aims and to achieve its service delivery to senators and the public.

SPIO will support the transition of the department's intranets to SharePoint, and will continue to work towards improving the accessibility and user experience of its web content.

In addition to the ongoing work noted above, SPIO will work closely with the PEO to implement changes and enhancements identified following a website review, and will continue to support digital innovation throughout the department to mitigate the department's strategic risks in relation to ICT systems and resources and workforce capability.

Procedure Office

Outputs

Legislative drafting and procedural support to non-executive senators.
 Procedural and parliamentary research services and training.
 Secretariat support to legislative scrutiny committees.
 Parliamentary information for public servants and the community.
 Advice and support for inter-parliamentary relations.

Performance information	Performance results
Procedural advice and support is sound and timely, enabling instructing senators to fulfil their roles.	Procedural advice and support provided was accurate and prepared within required timeframes and to the satisfaction of senators.
Legislative amendments and private senators' bills are legally sound and meet the requirements of instructing senators.	Amendments and bills were accurate, met requirements, were prepared to the satisfaction of senators and were generally prepared within requested timeframes (due to high demand, timeframes in relation to some requests for private senators' bills were revised in consultation with the requesting senator).
Secretariat support to the three legislative scrutiny committees is accurate and timely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation • Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills and • Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights. 	Advice and documents prepared for the committees were accurate and provided within the timeframes set by the Senate and the committees, and to the satisfaction of the committees.
Parliamentary research is accurate, timely and fulfilled each request. Training provided to senators and their staff supports their ability to perform their roles. The training and lecture programs, and other parliamentary information projects, are provided to increase the awareness of the work and role of the Parliament.	Accurate parliamentary research was provided within required timeframes and to the satisfaction of requestor. Lectures and training sessions were provided in accordance with the scheduled programs, content was relevant and accurate, and delivered to the satisfaction of the audience.
Inter-parliamentary functions are supported to the satisfaction of participants.	Inter-parliamentary functions, including the provision of secretariat support to the Australian Delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, were carried out to requirements and to the satisfaction of participants.

Overview

The Procedure Office is led by the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) and has three functional areas, as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9 – Elements and responsibilities of the Procedure Office

Executive, procedural advice and legislative drafting

Rachel Callinan, Clerk Assistant (Procedure)

Procedural advice, support and training.
Drafting of legislative amendments and private senators' bills.

Procedural support and public information

Glenn Ryall, Director, Procedure and Research

Legislative drafting and procedural advice
Publications, training, lectures
Parliamentary liaison and research on parliamentary matters

Legislative scrutiny

Anita Coles, Secretary, Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

Fattimah Imtoul, Acting Secretary (to 12/01/24), Scrutiny of Bills Committee and Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation Committee

Shaun Hayden, Secretary (15/01/24 to 17/05/24), Scrutiny of Bills Committee

Hannah Dibley (from 15/01/24), Secretary, Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation Committee

Secretariat, advisory and administrative support to the committees

The Procedure Office provides advisory, legislative drafting, training, research and public information services to support the work of senators and the Senate, as well as providing secretariat support for the Parliament's three legislative scrutiny committees.

The demand for procedural and legislative drafting services is driven by the requirements of senators and the Senate, particularly in response to the government's legislative program. The work of the secretariats of the legislative scrutiny committees is similarly driven by the volume of legislation coming before the Senate and additional inquiries undertaken by the committees.

The office monitors levels of satisfaction with its performance by formal and informal methods, including evaluation forms, surveys and direct feedback from senators, their staff and members of the public.

The full-time equivalent staffing level for the Procedure Office in 2023–24 was 23.2 (23.4 in 2022–23). The cost of providing the services of the Procedure Office in 2023–24 was \$5.0m (\$4.8m in 2022–23).

Procedural support

The Procedure Office Executive and the Procedure and Research Section assist non-government senators and their staff by providing advice relating to the role and work of the Senate and its committees. The section also provides procedural drafting services to assist senators conduct business in the Senate. In 2023–24, there continued to be strong demand for advice and drafting, particularly during sitting periods. Advice was provided on a range of procedural issues, including the constitutional powers of the Senate, the legislative process, the disallowance of delegated legislation, orders for the production of documents and opportunities to put motions before the Senate. The section also provided research support to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk and senators on matters relating to Senate practice and procedure. Staff ensured the accuracy of procedural advice, drafting and research by drawing on appropriate resources and precedents and consulting with other departmental officers as required. Services were provided on a confidential, non-partisan and consistent basis and in a timely fashion, often within extremely short deadlines.

In 2023–24, the section prepared an average of eight procedural scripts each sitting day for use by senators in the chamber, with a total of 477 scripts for the year (368 in 2022–23). These scripts assist senators to conduct business in the Senate through, for example, the introduction of bills, pursuing outstanding orders for the production of documents and proposing variations to the Senate’s routine of business. The section also frequently responded to requests to draft procedural motions for senators or review motions prepared by senators’ staff. These included motions for orders for the production of documents or to establish select committees.

Legislative drafting

The Procedure Office Executive and the Procedure and Research Section provide support to senators in relation to the legislative process by drafting private senators’ bills and amendments to government bills. Procedural amendments to the motions that mark the key stages of the passage of bills are also prepared. This drafting support is provided primarily to non-government senators, but also to government senators who are not part of the ministry (i.e. non-executive government senators).

In 2023–24, 86 second reading amendments—amendments to the procedural motion that a bill be read a second time—were prepared and circulated which is a continuation of the trend for more such amendments (63 in 2022–23 and 31 in 2021–22). 334 ‘sheets’ of ‘committee of the whole amendments’ were also drafted and circulated, comprising 1,049 individual amendments (also a significant increase on the previous period, when 747 committee of the whole amendments were circulated on 228 sheets). These are referred to as committee of the whole amendments as they propose amendments to the text of bills and are debated and voted on during the stage of a bill’s passage when the Senate resolves itself into the ‘committee of the whole’ to consider the details of a bill and any amendments proposed. These amendments vary in complexity and can be resource intensive to prepare.

A further 149 sheets of committee of the whole amendments were requested and drafted, but not circulated (again, a significant increase on the previous period, when 86 sheets

were drafted but not circulated). The decision to circulate amendments is purely a matter for the instructing senators. Reasons that sheets may not be circulated include the sponsoring senator deciding not to proceed with the amendments, or amendments being drafted to inform negotiations between parties, or as an alternative position to circulated amendments.

In accordance with section 53 of the Constitution, 20 sheets of amendments were framed as ‘requests’ to the House of Representatives. For each of these requests, a ‘statement of reasons’ was also produced to explain why the amendments were framed as requests, as required by the Senate’s procedures.

In 2023–24, the section received requests for 67 private senators’ bills (63 in 2022–23), which were progressed in accordance with senators’ instructions. 31 private senators’ bills were introduced in this reporting period (26 in 2022–23). This demand reflects continued strong interest among non-government senators for a legislative response to policy matters of concern to them and the use of private senators’ bills as a means of furthering debate on policy issues and in some cases influencing the government to pursue legislative action. Depending on their complexity, bills can take between a week to many months to prepare. The level of demand has required careful management of workload and resources, and discussion with senators’ offices regarding timeframes.

Figure 10 summarises legislative drafting and procedural services provided to senators over the past four years.

Figure 10 – Legislative drafting and procedural advice services provided to senators, 2020–21 to 2023–24

Outputs	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
Committee of the whole amendments circulated	740	668	747	1049
Second reading amendments circulated	59	31	63	86
Private senators’ bills introduced	18	23	26	31
Procedural scripts prepared	677	275	368	477

Informal feedback received from senators and their staff over the reporting period confirmed the satisfaction of senators with the quality of the procedural advice and legislative drafting services provided by the office, including where support was provided within the tight time constraints common in sitting weeks. As noted above, there has been a high demand for private senators’ bills and not all requests have been met within the timeframes originally proposed by senators. The detail of each drafting request, including timeframes, is discussed with senators’ offices and managed within existing resources.

In this reporting period a formal survey of senators’ satisfaction with the services provided by the Procedure Office Executive and Procedure and Research Section was conducted. The survey (17 responses) showed high overall satisfaction with services, including legislative drafting. Of the respondents who had utilised drafting services: 87% indicated their timeframes and expectations for committee of the whole and second reading

amendments were ‘fully met’ and 13% ‘partially met’; 86% indicated their expectations for private senators’ bills were ‘fully met’ and 14% ‘partially met’; and 64% indicated their timeframes for private senators’ bills were ‘fully met’, 29% ‘partially met’ and 7% ‘not met’. In addition, 94% of respondents rated their satisfaction with procedural advice as ‘excellent’.

Support for legislative scrutiny committees

The Legislative Scrutiny Unit provides secretariat, research and administrative support to the Parliament’s three legislative scrutiny committees:

- the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights
- the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Bills, and
- the Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation.

These committees examine bills and legislative instruments according to their terms of reference which are set out in the Senate’s standing orders, or in the case of the Human Rights Committee its enabling Act (see below). The committees generally report each sitting week (and occasionally outside of sitting weeks) on the bills and legislative instruments scrutinised. They also report annually on their work and significant matters they have pursued during the year.

The work of the committees in scrutinising bills and instruments supports parliamentary consideration of legislation in a number of important ways, including influencing the drafting of bills and legislative instruments, informing debate in the houses, and resulting in amendments to bills and legislative instruments and associated explanatory materials.

In this reporting period, the three secretariats undertook all work required by the committees within their expected timeframes, examining a large number of bills and instruments, preparing reports for the consideration of the committees, finalising reports for tabling and preparing any necessary procedural advice or documentation.

The Human Rights Committee secretariat examined 199 bills (198 in 2022–23) and drafted 12 reports containing comments on 42 bills (31 in 2022–23) raising matters relating to the committee’s terms of reference as set out in the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*. The secretariat also examined 1,619 disallowable and exempt legislative instruments (2,038 in 2022–23) and drafted comments on 30 instruments (19 in 2022–23). The secretariat also continued to support the committee with its inquiry into Australia’s Human Rights Framework (referred to by the Attorney-General), organising five public hearings during this reporting period and preparing and tabling its report on 30 May 2024. The secretariat also supported the committee in the initial stages of an inquiry required by statute into compulsory income management.

The Scrutiny of Bills Committee secretariat examined 207 bills (217 in 2022–23) and drafted 18 reports, containing comments on 83 bills (99 in 2022–23) raising matters relating to the committee’s terms of reference under Senate standing order 24.

The secretariat to the Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation Committee examined 1,550 legislative instruments (2,236 in 2022–23) against its terms of reference set

out in Senate standing order 23, including 211 exempt instruments (271 in 2022–23). The secretariat prepared 14 reports, identifying 243 instruments as potentially raising scrutiny concerns (271 in 2022–23) and identifying 196 instruments for the attention of the Senate (115 in 2022–23).

During this period the Unit also continued to work with the Department of Parliamentary Services' Information Services Division on a project to develop a contemporary document management system for managing the work of the secretariats. The implementation of the first phase of the system in this period has resulted in greater efficiencies in undertaking legislative scrutiny and reporting and it is expected in 2024 to result in greater accessibility to the work of the committees as a further phase of the project is completed in late 2024.

Parliamentary information and training

The Procedure and Research Section aims to increase knowledge of the role and work of the Senate by coordinating a range of training sessions, lectures and public information activities, as well as by producing parliamentary resources published both internally and externally.

The section delivers training in three streams—to senators and their staff, to public service officers and to not-for-profit organisations.

The section delivered a comprehensive scheduled program of training for senators' staff (in addition to ad hoc support and training). The scheduled training is presented via videoconference and during non-sitting periods to enable staff located across the country to participate. The training provides staff with a practical understanding of Senate procedure and the corresponding resources available to support senators to conduct business. The *Procedure Hub*, a resource on the senators' intranet, assists staff to understand and utilise the various templates, forms and guidance material available to support their senators to engage with the whole range of Senate business. The training sessions reinforce the material available on the *Procedure Hub*.

Training for public service officers aims to increase awareness of the work and role of the Senate, covering a range of topics including the legislative process, committee inquiries, budget estimates and delegated legislation. The training is largely offered in a hybrid format to allow both in-person and online participation. The number of public service officers attending such training has increased steadily in recent years from 331 participants in 2020–21 to 511 in 2023–24.

Following a successful pilot in 2021–22, an online training program for not-for-profit organisations (NFPs) was offered again in this reporting period, with a particular focus on providing NFPs with an understanding of the opportunities for public engagement with Senate committees. 113 participants attended this training in this reporting period, compared to 100 in 2022–23.

Six lectures were delivered as part of the long-running Senate Lecture Series during the reporting period, including the inaugural President's Lecture in June 2024. A total of 335 people attended the lectures in-person, with an additional 496 unique live online views.

Open Day in October 2023 celebrated the 35th anniversary of Parliament House, with the Procedure and Research Section coordinating the department’s participation which included facilitating public access to the Senate chamber and the President’s suite.

The 71st edition of the department’s publication *Papers on Parliament* was published in March 2024 and included articles developed from the Senate Lecture Series on topics such as the 10th anniversary of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, the Senate’s role in protecting democracy and the accountability of cross-jurisdictional bodies.

Figure 11 – Training programs and lectures, 2020–21 to 2023–24

Service	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
Senators’ orientation sessions	0	3	2	0
Senators’ staff training sessions	14	10	21	21
Training for public service officers				
• number of training sessions	13	19	21	17
• number of attendees	331	413	476	511
Public lectures				
• number of lectures	3	4	3	6
• number of attendees	188	45	191	335
• live online view	228	677	308	496

Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity building

The Australian Parliament’s international program focuses on strengthening engagement and cooperation between parliaments internationally, with an emphasis on parliamentary relations with countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The program’s activities and projects are coordinated by the International and Parliamentary Relations Office (IPRO). IPRO manages incoming and outgoing delegation programs, membership of inter-parliamentary organisations, and the international interests and travel of senators and members. IPRO is also responsible for the parliamentary strengthening and capacity building programs of the Australian Parliament, including study programs for visiting parliamentarians and staff of other parliaments.

IPRO is administered by the Department of the House of Representatives, and is funded jointly by the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives. The Senate Department supports the program by providing secretariat support to various outgoing delegations, responding to requests for information, and providing presenters and support to incoming delegation visits. In this reporting period, the Department provided delegation secretaries to support three parliamentary delegations, to: the United States of America; New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Fiji; and New Zealand.

The Senate Department also provides secretariat support to the Australian Delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) which in this period included attendance at the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda, Angola in October 2023 and 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland in March 2024. Secretariat support also included assisting the head of the delegation, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and 2023 Chairperson of the Asia-Pacific Group, the Hon. Milton Dick MP, to chair a meeting of the IPU geopolitical group at the 147th IPU Assembly.

After a 5-year interruption, the Inter-Parliamentary Study Program was held in March 2024. The program was managed by IPRO with a number of officers from across the Senate Department presenting as part of the program.

A detailed description of the work of IPRO is provided in the annual report of the Department of the House of Representatives.

The Procedure Office also responded to various requests for information, survey responses and research from other parliaments and international parliamentary bodies such as the Society of the Clerks-at-the-Table in Commonwealth Parliaments and the IPU.

Performance outlook

A key focus for 2024–25 for the Procedure Office Executive and the staff in the Procedure and Research Section who provide legislative and procedural drafting and advice will be to continue to manage the high workload for legislative amendments and private senators' bills.

With a federal election due to be held in the next reporting period, another significant undertaking will be preparations for the induction and orientation of new senators whose terms will commence on 1 July 2025 and providing training and support to their staff.

The Legislative Scrutiny Unit, in addition to its usual work supporting the three parliamentary scrutiny committees, will continue to work on the development of the unit's document management system, creating a more efficient and effective tool for conducting and publishing the work of the committees.

Parliamentary Education Office

Outputs

Parliamentary education resources and programs.

Performance information

Curriculum-aligned programs for students and teachers are delivered at Parliament House, online and in schools to encourage ongoing engagement with Australia's parliament.

Relevant and accurate print and digital resources are produced that explore the role and value of the Australian Parliament and are aligned to the Australian Curriculum.

Provision of a range of resources and services to support members of parliament in their engagement with communities and to increase citizen understanding of and engagement with Parliament.

Performance results

Feedback from teachers using Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) services showed very high levels of satisfaction with education programs. Programs were consistently conducted in accordance with the booking schedule.

Various PEO webpages and publications were updated and refreshed regularly to ensure accuracy. PEO website evaluation showed users have a high level of satisfaction with the information and resources on the website.

Senators and members were satisfied with the provision of services and support.

Overview

The Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) delivers parliamentary education services on behalf of the Australian Parliament to students, teachers and others across Australia. Since 1988, approximately 2.5 million people have expanded their knowledge of the Australian Parliament through participating in a PEO program.

The PEO is led by the Director, PEO, Lee Katauskas, with strategic oversight by the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) and is administered by the Senate Department. It is jointly funded by the Senate Department and the Department of the House of Representatives.

The PEO is guided by the PEO Advisory Committee which is comprised of members and senators and is co-chaired by the Deputy Presiding Officers, meeting three times a year.

The full-time equivalent staffing level for the PEO in 2023–24 was 13.8 (14.2 in 2022–23). The cost of providing the services of the PEO in 2023–24 was \$2.0m (\$2.0m in 2022–23).

Education programs: onsite, digital, outreach and Teacher Professional Learning

The PEO's student education offerings include onsite programs delivered at Parliament House and programs delivered in classrooms across Australia through digital delivery and through outreach. The PEO also offers Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) programs, both digital and in-person.

The PEO continued to experience strong demand for onsite student programs with approximately 2,100 programs delivered in 2023–24 (similar to the previous financial year).³

Demand for digital programs also remained strong with the PEO expanding the number of programs from 15 to 20 per week during the reporting period. As a result over 370 digital programs were delivered, a 6% increase from the previous period.

In 2023–24, the PEO conducted outreach to New South Wales and the Northern Territory, delivering programs to over 850 students from 15 schools. The Northern Territory outreach program was undertaken in collaboration with educators from the Museum of Australian Democracy and the Australian Electoral Commission.

While on outreach, the PEO also delivered TPL programs to approximately 30 teachers and pre-service teachers at Western Sydney and Charles Darwin Universities. TPL programs provide professional learning for teachers and pre-service teachers to support the delivery of informative and engaging civics and citizenship programs for students. In total, in this reporting period, the PEO delivered 25 TPL programs, the same number as the previous period, with nine of these programs delivered in collaboration with stakeholder partners such as the National Archives of Australia, the High Court of Australia and the Queensland and South Australian Parliaments' Education Offices.

3 In the 2022–23 Annual Report (pp. 26 and 54) the number of onsite programs was incorrectly recorded as 2,247. The correct figure is 2,076. The increase from 2021–22 was also incorrectly recorded (p. 54) as 74%; the correct figure is 286%.

In this reporting period the PEO has also been part of a collaborative project with the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Department of the House of Representatives to bring school bookings onto the Book Canberra Excursions website, making it easier for school groups to book PEO education programs and building tours as part of their Canberra excursions along with other major Canberra institutions.

Content: online and print

Interest in the PEO website, peo.gov.au, including its subsite auconstitution.peo.gov.au, remained strong during the reporting period, with over 1.4 million users (representing over 3.5 million unique page views, an increase of 6% from the previous period) accessing high-quality information about Australia's system of government and the Australian Parliament.

To ensure the PEO website continues to meet the needs of users the PEO, in collaboration with the Senate Public Information Office, commenced a review of its navigation, functionality and layout.

In 2023–24, the PEO also undertook an evaluation of teacher packs, with approximately 80 teachers responding to an invitation to provide feedback on these resources. The evaluation indicated that there was strong demand for PEO print resources to be digitised and made available on the PEO website. As a result, the following print resources are now available for free download on the website:

- *Australian Constitution pocket edition*
- *Rights, power, action: a practical classroom guide for teaching Australia's system of government*
- *Teaching civics and citizenship: a classroom guide*
- *Your Parliament*, and
- *PEO Poster Packs*.

Services for members and senators

The PEO provides a complimentary annual allocation of resources to senators and members to support their engagement with teachers, students and community groups across Australia. In addition, in-person and virtual briefings on PEO content, programs and bespoke resources are provided to parliamentarians on request.

During the reporting period, the PEO continued to support parliamentarians' engagement with visiting school groups and the Speaker's *Parliament in Schools* program through the provision of print products, bespoke resources, and briefings for parliamentarians and staff.

The PEO provided secretariat services to support three PEO Advisory Committee meetings, briefed the committee on various aspects of the PEO's work and responded to queries and feedback from committee members.

With the support of the Presiding Officers, the PEO also commenced a project to enhance its digital programs by supporting parliamentarians to create short videos that can be used in digital programs.

Performance outlook

Over the next reporting period, the PEO will continue to strategically manage its ability to meet demand for its onsite, digital and outreach programs within resources, particularly as the demand for digital programs continues to rise.

In support of parliamentarians' engagement with young people in their communities, the PEO will implement an engagement activity to mark the International Day of Democracy in September 2024. The PEO will also enhance its TPL programs through the development of online modules for inclusion in these programs.

The project to move school bookings onto the Book Canberra Excursions website will progress from its current development phase to implementation, requiring adjustments to some administrative processes.

In addition, the PEO will conclude and implement the outcomes of the review of its website to improve the layout, navigation and accessibility of the site. The Federal Parliament history timeline and the Australian Constitution online websites will be incorporated into the PEO website.

Committee Office

Outputs

Secretariat support and procedural advice to the legislative and general purpose standing committees, select committees, and certain joint committees.

Performance information

Performance results

The degree of satisfaction of the chairs of committees, committee members and other senators with the quality and timeliness of advice and support.

Formal and informal feedback, including reference to committee reports during debates in the Senate and in direct communication to Senate officers, shows that senators consider the support provided by the Committee Office to be effective, and performed to a high standard.

Draft reports, reports and other documents are timely, accurate and of a high standard. Tabling deadlines are met.

Accurate advice, documentation, and draft reports were provided to committees in accordance with their requirements. Reports were drafted and presented to the Senate in accordance with the timeframes agreed to by committees and deadlines set by the Senate.

Inquiry information, evidence and reports are published promptly upon authorisation.

Information was updated promptly and accurately on committee web pages. Submissions, other documents and reports were published consistent with the decisions of committees.

Inquiries from the public regarding committees are handled promptly and professionally.

Telephone and email queries from the public were responded to promptly and accurately. Members of the public had access to up to date, accurate and relevant material regarding committee activities and procedures to allow them to participate in committee inquiries.

Overview

Committee Office secretariats supported 16 legislation and references standing committees, nine Senate select committees, two joint select committees and four other joint committees (see figure 12). The office of the Clerk Assistant (Committees) also provides the secretariat to the Chairs' Committee which is chaired by the Deputy President of the Senate.

Secretariats supporting these committees continued to experience a high workload, with large numbers of inquiries and hearings taking place, including by way of video and teleconference. The cost of the office in 2023–24 was \$12.3m (\$10.7m in 2022–23), with staff salaries comprising approximately 91 per cent of the office's total expenses.

The remaining costs were administrative (for example, printing, venue hire and transport and accommodation for secretariat staff attending hearings that were not held in Australian Parliament House). Committee secretariats provided administrative support to committees to allow them to undertake their inquiries in accordance with the rules of the Senate, and in a way that was consistent with decisions made by the committees themselves. Secretariat staff processed submissions, correspondence and answers to questions on notice, published a range of material to committee websites, arranged private meetings and briefings, liaised with witnesses and stakeholders, and arranged public hearings and site inspections around Australia, including by video and teleconference. Committee Office staff analysed and collated the evidence committees received, drafted briefing material and reports, arranged for the tabling and publication of reports, and assisted witnesses and others to participate in inquiries. In addition, secretariats provided timely and practical procedural advice to chairs, committee members and other stakeholders, and responded to requests for information from members of the public about the operation and activities of committees, and about committee practice and procedure.

Committees continued to make effective use of video and teleconference facilities to hold public hearings and private meetings and briefings. This ensured that committees could receive the evidence they required in order to meet their inquiry and reporting obligations, and enabled them to hear from a wide range of witnesses from around Australia, and internationally in some circumstances.

Feedback from members of committees when reports are tabled or debated in the Senate, and in the House of Representatives in relation to certain joint committees, and provided informally during the year, indicates that committee members are generally satisfied with the quality of the advice and support that is provided by secretariats. As reported in previous financial years, senators have provided ongoing feedback about service development and improvements, which includes the ability for committees to visually broadcast their interstate public hearings, and for targeted training for committee chairs. Training for committee chairs and their staff has been offered to all chairs, and all new senators.

The department's collaborative work with the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Department of the House of Representatives resulted in a trial of the visual broadcast of some public hearings held outside of Canberra during the 2023–24 financial year. Feedback from committee members indicates that they were very satisfied with the trial and consider that the ability to visually broadcast hearings that are held outside of Australian Parliament House in Canberra is an important way to improve access to the work of committees. The department will continue to work with colleagues in the Department of Parliamentary Services to explore options for this trial to become an ongoing service.

Feedback from committee chairs, other senators and senators' staff is a valuable source of information for the department to undertake continuous improvement of our services. In this financial year we consolidated the use of a consistent file sharing system across secretariats to make accessing information more efficient for committee members and their staff, developed and published new digital resources to assist committee chairs, their staff and other senators, and implemented electronic tabling of certain information received by committees to improve administrative efficiency.

Figure 12 – Elements and responsibilities of the Committee Office⁴

Executive

Toni Matulick, Clerk Assistant

Jeanette Radcliffe, Senior Clerk of Committees

Procedural advice and training
 Planning and coordination
 Secretariat staffing and resources
 Statistics and records

Legislative and general purpose standing committee secretariats

Joint committee secretariats

Senate select committee secretariats

Community Affairs

Apolline Kohen

Economics

Sean Turner

Education and Employment

Gerry McInally

Environment and Communications

Stephen Palethorpe

Finance and Public Administration

Bonnie Allan

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Pothida Youhorn

Legal and Constitutional Affairs

Sophie Dunstone

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

Tas Larnach

Additional Support Unit

Alan Raine

JOINT STATUTORY

Corporations and Financial Services

Ivan Powell

Law Enforcement

Lyn Beverley

National Anti-Corruption Commission

Lyn Beverley

JOINT STANDING

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Jane Thomson

JOINT SELECT

Northern Australia

Alan Raine

Social Media and Australian Society

Gerry McInally

Adopting Artificial Intelligence

Ivan Powell

Australia's Disaster Resilience

Pothida Youhorn

Commonwealth Bilateral Air Service Agreements

Lyn Beverley

Cost of Living

Alan Raine

Foreign Interference through Social Media

Apolline Kohen

Impact of Climate Risk on Insurance

Jane Thomson

Northern Australia

Alan Raine

Perth Mint and Commonwealth regulatory compliance

Alan Raine

Provision of and Access to Dental Services in Australia

Tas Larnach

Supermarket Prices

Sarah Redden

⁴ As at 30 June 2024 or when the committee ceased.

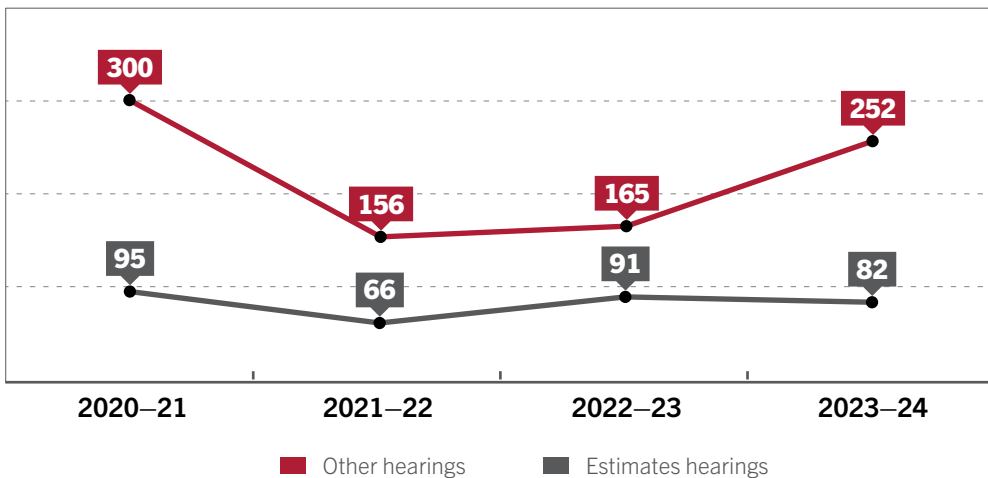
Activity levels and workload

The workload of the Committee Office is determined by decisions of the Senate and of the committees themselves. During this reporting period, the Committee Office continued to deliver secretariat, research and drafting services and administrative support to committees to enable them to conduct inquiries and table reports consistent with the timeframes set by the Senate and decisions made by committees. The highest number of inquiries managed at one time was 66.

Submissions, public hearings and witnesses

The volume of work undertaken by committee secretariats during 2023–24 is demonstrated by the increased level of administrative support provided to committees. This included processing 8,831 submissions, which is more than double the number of submissions published in the previous reporting period. In addition to publishing and processing this high level of submissions, secretariats arranged 252 public hearings (including 82 estimates hearings) at which 7,184 witnesses appeared. Secretariats supported committees by arranging 538 private meetings (up from 508 in the previous year) and 16 site inspections.

Figure 13 – Number of committee hearings, 2020–21 to 2023–24



To manage this volume of work, the office continued to operate flexibly with staff regularly working across secretariats, supporting different committees, and joining staff in other programs within the department on cross-program project teams when their workload permitted. Demonstrating professional flexibility and being able to pivot quickly to meet the changing demands of the Senate and its committees is a key capability of Committee Office staff, and supports the department’s ongoing ability to deliver high quality services. In addition, it allows staff to expand their professional skills and develop relationships across teams and the parliamentary departments. Informal feedback from senators and their staff and from Senate officers indicates that this flexibility is highly valued, and assists the department to effectively manage risk across service delivery and workforce capability.

Estimates hearings

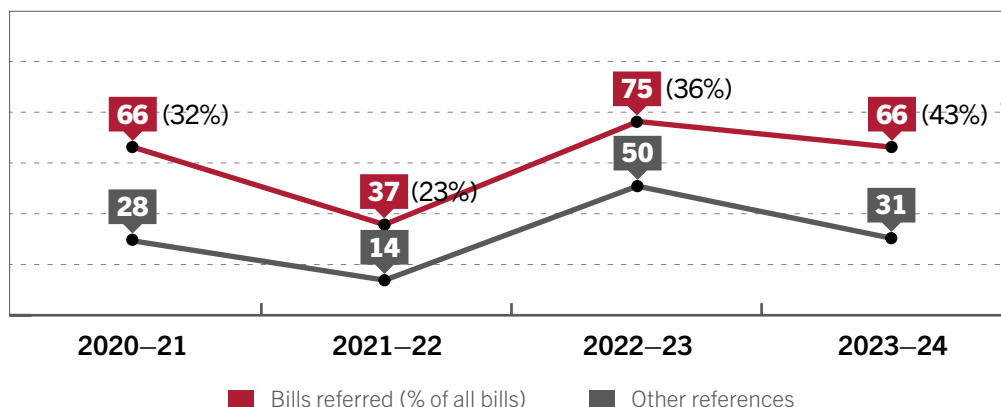
The 2023–24 supplementary Budget estimates hearings took place in October 2023. Additional Budget estimates were then held in February 2024, followed by the 2024–25 Budget hearings in May and June 2024. As shown in figure 13, there were 82 estimates hearings, down from 91 hearings in the previous period. During these estimates hearings, 2,923 witnesses appeared.

Committees continued to make use of video and teleconference facilities to allow for remote participation when agreed by the committee.

References and reports

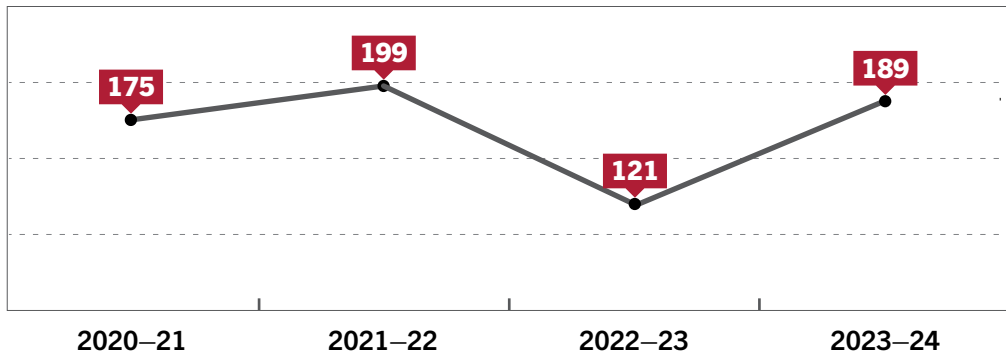
In addition to the 66 legislation inquiries established during the year, committees inquired into and reported on diverse topics including supermarket prices, artificial intelligence (AI), integrity of consultancy services, cost of living pressures, shut down of 3G mobile network, bank closures in regional Australia, impact and mitigation of aircraft noise, issues relating to menopause and perimenopause, wrongful detention of Australia citizens overseas and Australia's retirement system.

Figure 14 – Number of references to committees, 2020–21 to 2023–24



The office supported committees to table a total of 189 reports. Figure 15 indicates how the election cycle impacts the number of reports tabled during the year.

Figure 15 – Reports presented by all committees supported by the Committee Office 2020–21 to 2023–24



Each committee report, while initially drafted by Committee Office staff, is, in the end, a committee document which reflects the views of members of the committee undertaking the inquiry.

Public information

Providing accurate, accessible and relevant public information about the work of Senate committees is an area of continuing focus.

The Committee Office continued to work with the Senate Public Information Office and the Department of Parliamentary Services on projects to improve the tools, systems and processes for drafting and publishing reports, and to manage the high volume of submissions and answers to questions on notice provided to committees during estimates and other hearings. Tools, systems and processes that enable prompt, accessible publication of committee evidence and reports are an essential part of the Committee Office’s responsibility to ensure committee information is processed, analysed and published in a timely way. They also ensure that information is relevant and accessible, that senators are satisfied with services provided and that efficiencies can be realised.

To further develop these systems and processes, the Office of the Senior Clerk continued work to deliver a dedicated project team responsible for Committee Office-specific ICT, web publishing support and training, induction of new staff, and progressing ICT projects in collaboration with the Senate Public Information Office and the Department of Parliamentary Services. Notably, a redeveloped version of the Committee Office’s bespoke drafting program, *Report Builder*, that was delivered in collaboration with the Department of the House of Representatives and the Department of Parliamentary Services in the previous financial year was operationalised, and training undertaken to ensure that efficiencies from the program could be realised, freeing up staff time to effectively manage a consistently high workload.

The Committee Office Executive, comprising the Office of the Senior Clerk and the Office of the Clerk Assistant (Committees), continued their focus on recording, analysing and publishing statistics and data generated by the Committee Office, including the twice-yearly publication *Work of Committees* and ensuring that information about committee

membership and hearings was up to date and publicly accessible via the Senate website. Additional work was commenced to consider how the information published in *Work of Committees* could be collected, collated and then published digitally, including in a more timely way. This work will continue in the 2024–25 financial year.

Committee Office staff supported the department's seminar program by delivering training sessions to public servants and other members of the public about the operation of Senate committees, as well as delivering training offered by the Parliamentary Library for parliamentary staff.

International engagement

Committee Office staff presented information to international delegations visiting Australia and supported two outgoing parliamentary delegations.

Management and leadership

Committee secretaries met regularly throughout the year to discuss corporate and administrative issues, staff development and organisational capability, and procedural matters. Supporting staff wellbeing and building staff capability through learning and development activities was a focus during these meetings, as was how to best respond to feedback from committee members and their staff in order to improve our services and make sure they meet the needs of the Senate and its committees, and members of the public, well into the future.

All Committee Office staff met regularly with their at-level cohort as a way of sharing information, building effective relationships and capability, and undertaking peer learning and development. These meetings are an important way for Senate staff to identify learning and development needs and aspirations.

Projects during this reporting period included consolidation of a consistent file sharing program for use by all committees administered by the Department of the Senate, training for chairs of committees and their staff and new senators, and development and publication of new digital materials for chairs to support them in their role to effectively manage committee proceedings.

Staffing levels in the Committee Office were maintained to ensure that there was appropriate support for committees, and to maintain staff wellbeing by providing sufficient resources and allowing staff to take regular leave.

Performance outlook

The 2023–24 reporting period saw the Committee Office support a high level of committee activity and continue its focus on building a skilled and capable workforce able to adapt flexibly to meet this sustained demand. In 2024–25, staffing levels are expected to be maintained and the office will continue its focus on capability building, business improvement and staff wellbeing to ensure a sustainable capacity to meet the demands of the Senate and its committees.

Enhanced service delivery and business improvement will remain a key focus in 2024–25. The office will consolidate efforts to meet changing expectations of the level of support that should be available to witnesses, senators and their staff, and to our staff when participating in challenging and sensitive inquiries. The Committee Office will continue its focus on expanding and improving the ways in which committee members and members of the public are able to engage with the work of committees. The office will continue to enhance procedural and other information resources to support committees to undertake their important scrutiny and accountability functions and to meet the changing needs and expectations of witnesses, and senators and their staff.

The Committee Office will continue its collaboration with colleagues across the Senate, the Department of Parliamentary Services and the House of Representatives to ensure greater integration of ICT systems to support business improvement and to expand the accessibility and reach of public information about the work of committees.

At the same time, the office will continue to foster a supportive and rewarding work environment that values collaboration and learning, supports and values innovation by teams and work groups, and sees managers demonstrating an active commitment to the health and wellbeing of their staff, and to developing the capability of individuals and teams.

Black Rod's Office

Outputs

Chamber, committee room, office and printing support, ceremonial services, and security advice. Corporate services, including payroll services for senators and human resource strategies and services for departmental staff, and support to the Clerk in meeting public governance, performance and accountability and certain record keeping requirements.

Support services, in conjunction with the Department of the House of Representatives, to the Association of Former Members of the Parliament of Australia (AFMPA).

Financial management and human resource corporate services to the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO).

Performance information

Performance results

Services are provided to the satisfaction of the President, office holders, Senate committees and senators so that they are able to fulfil their roles.

Services were delivered within timeframes and legislative requirements. Consistently positive feedback from senators, including office holders, and their staff was received throughout the reporting period.

Provision of corporate services facilitates the operations of the Senate and meets accountability obligations under the law and to the Senate.

Services were delivered within timeframes. Services supported the Clerk as the accountable authority to meet legislative obligations and the requirements of the Senate.

Services to the AFMPA are of a high standard, are provided promptly and are accurate.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, limited assistance has been required by the AFMPA.

Provisions of services to the PBO is of a high standard and is in accordance with the memorandum of understanding which includes a service level agreement.

Services were delivered to the satisfaction of the PBO.

Overview

The primary functions of the Black Rod's Office are to provide support services to the Senate, including to Senate committees and to senators at Parliament House, and to deliver certain corporate services to the department. The office is led by the Usher of the Black Rod and has three operational areas, as shown in figure 16.

The Usher of the Black Rod undertakes duties in the Senate chamber, including clerking and ceremonial roles, assisted by three senior staff and the chamber attendant team, among others. A major focus for the Office was the negotiation and implementation of the *Department of the Senate Enterprise Agreement 2024–2026* which took effect on 29 March 2024. Nine bargaining meetings were facilitated with staff and their representatives with a successful vote being held at the end of February 2024. The Usher of the Black Rod also assisted with the organisation of events and ceremonies for the swearing-in of Australia's 28th Governor-General, Her Excellency Sam Mostyn AC.

The Usher of the Black Rod represented the department at cross-parliamentary forums including the Parliamentary Administration Advisory Group and the Security Management Board. The Usher of the Black Rod also administered the Presiding Officers' *Rules for Media Related Activity* in Parliament House and its precincts as the President's delegate.

The Black Rod's Office maintained its high level of service and support to the Senate, the President, senators and committees during this reporting period.

The regular work of the Black Rod's Office involves frequent and direct contact with Senate office holders, senators and their staff, and other stakeholders, all of whom provide regular informal feedback which is generally positive. The work of the office was also subject to scrutiny by the Appropriations, Staffing and Security Committee, and by the Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee in estimates hearings.

The average full-time equivalent staffing level for the Black Rod's Office for 2023–24 was 36.5 (33.2 in 2022–23), and the cost of running the office was \$5.1m (\$4.6m in 2022–23).

Figure 16 – Responsibilities of the Black Rod’s Office

Executive

John Begley, Usher of the Black Rod / Chief Operating Officer

Procedural, protocol, ceremonial and security advice.
 Advice on corporate and certain parliamentary administrative matters.
 Membership of the Security Management Board.
 Secretariat support to the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations, Staffing and Security.
 Secretariat support to the House Committee.
 Secretariat support to various departmental committees including the Audit Committee and Workplace Consultative Committee.

Senators’ Services	Human Resource Management	Financial Management
<p>John Baczynski, Deputy Usher of the Black Rod and Director, Senators’ Services</p> <p>Agency security advice and support Information technology security advice Accommodation Equipment management Chamber and committee room support Comcar shuttle liaison and coordination Delivery services Fleet management Office equipment Printing Project board membership</p>	<p>Bianca Wellington, Director, Human Resource Management</p> <p>Recruitment and staffing Learning and development Workplace wellbeing, health and safety Rehabilitation coordination Industrial relations Performance management Services to the PBO</p> <p>Tim Phillips, A/g Director, Payroll and Reporting</p> <p>Pay and conditions Services to the PBO Recruitment and staffing</p>	<p>Fiona O’Loughlin, Chief Finance Officer</p> <p>Financial management and advice Financial reporting and systems management Asset management Accounts processing Strategic procurement advice Support for senior management decision-making Services to the PBO Corporate governance support and advice Compliance assurance Risk and fraud framework management</p>

Senators' services

The Usher of the Black Rod and the Senators' Services Section assist the President and Clerk on ceremonial and other occasions, and also provide chamber, committee room and message delivery services. Officers from other sections of the department continued to assist with chamber attendant duties to provide additional support as required.

During the reporting period the section also provided certain office support services to senators, their staff and departmental staff.

The printing and delivery services unit continued printing documents to support the operation of the Senate, including the *Notice Paper*, the *Order of Business*, first and third reading prints of legislation and the *Journals of the Senate*. The printing and delivery services unit also continued to explore innovative products and offerings to support the work of the Parliamentary Education Office.

Over the period, service turnaround times were met consistently, ensuring that documents, including committee reports, were available when required. The section also provided a high standard of delivery services to senators, their staff and departmental staff.

The section facilitated nine suite moves for senators in the Senate wing of Parliament House as a result of casual vacancies and other ad-hoc moves as required. The section also represented the interests of senators and the department in relation to building projects that continued throughout the reporting period, facilitating and approving 1,041 individual maintenance and building access requests.

Security advice

The Usher of the Black Rod and the Deputy Usher of the Black Rod provided security advice and support to the President, Senate committees, other senators and the department.

In particular, they worked closely with colleagues in the Department of Parliamentary Services' Security Branch, the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office and the Australian Federal Police, providing input into security matters from a Senate perspective.

Human resource management

The Human Resource Management Section delivers people strategy and services across the employee life cycle for departmental staff, in addition to administering certain allowances paid to senators and providing payroll services to the Parliamentary Budget Office. During this period the section focused on bargaining for the department's enterprise agreement, initiatives and training to improve staff wellbeing and resilience, assisting in the department's response to *Set the Standard: Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces* and preparing for the change of frequency to senators' payroll from monthly to fortnightly.

Financial management

The Financial Management Section delivers financial management, accounting and budgeting services, and supports the Clerk in meeting his governance and accountability obligations. The section administers the department's financial management information and expense management systems.

During the reporting period, the section continued to provide assurance to the Clerk and other senior officers that the department had complied with financial reporting responsibilities, including producing audited annual financial statements and in relation to procurement. It also supported the department's budget process, including the preparation of the portfolio budget statements and internal budgets.

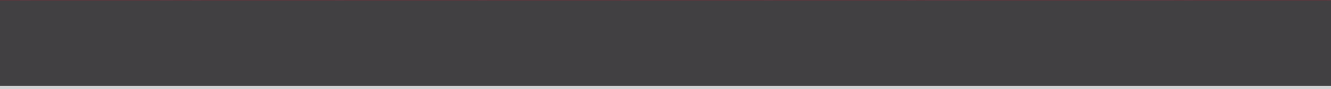
The section also manages the department's key governance mechanisms including monitoring the department's compliance with relevant legislation, oversight of the department's risk framework and administration of the department's audit committee.

Corporate services for the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO)

The office also provides certain financial management and human resource corporate services to the PBO on a fee-for-service basis. This is done in accordance with a memorandum of understanding which includes a service level agreement. The PBO expressed satisfaction with the department's delivery of the outsourced corporate services functions during the period. Services provided by the department included transactional human resource and financial management services.

Performance outlook

Key priorities for 2024–25 are to work with the other parliamentary departments on implementing improvements to accessibility and inclusion at Australian Parliament House as a part of the Access and Inclusion Champions Group. A key focus during the year ahead will also be preparations for the federal election and the opening of the 48th Parliament.



Management and accountability

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Corporate governance

The department's operations for 2023–24 were governed by the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, and other Commonwealth legislation and policy.

Corporate plan

The department's 2023–24 Corporate Plan outlines our objectives, role and structure, the environment in which we operate, and our approach to maintaining the capabilities of our key resource – our staff. Work reports provided to the Clerk throughout the reporting period showed continued progress in key areas and work tasks. Planned outcomes are explained in the department's portfolio budget statements and performance results, including our annual performance statements, and are included in this report.

Management and assurance

The department's corporate governance mechanisms include two senior committees: the Program Managers' Group, chaired by the Deputy Clerk, and the Audit Committee, chaired by an independent member from outside the department. These committees provide advice, support and assurance to the Clerk to ensure effective governance and that statutory responsibilities for the management of the department are met. The role, membership and activities of these groups are described in Figure 17. A copy of the Audit Committee Charter can be found on the Department of the Senate website.

The department also participates in a range of interdepartmental committees through which the parliamentary departments coordinate common and joint activities. Chief among these were meetings of the heads of the four parliamentary departments, the Parliamentary Administration Advisory Group, the newly established Human Resources Advisory Panel, the Security Management Board, the Parliamentary ICT Advisory Board (and its subordinate ICT committees), and other bodies managing joint projects. Collaboration with parliamentary colleagues is also supported through informal meetings between parliamentary service officers as required. The leaders of the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service have been folded into a number of these forums.

Figure 17 – Management and assurance, 2023–24

Program Managers' Group

Role	Coordinate corporate governance matters, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• human resource management• risk management and planning• performance reporting• financial planning, and• departmental service quality.
Activities	Six meetings Examined a range of issues in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• budget• staffing (including learning and development)• health and wellbeing strategy (including work, health and safety)• ICT and associated risk strategies• compliance, auditing and reporting requirements• risk management• administrative arrangements, and• administration in common with other parliamentary departments.
Membership	Department senior executive. Chaired by the Deputy Clerk.

Audit Committee

Role	Provide independent advice to the Clerk on the department's financial and performance reporting responsibilities, risk oversight and management, and systems of internal controls.
Activities	Five meetings. Based on the committee's charter, the committee undertook a progressive annual work plan against its four main areas of focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• financial reporting• performance reporting• risk oversight and management, and• systems of internal control. An annual report of the committee's activities is provided to the Clerk .
Membership	Three members (including the Chair). Further information on the members is outlined in figure 18. Advisers: Deputy Clerk and one program manager. Observers: Usher of the Black Rod (Secretary), Chief Finance Officer, representatives from the Australian National Audit Office and the department's internal audit service provider.

Figure 18 – Audit Committee member information, 2023–24

Member name	Qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience	Meetings attended¹	Total annual remuneration²
E Montano	<p>Ms Montano holds the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws (UNSW) and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.</p> <p>She has over twenty years' experience as chair, deputy chair and member of boards and audit committees across a range of government and not for profit entities. She has broad ranging experience in governance and the machinery of government including in financial and performance reporting, risk, assurance and program and project management and oversight.</p> <p>As a former Chief Executive Officer of AUSTRAC, she was the first woman to lead a Commonwealth law enforcement/regulatory agency. Prior to that appointment, she was a consultant and senior lawyer with King & Wood Mallesons.</p>	5 (of 5)	\$15,884
G Knuckey	<p>Mr Knuckey holds a Bachelor of Economics (ANU), is a Fellow Chartered Accountant, Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Registered Company Auditor.</p> <p>He has extensive experience as an audit committee member or chair and is currently serving on audit committees for numerous government entities. He also has extensive experience as a director and serves on boards and audit committees of multiple private sector entities.</p> <p>Mr Knuckey has been a full-time company director and audit committee member since 2009 following a 32 year career with Ernst & Young specialising in Audit and Assurance Services in both the public and private sectors across a range of industries.</p>	5 (of 5)	\$10,175
A Young	<p>Mr Young holds a Certificate in Governance Practice and is a Fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia.</p> <p>He has tertiary qualifications in the Arts, Business and Law and a policing qualification with the AFP. He had 25 years of experience in the Parliaments of Western Australia and Victoria, completing his tenure as Clerk of the Legislative Council and Clerk of the Parliaments in Victoria in 2022. His responsibilities as Clerk included being an employer and accountable officer for his own department and significant involvement in the whole of Parliament governance.</p>	5 (of 5)	\$9,805

- 1 The comparison relates to the total number of audit committee meetings conducted during the reporting period (as per reporting requirements). Committee members attended all of the meetings they were entitled to attend. In addition to attending meetings, the committee members are required to consider material out-of-session including significant preparation for each meeting.
- 2 Total annual remuneration is GST inclusive (where applicable) and excludes any travel costs for interstate members.

Fraud and corruption control and risk management

Consistent with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act, the Clerk's Instructions and associated financial management policies promote the proper use of the department's resources. The Clerk's Instructions are reviewed regularly to ensure their applicability and coverage.

The department has in place appropriate fraud prevention, detection, investigation and reporting mechanisms that comply with the Commonwealth Fraud and Corruption Control Framework. No incidents of fraud or corruption were detected in this reporting period.

During 2023–24, risk areas and associated controls and mitigation strategies were routinely considered by senior management and reported to the department's Audit Committee. The framework for managing risk and fraud control is revised regularly and made available to staff on the department's intranet. Risk oversight and management is a standing agenda item for meetings of the program managers.

Significant non-compliance issues with finance law

The department did not identify any instances of significant non-compliance with the finance law during 2023–24. The finance law incorporates the PGPA Act, any rules and instruments created under the PGPA Act, and appropriation and supply Acts.

External scrutiny

The Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee and the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations, Staffing and Security provide means by which senators and others may monitor the department's performance. Matters relating to the structure and functions of the parliamentary departments may also be examined by the Appropriations, Staffing and Security Committee.

Estimates hearings are an important accountability mechanism in which senators may test advice provided by departmental officers and evaluate the department's performance. The Clerk and officers of the department appeared before the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee on 23 October 2023, 12 February 2024 and 28 May 2024. Matters considered by the Committee included the Senate committee system and its workload, and further budget supplementation for the department. The department also provided responses to 167 estimates questions on notice, which are published on the committee's web pages.

The department's activities were also scrutinised by both an internal audit service provider and the Australian National Audit Office, although that office did not conduct any performance audits covering the department's activities during the reporting period.

The department was not subject to any judicial or administrative tribunal decisions which had, or may have, a significant impact on the department's operations.

Management of human resources

Staffing

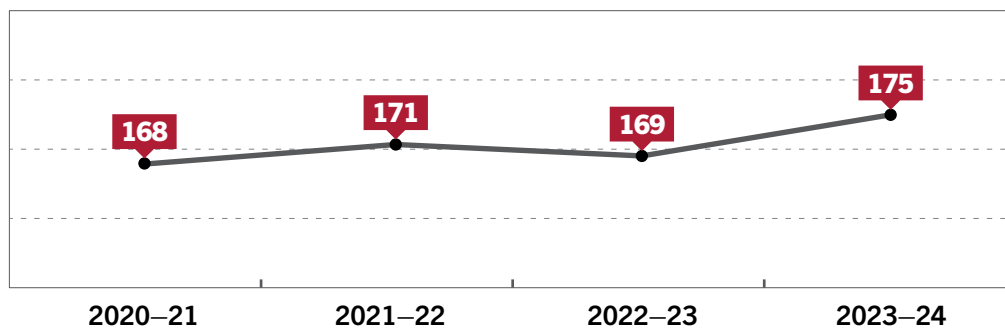
The Clerk of the Senate is appointed by the President of the Senate under subsection 58(1) of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*, after consulting senators. Staff are engaged under section 22 of that Act.

Additional support was provided to the department through secondment arrangements with other Commonwealth and state and territory government agencies, such as the Office of Parliamentary Counsel, as well as by graduates participating in the Parliament of Australia Graduate Program.

Figure 19 shows that the average full-time equivalent staffing level for 2023–24 was 175, an increase from 169 in 2022–23.

Further staffing statistics are provided in Appendix 2.

Figure 19 – Full-time equivalent staff numbers, 2020–21 to 2023–24



The department’s learning and development framework supports staff to develop and maintain relevant skills and knowledge. Participation in learning activities is actively promoted and encouraged. In 2023–24, a total of 31 learning activities were offered, all of which focused on skills for the workplace, leadership, diversity, health and wellbeing and role-specific learning.

Thirteen learning activities were internal training sessions, with a focus on parliamentary skills and knowledge. Continued learning and development in parliamentary procedure and practice remains a priority for the department, to support our core work providing accurate and timely procedural advice.

In addition to the above learning and development opportunities, the department coordinated an additional three sessions for staff in specific roles where there was a need to focus on mental health, physical health and safety (WH&S), and social wellbeing and inclusion.

Financial assistance or paid leave (or both) is also available under the department's Study Assistance scheme, to assist ongoing staff to undertake formal studies relevant to their career development and the department's operational requirements. In 2023–24, 14 employees accessed Study Assistance.

The department participated in the 2024 Australian Public Service Employee Census, administered by the Australian Public Service Commission, in May and June 2024.

The department's results are posted publicly on the Australian Parliament House website in line with the release of the APS-wide results.

Employment arrangements

The remuneration of the Clerk of the Senate, who is the holder of a statutory office, is determined by the President of the Senate after consultation with the Remuneration Tribunal.

The department's five Senior Executive Service (SES) employees are covered by determinations made under subsection 24(1) of the Parliamentary Service Act.

The department's 191 non-SES employees (including casual or sessional employees and those on long-term paid leave) are covered by the Department of the Senate Enterprise Agreement 2024–2026.

On 28 March 2023, the government's Public Sector Workplace Relations Policy 2023 was released. As a non-APS agency, the department was able to adopt common conditions agreed through the centralised bargaining process for APS agencies, despite not being a participant in the APS bargaining process. The department issued its Notice of Employee Representational Rights to non-SES employees on 30 June 2023 and conducted 9 bargaining meetings to finalise the Department of the Senate Enterprise Agreement 2024–2026. The voting period for the agreement was 27 February to 1 March 2024. The vote resulted in positive outcome (96.3% voting in favour). The Fair Work Commission approved the agreement on 22 March 2024 and the agreement commenced on 29 March 2024.

The enterprise agreement provided for a 4% salary increase from 9 November 2023, a 3.8% salary increase from 9 November 2024 and a 3.4% salary increase from 9 November 2025. Consistent with the government's policy, a one-off payment was processed on payday 14 March 2024, following the 'yes' vote.

Under the department's workplace arrangements, staff have access to a range of entitlements, including leave, flexible work arrangements, study assistance, a workplace support allowance, salary packaging, guaranteed minimum superannuation payments and other allowances.

Employees can also use other services offered at Parliament House, including the sporting facilities and the Parliamentary Library.

None of the department's workplace arrangements provide for performance pay. No employees had an Individual Flexibility Arrangement with the Clerk under the enterprise agreement.

All employees work at Parliament House, Canberra.

Work health and safety

The department promotes and protects the physical and mental health and wellbeing of its workers and others in the workplace by providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment and meeting its duties and obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

The department notifies work health and safety incidents to Comcare as required by the Work Health and Safety Act. There were no incidents notified to Comcare in 2023–24. The department was not subject to any investigation or compliance or enforcement measure under that Act.

Workplace diversity and inclusion

The department's Policy on Workplace Diversity and Inclusion and action plan identifying shared actions across the diversity groups was published on 9 May 2023.

The diversity groups identified in the Policy are: First Nations' people, people with disabilities, gender diversity, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, mature aged persons, carers, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual + (LGBTQIA+) persons. Neurodivergent persons was included as an identified group in November 2023.

Specific action plans for each diversity group continue to be developed and reviewed. Workshops led by program managers and other senior leaders continue to be held with interested staff.

Action plans are regularly reviewed and updated as required, to keep up to date with developments in best practice, address intersecting diversities, or to incorporate and align with whole-of-Parliamentary Service measures.

The department continues to participate in meetings of the Parliamentary Departments, including through the new Access and Inclusion Champions Group, to discuss our respective departments' diversity and inclusion activities, and potential for further cross-parliamentary activities.

The department has expanded the scope of diversity information employees can provide using our HR information management system, Aurion. This will supplement the diversity information that is collected through the APS Census, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's annual Commonwealth Public Sector Reporting, and through our recruitment process, which we will continue to refine.

The department will use the information available to us through these data collection and reporting mechanisms to improve our measurement and reporting of diversity characteristics, including in future annual reports, and to further strengthen our strategies to support workplace diversity and inclusion.

Ethical standards and behaviour

The department works within a strong ethical framework guided by the Parliamentary Service Values, Parliamentary Service Employment Principles and the Parliamentary Service Code of Conduct set out in the Parliamentary Service Act.

New staff are inducted and advised of the department's standards for conduct, performance and behaviour.

Breaches of the Parliamentary Service Code of Conduct are taken seriously and managed appropriately according to the Parliamentary Service Act. In 2023–24, no employees were investigated for suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Management of financial resources

Procurement

The department applies the requirements of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act and the Commonwealth Procurement Rules. No issues were identified with the department's procurement practices during the reporting period. The department supports small business participation in the Commonwealth Government procurement market. Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and Small Enterprise participation statistics are available on the Department of Finance's website. The department has adopted the Commonwealth Contracting Suite for low-risk procurements valued under \$200,000 and electronic systems and processes are used to facilitate on-time payment performance.

Consultancy and non-consultancy contracts

The department engages consultants to provide specialist expertise when not available within the department, or where an independent assessment is desirable.

The department uses various selection processes to engage consultants including open tender, selective tender, direct sourcing, a panel of recognised or pre-eminent experts, or consultants who have previously undertaken work for the department or are known to have the requisite skills.

Decisions to engage consultants during 2023–24 were made in accordance with the PGPA Act and related regulations, including the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and relevant internal policies.

Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on reportable consultancy and non-consultancy contracts. Information on the value of reportable contracts is available on the AusTender website.

Expenditure on reportable consultancy contracts

Reportable consultancy contracts 2023–24	Number	Expenditure¹ \$
New contracts entered into during the reporting period	2	79,129
Ongoing contracts entered into during a previous reporting period	5	205,190
Total	7	284,319

Organisations receiving a share of the reportable consultancy contract expenditure 2023–24	Expenditure¹ \$
Synergy Group Australia	137,836
Ashurst Australia	68,055
KPMG	29,182
Elizabeth Montano	16,797
McBeath Pty Ltd	11,086
Total	262,956

1 Expenditure is calculated on a cash basis and includes GST where applicable.

During 2023–24, two new consultancy contracts were entered into involving total expenditure of \$0.08m. In addition, five ongoing consultancy contracts were active during the period, involving total actual expenditure of \$0.21m.

This amount does not include \$0.18m for the provision of independent legal advice supporting the work of the two legislative scrutiny committees and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights.

Expenditure on reportable non-consultancy contracts

Reportable non-consultancy contracts 2023–24	Number	Expenditure¹ \$
New contracts entered into during the reporting period	6	147,767
Ongoing contracts entered into during a previous reporting period	14	404,717
Total	20	552,484

Organisations receiving a share of the reportable non-consultancy contract expenditure 2023–24	Expenditure¹ \$
Design Craft	93,261
Technology One	92,191
Manuka News	63,858
Aurion Corporation	50,727
Expense8 Pty Ltd	45,961
Micro Focus	30,709
Acendre	28,136
Total	404,843

1 Expenditure is calculated on a cash basis and includes GST where applicable.

Report on financial performance

Overview

In 2023–24, the department was appropriated \$26.97m by the *Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2023-2024*.

The department ended the financial year with an operating loss of \$1.12m (excluding asset-related adjustments). While additional ongoing funding was agreed in the 2023–24 Budget, the demand for the department’s services continued at an elevated level, particularly in relation to committee support.

Net results

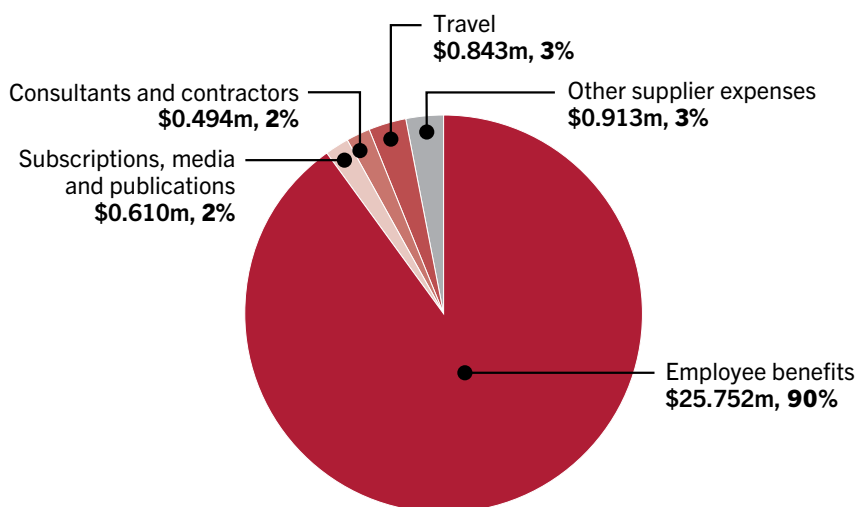
The following table outlines a summary of financial results between 2022–23 and 2023–24:

Statement of comprehensive income	2023–24 (\$'000)	2022–23 (\$'000)	Variance (\$'000)	Variance %
Total own-source revenue	526	499	27	5.4%
Total revenue from government	26,972	23,937	3,035	12.7%
Total expenses	28,854	26,568	2,286	8.6%
Net surplus/(deficit)*	(1,356)	(2,132)		

* including asset-related adjustments

The department’s operating expenses for 2023–24 were \$28.61m (excluding asset-related adjustments). The majority of the expenditure is on employee benefits (\$25.75m), with the remaining ten per cent on supplier related expenses. A further breakdown of the proportion of expenses is shown in figure 20.

Figure 20 – Expenses by type 2023–24



Financial position

The following table outlines a summary of financial position between 2022–23 and 2023–24:

Statement of financial position	2023–24 (\$'000)	2022–23 (\$'000)	Variance (\$'000)	Variance %
Total assets	16,262	17,068	(806)	-4.7%
Total liabilities	8,819	8,562	257	3.0%
Equity/Net assets	7,443	8,506	(1,063)	-12.5%

As at 30 June 2024, the department’s net equity was \$7.44m. Most of the assets and liabilities are of a financial nature, with the largest asset balance being appropriation and other receivables (\$13.64m). Most of the department’s liabilities relate to employee provisions (\$7.61m) and the remainder largely to short term payables (\$1.18m) in relation to accrued salaries and trade payables. The reduction in equity relates to the deficit described above.

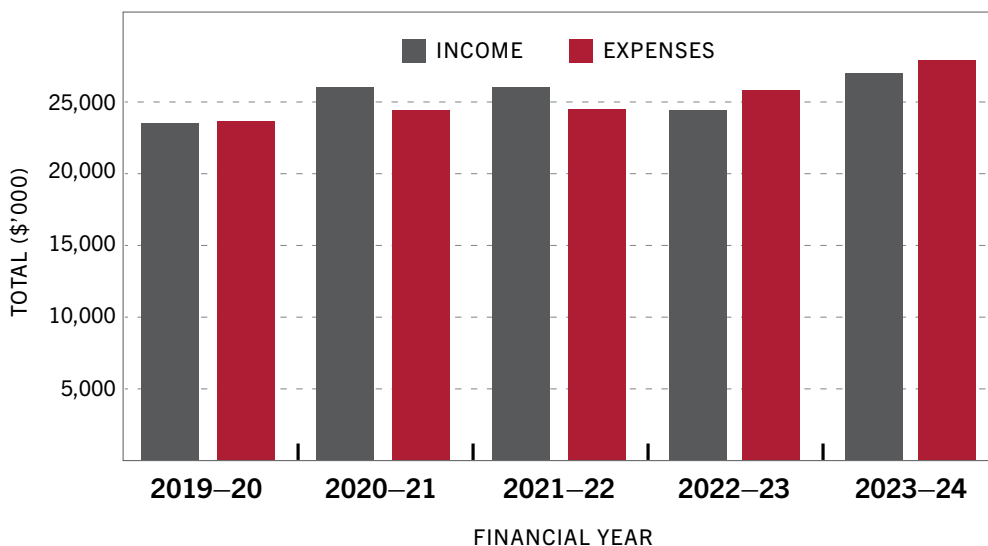
Entity resource statement

The entity resource statement provides additional information about the funding sources that the department had access to during the year. Appendix 1 details the resources available to the department during 2023–24 and sets out a summary of total expenses for Outcome 1.

Sustainability

The department's financial performance for the last five years is demonstrated below:

Figure 21 – Financial performance 2019–20 to 2023–24



The demand for the department's services is driven by the needs of the Senate and senators. The previous financial year's high level of demand for services has continued, particularly in relation to committee support. These factors have put pressure on the department's budget and resulted in a significant operating loss in the 2023–24 financial year. The loss has been funded from cash reserves generated through prior year unspent appropriations.

The current level of activity is expected to continue until the next Federal election. The department continues to have sufficient cash reserves to meet short and long term liabilities and is financially sustainable.

Other information

Advertising and market research

In 2023–24, the department did not conduct any advertising campaigns or market research.

Child Safe Framework

The Department of the Senate is committed to promoting a culture that does not permit or tolerate child harm or abuse, and protects children by creating and maintaining behaviours and practices that are safe for children.

The majority of the department's involvement with children is through the work of the Parliamentary Education Office, which provides education programs to school children at Parliament House, through outreach visits to schools and through video conference programs. From time to time, the department may also have contact with children through our work providing secretariat support to Parliamentary committees.

For example, committee inquiries may involve interaction with children during hearings or site visits. The department may also interact with children through our support of special events, such as Parliament House open day.

We are compliant with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, and the department has in place a Policy on Child Safety detailing its commitment to child safety and what is required by departmental employees to support this commitment. In 2023–24, the department undertook a risk assessment which determined that the overall child safety risk rating for the department remains 'low'. Consistent with previous years, the assessment confirms the appropriateness of the department's child safety measures, training and systems.

The department understands that managing child safety risks is an ongoing process and will continue to regularly analyse and review the measures we have in place to mitigate risks.

Disability reporting mechanism

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 (the Strategy) is the overarching framework for inclusive policies, programs and infrastructure that will support people with disability to participate in all areas of Australian life. The Strategy sets out where practical changes will be made to improve the lives of people with disability in Australia. It acts to ensure the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are incorporated into Australia's policies and programs that affect people with disability, their families and carers. All levels of government have committed to deliver more comprehensive and visible reporting under the Strategy. A range of reports on progress of the Strategy's actions and outcome areas will be published and available at www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/ads.

The department seeks to align its actions to improve accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities with this strategy including through work with other parliamentary departments through the Access and Inclusion Champions Group.

Freedom of information

While the Department of the Senate is not subject to the application of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act), the department's policy is to comply with the intent of the Act in relation to its administrative records to the extent practicable, having regard to the legal issues which may arise in the absence of the protections afforded by the Act. In this reporting period, the department received one request for information in relation to its administrative records which was complied with in full.

Ecologically sustainable development and environmental performance

The Department of the Senate is located within the Australian Parliament House; therefore, all facilities and environmental management activities are undertaken by DPS. DPS reports on its environmental performance in accordance with the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) in its annual report.

APS Net Zero Emissions 2030—Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

The below table reports on emissions data relevant to the Department of the Senate.

Table 1: Greenhouse gas emissions inventory (location-based method), 2023–24

Emission Source	Scope 1 kg CO2-e	Scope 2 kg CO2-e	Scope 3 kg CO2-e	Total kg CO2-e
Electricity	N/A	-	-	-
Natural Gas	-	N/A	-	-
Solid waste*	N/A	N/A	-	-
Refrigerants*	-	N/A	N/A	-
Fleet and other vehicles	409	N/A	104	514
Domestic commercial flights	N/A	N/A	77,148	77,148
Domestic hire car*	N/A	N/A	849	849
Domestic travel accommodation*	N/A	N/A	22,888	22,888
Other Energy	-	N/A	-	-
Total kg CO2-e	409	-	100,988	101,398

Note: the table above presents emissions related to electricity usage using the location-based accounting method. CO2-e = Carbon Dioxide Equivalent.

*indicates emission sources collected for the first time in 2023-24. The quality of data is expected to improve over time as emissions reporting matures.

Further detail about Parliament House emissions (including electricity, natural gas and solid waste data) was unable to be separated from the DPS data and has been included in their annual report.



Financial statements

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Independent Auditor's Report



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the President of the Senate

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Department of the Senate (the Entity) for the year ended 30 June 2024:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*; and
- (b) present fairly the financial position of the Entity as at 30 June 2024 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

The financial statements of the Entity, which I have audited, comprise the following as at 30 June 2024 and for the year then ended:

- Statement by the Accountable Authority and Chief Finance Officer;
- Statement of comprehensive income;
- Statement of financial position;
- Statement of changes in equity;
- Cash flow statement; and
- Notes to and forming part of the financial statements, comprising material accounting policy information and other explanatory information.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Entity in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements for financial statement audits conducted by the Auditor-General and their delegates. These include the relevant independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) to the extent that they are not in conflict with the *Auditor-General Act 1997*. I have also fulfilled my other responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Accountable Authority's responsibility for the financial statements

As the Accountable Authority of the Entity, the Clerk of the Senate is responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the Act) for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures and the rules made under the Act. The Clerk of the Senate is also responsible for such internal control as the Clerk of the Senate determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Clerk of the Senate is responsible for assessing the ability of the Entity to continue as a going concern, taking into account whether the Entity's operations will cease as a result of an administrative restructure or for any other reason. The Clerk of the Senate is also responsible for disclosing, as

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Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting, unless the assessment indicates that it is not appropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements


My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control;
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Accountable Authority;
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Accountable Authority's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern; and
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Accountable Authority regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Australian National Audit Office



Colin Bienke
Audit Principal

Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra
26 September 2024

Certification by the Clerk of the Senate and the Chief Finance Officer



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

STATEMENT BY THE ACCOUNTABLE AUTHORITY AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2024 comply with subsection 42(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the department will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

(Richard Pye)
Clerk of the Senate

26 September 2024

(Fiona O'Loughlin)
Chief Finance Officer

26 September 2024

Statement of comprehensive income

for the period ended 30 June 2024

	Notes	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
EXPENSES				
Employee benefits	1.1A	25,752	23,805	24,712
Suppliers	1.1B	5,369	4,854	5,050
Depreciation and amortisation	2.2	241	205	207
Loss on disposal of assets	2.2	-	4	-
Total expenses		31,362	28,868	29,969
LESS:				
OWN-SOURCE INCOME				
Revenue from contracts with customers	1.2A	516	499	450
Revenue from sale of right of use asset		10	-	-
Other revenue	1.2B	2,508	2,300	2,361
Total own-source income		3,034	2,799	2,811
NET COST OF SERVICES		28,328	26,069	27,158
Revenue from government		26,972	23,937	26,972
Surplus / (Deficit)		(1,356)	(2,132)	(186)

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Original budget figures are those published in the department's 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statements.

Statement of financial position

as at 30 June 2024

	Notes	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
ASSETS				
Financial assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	2.1A	213	226	204
Trade and other receivables	2.1B	13,638	14,313	15,773
Total financial assets		13,851	14,539	15,977
Non-financial assets				
Plant and equipment	2.2	1,948	2,051	2,066
Intangibles	2.2	57	99	73
Inventories		124	122	118
Prepayments		282	257	226
Total non-financial assets		2,411	2,529	2,483
Total assets		16,262	17,068	18,460
LIABILITIES				
Payables				
Suppliers	2.3A	429	317	139
Other payables	2.3A	750	781	606
Total payables		1,179	1,098	745
Interest bearing liabilities				
Leases	2.3B	32	50	30
Total interest bearing liabilities		32	50	30
Provisions				
Employee provisions	3A	7,608	7,414	7,118
Total provisions		7,608	7,414	7,118
Total liabilities		8,819	8,562	7,893
Net assets		7,443	8,506	10,567
EQUITY				
Contributed equity		3,260	2,967	3,260
Reserves		11,495	11,495	11,495
Accumulated deficit		(7,312)	(5,956)	(4,188)
Total equity		7,443	8,506	10,567

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Original budget figures are those published in the department's 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statements.

Statement of changes in equity

for the period ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
CONTRIBUTED EQUITY			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	2,967	2,702	2,967
Transactions with owners			
Contribution by owners			
Equity injections - appropriation (DCB)	293	265	293
Total transactions with owners	293	265	293
Closing balance as at 30 June	3,260	2,967	3,260
RETAINED EARNINGS			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	(5,956)	(3,824)	(4,002)
Comprehensive income			
Surplus / (Deficit) for the period	(1,356)	(2,132)	(186)
Total comprehensive income	(1,356)	(2,132)	(186)
Closing balance as at 30 June	(7,312)	(5,956)	(4,188)
ASSET REVALUATION RESERVE			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	11,495	11,495	11,495
Closing balance as at 30 June	11,495	11,495	11,495
TOTAL EQUITY			
Opening balance			
Balance carried forward from previous period	8,506	10,373	10,460
Comprehensive income			
Surplus / (Deficit) for the period	(1,356)	(2,132)	(186)
Total comprehensive income	(1,356)	(2,132)	(186)
Transactions with owners			
Contribution by owners			
Equity injections - appropriation (DCB)	293	265	293
Closing balance as at 30 June	7,443	8,506	10,567

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Original budget figures are those published in the department's 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statements.

Amounts appropriated which are designated as equity injections for a year (less any formal reductions) and Capital Budgets (DCB) are recognised directly in contributed equity in that year.

Cash flow statement

as at 30 June 2024

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Appropriations	28,703	26,038	26,972
Sale of goods and rendering of services	434	545	450
Net GST received	188	179	233
Other	10	-	-
Total cash received	29,335	26,762	27,655
Cash used			
Employees	25,638	23,382	24,712
Suppliers	2,913	2,520	2,922
Section 74 receipts transferred to OPA	837	849	-
Total cash used	29,388	26,751	27,634
Net cash (to)/from operating activities	(53)	11	21
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Cash used			
Purchase of plant and equipment	96	378	293
Total cash used	96	378	293
Net cash used by investing activities	(96)	(378)	(293)
FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Contributed equity	153	406	293
Total cash received	153	406	293
Cash used			
Principal payments of lease liabilities	17	17	21
Total cash used	17	17	21
Net cash from financing activities	136	389	272
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held	(13)	22	-
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	226	204	204
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	213	226	204

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Original budget figures are those published in the department's 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statements.

Section 74 (of PGPA Act) receipts are not separately identified in the Portfolio Budget Statements.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Overview

Note 1: Financial performance

Note 2: Financial position

Note 3: People and relationships

Note 4: Funding

Note 5: Explanation of major budget variances

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Overview

The department is the secretariat to the Australian Senate. All functions derive from this purpose and its work is substantially driven by the requirements of the Senate and senators. The department is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity, domiciled in Australia. The registered office is Parliament House, Canberra.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements are required by section 42 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act).

The financial statements and notes have been prepared in accordance with:

- the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting Rule) 2015* (FRR), and
- Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations – Simplified disclosures for Tier 2 Entities under AASB 1060 issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and are in accordance with historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars and values are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified.

New accounting standards

All new/revised/amending standards or interpretations that were issued prior to the sign-off date and are applicable to the current reporting period did not have a material impact on the department's financial statements.

Future Australian Accounting Standard requirements

No new or revised pronouncements were issued by the AASB prior to the finalisation of the financial statements which are expected to have a material impact on the department in future reporting periods.

Taxation

The department is exempt from all forms of taxation except Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) and the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Events after the reporting period

No events have occurred after balance date that should be brought to account or noted in the 2023-24 financial statements.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 1: Financial performance

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Note 1.1: Expenses		
Note 1.1A: Employee benefits		
Wages and salaries	19,332	17,412
Superannuation		
Defined benefit plans	1,158	1,127
Defined contribution plans	2,218	2,034
Leave and other entitlements	3,044	3,232
Total employee benefits	25,752	23,805

Accounting policy

Superannuation

Employees of the department are members of the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS), the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme (PSS), Public Sector Superannuation accumulation plan (PSSap) or other elected defined contribution schemes.

The CSS and PSS are defined benefit schemes for the Commonwealth. The PSSap is a defined contribution scheme.

The liability for defined benefits is recognised in the financial statements of the Australian Government and is settled by the Australian Government in due course. This liability is reported by the Department of Finance as an administered item.

The department makes employer contributions to the relevant employees' defined benefit schemes at rates determined by an actuary to be sufficient to meet the current cost to the government and accounts for the contributions as if they were contributions to defined contribution plans.

Leave and other entitlements

Accounting policies for leave and other entitlements are contained at note 3A – Employee Provisions.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'00
Note 1.1B: Suppliers		
Goods and services		
Employee related supplier expenses	197	168
Consultants and contractors	361	334
Audit fees	224	208
Travel	843	768
Hire charges and hospitality	175	134
Subscriptions, media and publications	610	525
General office expenses	435	450
Office accommodation	2,417	2,211
Total goods and services	5,262	4,798
Goods supplied	274	309
Services rendered	4,988	4,489
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	5,262	4,798
Other supplier expenses		
Workers compensation	107	56
Total other supplier expenses	107	56
Total supplier expenses	5,369	4,854

Audit fees include internal audit expenses and ANAO's estimated audit services fee (a resource received free of charge).

Accounting policy

Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets

The department has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of assets that have a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (less than \$10,000 per asset). The department recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Note 1.2: Own-source income		
Note 1.2A: Revenue from contracts with customers		
Sale of goods	60	60
Rendering of services	456	439
Total revenue from contracts with customers	516	499
Disaggregation of revenue from contracts with customers		
Major product / service type:		
Provision of corporate services	121	115
Provision of parliamentary education services	335	324
Sale of goods	60	60
	516	499
Type of customer:		
Australian Government entities (related parties)	476	458
Non-government entities	40	41
	516	499
Timing of transfer of goods and services:		
Overtime	372	365
Point in time	144	134
	516	499
Note 1.2B: Other revenue		
Resources received free of charge		
Office accommodation at Parliament House	2,417	2,211
Financial statement audit services from ANAO	91	89
Total other revenue	2,508	2,300

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Accounting policy

Revenue

The department receives revenue from appropriations, the rendering of services and the sale of goods.

Revenue from sale of goods is recognised when control has been transferred to the buyer. The department reviews contracts with customers to ascertain if the contract is in scope of AASB 15 and if the performance obligations are required by an enforceable contract and they are sufficiently specific to enable the department to determine when they have been satisfied.

The department had no remaining or unsatisfied performance obligations as at 30 June 2024.

The transaction price is the total amount of consideration to which the department expects to be entitled in exchange for transferring promised goods or services to a customer. The consideration promised in a contract with a customer may include fixed amounts, variable amounts, or both.

Receivables for goods and services, which have 30 day terms, are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance account. Collectability of debts is reviewed at the end of the reporting period. Allowances are made when collectability of the debt is no longer probable.

Resources received free of charge

Resources received free of charge are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income as revenue where a fair value can be reliably measured and the services would have been purchased if they had not been provided free of charge. Use of those resources is recognised as an expense.

The department's resources received free of charge relate to audit services from the Australian National Audit Office and accommodation at Parliament House from the Department of Parliamentary Services.

Revenue from government

The departmental appropriation for the financial year (adjusted for any formal additions and reductions) is recognised as revenue from government when the department gains control of the appropriation. Appropriations receivable are recognised at their nominal amounts.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 2: Financial position

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Note 2.1: Financial assets		
Note 2.1A: Cash and cash equivalents		
Cash at bank	213	226
Total cash and cash equivalents	213	226
Note 2.1B: Trade and other receivables		
Appropriation receivable	13,511	14,267
Goods and services	88	8
GST receivable (from ATO)	20	38
Other	19	-
Total trade and other receivables	13,638	14,313

Accounting policy

Financial assets

Financial assets are financial instruments

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and deposits in bank accounts.

Trade and other receivables are recognised at nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance account. Collectability of debts is continually reviewed. Allowances are made on an expected loss basis.

Financial assets are recognised when the department becomes party to a contract and has a legal right to receive cash. Loans and receivables are assessed for impairment on initial recognition. Impairment allowances are made on a lifetime expected loss basis.

Financial assets are derecognised when the contractual rights expire or upon payment.

The fair values of the department's financial assets and liabilities approximate their carrying amounts.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	
	\$'000	\$'000

Note 2.2: Non-financial assets

Reconciliation of opening and closing balances of plant and equipment (P&E) and intangibles

	P&E	Intangibles – computer software	Total
As at 1 July 2023			
Gross book value	2,411	347	2,758
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(360)	(248)	(608)
Total as at 1 July 2023	2,051	99	2,150
Additions by purchase	96	-	96
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(173)	(42)	(215)
Depreciation on right-of-use assets	(26)	-	(26)
Total as at 30 June 2024	1,948	57	2,005
Total as at 30 June 2024 represented by:			
Gross book value	2,507	347	2,854
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(559)	(290)	(849)
Total as at 30 June 2024	1,948	57	2,005
Carrying amounts of right-of-use assets	24	-	24

Right-of-use and intangible assets are measured and carried at cost. Plant and equipment assets are carried at fair value following initial recognition at cost.

Contractual commitments for the acquisition of plant, equipment and intangible assets

The department has no (2023: nil) contractual commitments payable within 1 year for the acquisition of plant and equipment.

Amounts for capital commitments are GST inclusive.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Accounting policy

Acquisition of assets

Purchases of non-financial assets are initially recognised at cost in the statement of financial position, except for purchases costing less than \$2,000, which are expensed in the year of acquisition (other than where they form part of a group of similar items which are significant in total).

The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken. Financial assets are initially measured at fair value.

Plant and equipment

Revaluations

Following initial recognition at cost, plant and equipment assets (excluding right-of-use assets) are carried at fair value less subsequent accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Carrying amounts are reviewed every year to determine if an independent valuation is required. The regularity of independent valuations depends upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

Revaluation adjustments are made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment is credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that it reverses a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised through operating result. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets are recognised directly in the surplus/deficit except to the extent that they reverse a previous revaluation increment for that class. Upon revaluation, any accumulated depreciation is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset.

Depreciation

Depreciable plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to the department, using in all cases the straight-line method of depreciation.

Depreciation rates (useful lives), residual values and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current, and future reporting periods, as appropriate.

Depreciation and amortisation rates applying to each category of depreciable asset are based on the following useful lives:

Asset class	2024	2023
Plant and equipment	5 to 15 years	5 to 15 years
Furniture and fittings	5 to 100 years	5 to 100 years

The depreciation rates for right-of-use assets are based on the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the asset or the end of the lease term.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Impairment

All assets were assessed for indications of impairment at 30 June 2024 and none were identified.

Where indications of impairment exist, the asset's recoverable amount is estimated and an impairment loss recognised if the asset's recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount. The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value less costs of disposal and its value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from the asset.

Derecognition

An item of plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no further future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal. Gains or losses from disposal of plant and equipment are recognised when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

Lease right-of-use assets

Leased right-of-use assets are capitalised at the commencement date of the lease and comprise of the initial lease liability amount, initial direct costs incurred when entering into the lease less any lease incentives received. These assets are accounted for by Commonwealth lessees as separate asset classes to corresponding assets owned outright, but included in the same column as where the corresponding underlying assets would be presented if they were owned.

Following initial application, an impairment review is undertaken for any right-of-use lease assets that shows indicators of impairment and an impairment loss is recognised against any asset that is impaired. Lease right-of-use assets continue to be measured at cost after initial recognition in Commonwealth agency, General Government Sector and Whole of Government financial statements.

Fair value measurement

All plant and equipment is measured at fair value in the statement of financial position. When estimating fair value, market prices (with adjustments) are used where available. Where market prices are not available, depreciated replacement cost is used. A reconciliation of movements in plant and equipment is included above.

Intangibles

The department's intangible assets comprise of internally developed software and purchased software for internal use. These assets are carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Software is amortised on a straight-line basis over its anticipated useful life. The useful life of the department's software is 3 to 7 years (2023: 3 to 7 years).

All software assets were assessed for indications of impairment as at 30 June 2024

Inventories

Inventories held for sale are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Note 2.3: Payables		
Note 2.3A: Supplier and other payables		
Trade creditors and accruals	429	317
Salaries and wages	588	611
Superannuation	93	90
FBT payable (to ATO)	69	80
Total supplier and other payables	1,179	1,098
Note 2.3B: Interest bearing liabilities		
Leases	32	50
Total interest bearing liabilities	32	50
Lease liabilities analysis		
The department's lease liability maturity profile is as follows:		
Within 1 year	18	21
Between 1 to 5 years	14	29
Total lease liabilities	32	50

The above lease disclosure should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Contingent liabilities and contingent assets

The department had no quantifiable or unquantifiable contingent assets or liabilities as at 30 June 2024 (2023: nil).

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Accounting policy

Payables

Trade creditors and accruals are financial instruments.

Supplier and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced). Supplier and other payables are derecognised on payment. Supplier payables are settled within 20 days.

The liabilities for salaries and superannuation recognised as at 30 June 2024 represents outstanding contributions for the final pay fortnight of the year.

For all new contracts entered into, the department considers whether the contract is, or contains, a lease. A lease is defined as 'a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration'.

Once it has been determined that a contract is, or contains, a lease, the lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, if that rate is readily determinable, or the department's incremental borrowing rate.

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification to the lease. When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right of use asset or profit and loss depending on the nature of the reassessment or modification.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Note 2.4: Current / non-current distinction for assets and liabilities		
Assets expected to be recovered in:		
No more than 12 months		
Cash and cash equivalents	213	226
Trade and other receivables	13,638	14,313
Prepayments	282	257
Plant and equipment (right-of-use assets)	18	21
Inventories	124	122
Total no more than 12 months	14,275	14,939
More than 12 months		
Plant and equipment (excluding right-of-use)	1,916	2,001
Plant and equipment (right-of-use assets)	14	29
Intangibles – computer software	57	99
Total more than 12 months	1,987	2,129
Total assets	16,262	17,068
Liabilities expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months		
Suppliers	429	317
Other payables	750	781
Leases	18	21
Employee provisions	1,679	1,596
Total no more than 12 months	2,876	2,715
More than 12 months		
Leases	14	29
Employee provisions	5,929	5,818
Total more than 12 months	5,943	5,847
Total liabilities	8,819	8,562

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3: People and relationships

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
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Note 3A: Employee provisions

Leave

Annual leave	2,275	2,183
Long service leave	5,333	5,231
Total employee provisions	7,608	7,414

Accounting policy

Employee benefits

Liabilities for 'short-term employee benefits' (as defined in AASB 119 Employee Benefits) and termination benefits due within twelve months of the end of the reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

The liability for employee benefits includes provision for annual leave and long service leave. Leave provisions involve assumptions based on the expected tenure of existing staff, patterns of leave claims and payouts, future salary movements and future discount rates.

The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that will apply at the time the leave is taken, plus the department's employer superannuation contribution rates, and applicable on-costs, to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination.

The liability for long service leave has been determined using the shorthand method issued by the Department of Finance. The estimate of the present value of the liability takes into account attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and enterprise agreements.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3B: Key management personnel remuneration

Key management personnel are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the department, directly or indirectly, including any director (whether executive or otherwise) of the department.¹

The department has determined the key management personnel to be the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Clerk Assistants and the Usher of the Black Rod. Key management personnel remuneration is reported in the table below.

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Key management personnel remuneration		
Short-term employee benefits	1,618	1,590
Post-employment benefits	250	243
Other long-term employee benefits	97	118
Total key management personnel remuneration	1,965	1,951

The total number of key management personnel included in the above table is six individuals (2023: six).

¹ The President of the Senate is not considered key management personnel. The powers of the President do not give rise to a capacity to plan, direct or control the activities of the department, or significantly influence the department in its financial or operating policy decisions.

On 1 July 2024, the department identified an error in the calculation of remuneration paid to a senior executive during 2023-24 financial year that resulted in an overpayment of \$19,399 and breach of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*. The senior executive was notified on 1 July 2024 and the amount was repaid on 4 July 2024. Appropriate actions have been taken to prevent a similar issue occurring in the future. The amount is not included in the remuneration totals above and a receivable has been recognised at Note 2.1B.

Prior year adjustment

An error was made in the prior year disclosure of key management personnel remuneration due to an understatement of the leave accrual which impacted the short-term and other long-term benefits. The revised disclosure (comparative above) does not impact the financial statements, other than Notes 3B and 3D, and is summarised below:

	Before adjustment \$'000	After adjustment \$'000	Net movement \$'000
Short-term employee benefits	1,577	1,590	13
Post-employment benefits	243	243	-
Other long-term employee benefits	33	118	85
Total key management personnel remuneration	1,853	1,951	98

Note 3C: Related party transactions

Related parties to the department are defined as key management personnel and close family members of key management personnel. A related party transaction is a transfer of resources, services or obligations between the department and a related party, regardless of whether a price is charged.

During 2023-24, there were no related party transactions (2023: nil).

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3D: Executive remuneration disclosure – Key management personnel

Name	Position title	Short-term benefits			Post-employment benefits			Other long-term benefits		Termination benefits \$	Total remuneration \$
		Base salary \$	Bonuses \$	Other benefits and allowances \$	Superannuation contributions \$	Long service leave \$	Other long-term benefits \$				
R Pye	Clerk of the Senate	393,460	-	1,767	61,589	15,859	-	-	-	472,675	
J Morris	Deputy Clerk of the Senate	234,151	-	20,482	47,810	21,165	-	-	-	323,608	
T Bryant	Clerk Assistant, Table	219,186	-	20,482	38,448	16,883	-	-	-	294,999	
R Callinan	Clerk Assistant, Procedure	235,355	-	20,482	31,576	13,676	-	-	-	301,089	
J Begley	Usher of the Black Rod	220,861	-	20,482	31,530	14,902	-	-	-	287,775	
T Matulick	Clerk Assistant, Committees	211,503	-	20,290	39,004	14,237	-	-	-	285,034	
Total¹		1,514,516	-	103,985	249,957	96,722	-	-	-	1,965,180	

¹ The total amounts outlined in the table above correspond with the disclosure at note 3B.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Prior year adjustment

An error was made in the 2023 executive remuneration disclosure due to an understatement of the leave accrual which impacted the short-term and other long-term benefits. The error did not impact the 2023 financial statements, other than Notes 3B and 3D, and is summarised below:

Name	Position title	2023 Short-term benefits			Other long-term benefits			Total remuneration	
		Base salary before adjustment	Base salary after adjustment	Net movement	Long service leave before adjustment	Long service leave after adjustment	Net movement		
		\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
R Pye	Clerk of the Senate	416,099	419,647	3,548	9,363	36,203	26,840	61,379	517,229
J Morris	Deputy Clerk of the Senate	255,725	260,456	4,731	5,789	22,105	16,316	73,715	356,276
T Bryant	Clerk Assistant, Table	180,704	183,868	3,164	4,197	15,191	10,994	64,930	263,989
R Callinan	Clerk Assistant, Procedure	202,921	203,577	656	4,691	9,195	4,503	58,196	270,968
J Begley	Usher of the Black Rod	201,375	201,272	(103)	4,675	12,206	7,531	58,135	271,613
T Matulick	Clerk Assistant, Committees	181,137	182,556	1,419	4,233	22,563	18,329	65,326	270,445
Total		1,437,961	1,451,376	13,415	32,948	117,463	84,513	381,681	1,950,520

² Other benefits, allowances and superannuation contributions were correct disclosed in 2023.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3E: Executive remuneration disclosure – Senior executives and other highly paid staff

During the reporting period, all the department senior executives were included in the key management personnel disclosed above (2023: nil).

The department did not have any other highly paid staff that meet the reporting threshold (2023: nil).

Accounting policy

Remuneration policies, practices and governance arrangements

The Clerk of the Senate's remuneration is determined by the President of the Senate, after consultation with the Remuneration Tribunal, under section 63 of the Parliamentary Service Act 1999. In practice, the advice of the tribunal and the determinations of the Presiding Officers fix the remuneration of the heads of the four parliamentary departments at the same level. All other Senior Executive Service (SES) staff are remunerated under determinations made by the Clerk of the Senate under subsection 24(1) of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*.

For many years the department's policy has been that changes in SES terms and conditions reflect equivalent changes for non-SES employees in the department's enterprise agreements.

The department's remuneration arrangements do not provide for performance pay for any staff. Staff can also use other services offered at Parliament House, including vehicle parking.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 4: Funding

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Note 4A: Annual appropriations (recoverable GST exclusive)		
Annual appropriation	26,972	23,937
Departmental capital budget (DCB) ¹	293	265
Adjustments to appropriation (PGPA Act – s. 74 receipts)	837	849
Total appropriation	28,102	25,051
Appropriation applied (current and prior years)	28,856	26,444
Variance	(754)	(1,393)

¹ The DCB is appropriated through the *Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2023–24*. It is not separately identified in the Appropriation Act.

Note 4B: Unspent annual appropriations (recoverable GST exclusive)

Departmental

<i>Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2021–22</i>	-	153
<i>Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2022–23</i>	265	14,340
<i>Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2023–24</i>	13,459	-
Total	13,724	14,493

Unspent appropriation amounts include the cash at bank balance as at 30 June.

Note 4C: Special appropriations managed through third party arrangements (recoverable GST exclusive)

Authority ¹

Department of Finance – <i>Parliamentary Superannuation Act 2004</i> , s. 18	3,009	2,856
Department of Finance – <i>Australian Constitution</i> , s. 66	774	749
Department of Finance – <i>Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017</i> , s. 59	22,088	22,020
Total	25,871	25,625

¹ Arrangements have been entered into with the Department of Finance to allow the department to draw upon these appropriations.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024 \$'000	2023 \$'000
Note 4D: Net cash appropriation arrangements		
Total comprehensive income – as per the Statement of Comprehensive Income	(1,356)	(2,132)
Plus: depreciation/amortisation of assets funded by appropriations (DCB) ¹	215	189
Plus: depreciation of right-of-use assets ²	26	16
Less: lease principal repayments	17	17
Net cash operating surplus	(1,132)	(1,944)

¹ The DCB is appropriated through the *Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2023–24*. It is not separately identified in the Appropriation Act.

² The inclusion of depreciation/amortisation expenses related to ROU leased assets and the lease liability principal repayment amount reflects the impact of AASB 16 Leases, which does not directly reflect a change in appropriation arrangements.

Notes to and forming part of the financial statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 5: Explanation of major budget variances

Explanation of major variance	Variance to budget \$'000	Variance to budget %	Affected line items
The department continued to experience high levels of demand for services required to support committees, which led to higher than anticipated salary expenses.	1,040	4%	Statement of comprehensive income: • Employee benefits
	926	4%	Cash Flow Statement: • Cash used – employees
The department's budget did not foresee the level of demand required to support committees, including increased venue hire and interstate travel costs.	(2,135)	-16%	Statement of financial position: • Trade and other receivables
	(3,214)	-43%	Statement of changes in equity: • Retained earnings
Appropriation applied (current and prior year) to service the expenses of the department was not anticipated at the time of the original budget.	1,731	6%	Cash Flow Statement: • Cash received – appropriations



Appendices

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- ▶ 2 – Staffing_____127
- ▶ 3 – Contact details_____131

Appendix 1 – Resources

Pursuant to paragraph 17AF(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*, the following table provides a summary of the department’s total resources and payments made during the reporting period and corresponds with the department’s portfolio budget statements for 2023–24.

Resource statement, 2023–24

	Actual available appropriations for 2023–24 \$'000 (a)	Payments made in 2023–24 \$'000 (b)	Balance remaining \$'000 (a – b)
Departmental appropriation			
Prior year departmental appropriations	14,493	14,228	265
Departmental appropriations ¹	28,102	14,643	13,459
Total departmental annual appropriations	42,595	28,871	13,724
Total resourcing and payments	42,595	28,871	13,724

¹ Includes an amount of \$0.265m for the 2023–24 departmental capital budget.

Expenses for outcome, 2023–24

	Budget 2023–24 \$'000 (a)	Actual expenses 2023–24 \$'000 (b)	Variation \$'000 (a – b)
Outcome 1: Advisory and administrative support services to enable the Senate and senators to fulfil their representative and legislative duties.			
Program 1: Advice and support - Secretariat support for the Senate and its committees, and advice and support to enable senators and others to participate in their meetings.			
Departmental expenses			
Departmental appropriation ¹	26,972	28,087	(1,115)
s74 External revenue ²	450	526	(76)
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year ³	2,547	2,749	(202)
Total expenses for Outcome 1	29,969	31,362	(1,393)

¹ Excludes the 2023-24 departmental capital budget

² Estimated expenses incurred in relation to receipts retained under section 74 of the PGPA Act 2013.

³ Expenses not requiring appropriation in the Budget year are made up of depreciation and amortisation expenses, audit fees and resources received free of charge where recognition of an expense is required.

	Budget 2023–24	Actual 2023–24
Average staffing level (number)	173	175

Appendix 2 – Staffing

The figures in these tables include staff on long-term paid leave, but exclude staff on leave without pay or on temporary movements out of the department at 30 June 2024.

Staff numbers, by classification and salary range, 30 June 2024

Classification	Salary (\$)	Total
Clerk of the Senate	473,820*	1
Deputy Clerk of the Senate (SES Band 2)	246,070 – 259,021	1
Clerk Assistants and Usher of the Black Rod (SES Band 1)	203,037 – 213,242	4
Parliamentary Executive Level (PEL 2)	157,240 – 168,126	24
Parliamentary Executive Level (PEL 1)	126,401 – 141,587	36
Australian Parliamentary Service (APS 6)	104,587 – 114,727	49
Australian Parliamentary Service (APS 5)	92,851 – 98,606	5
Australian Parliamentary Service (APS 4)	83,113 – 89,273	36
Australian Parliamentary Service (APS 3)	74,105 – 80,056	31
Australian Parliamentary Service (APS 2)	65,212 – 72,612	3
Australian Parliamentary Service (APS 1)	58,009 – 64,425	7

* Indicates total remuneration package

Staff numbers, by classification and gender category, 30 June 2024

Classification	Gender					Total
	Man/ Male	Woman/ Female	Non- binary	Prefers not to answer	Uses a different term	
Clerk of the Senate	1	-	-	-	-	1
Deputy Clerk of the Senate (SES Band 2)	-	1	-	-	-	1
Clerk Assistants and Usher of the Black Rod (SES Band 1)	2	2	-	-	-	4
PEL 2	12	12	-	-	-	24
PEL 1	9	27	-	-	-	36
APS 6	17	32	-	-	-	49
APS 5	1	4	-	-	-	5
APS 4	15	21	-	-	-	36
APS 3	11	20	-	-	-	31
APS 2	3	-	-	-	-	3
APS 1	4	3	-	-	-	7
Total	75	122	-	-	-	197

SES = Senior Executive Service, PEL = Parliamentary Executive Level, APS = Australian Parliamentary Service

Employees by gender

Gender	2023–2024		2022–2023 ¹	
	Ongoing	Non-ongoing	Ongoing	Non-ongoing
Man/Male	59	16	59	16
Woman/Female	100	22	96	26
Non-binary	-	-	-	-
Prefers not to answer	-	-	-	-
Uses a different term	-	-	-	-
Total	159	38	155	42

Full-time and part-time employees

Full-time or part-time	2023–2024		2022–2023 ¹	
	Ongoing	Non-ongoing	Ongoing	Non-ongoing
Full-time	144	12	139	17
Part-time	15	26	16	25
Total	159	38	155	42

Employees by classification

Classification	2023–2024		2022–2023 ¹	
	Ongoing	Non-ongoing	Ongoing	Non-ongoing
Clerk of the Senate	1	-	1	-
SES2	1	-	1	-
SES1	4	-	4	-
PEL2	24	-	21	-
PEL1	36	-	30	7
APS6	37	12	40	13
APS5	5	-	4	-
APS4	31	5	31	3
APS3	15	16	18	12
APS2	3	-	4	1
APS1	2	5	1	6
Total	159	38	155	42

1 The 2022-23 figures have been adjusted to include all staff employed at 30 June 2024.

Appendix 3 – Contact details

This appendix lists contact details for all areas of the department.

Department of the Senate

Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

Phone: 02 6277 7111

Website: www.aph.gov.au/senate/dept

Office holders and senior officers of the Senate

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

President of the Senate

Senator the Hon. Sue Lines

Email: senator.lines@aph.gov.au

Parliament House

Phone: 02 6277 3300

Electorate Office—West Perth, Western Australia

Phone: 08 9481 4844

Deputy President of the Senate

Senator Andrew McLachlan CSC

Email: senator.mclachlan@aph.gov.au

Parliament House

Phone: 02 6277 3337

Electorate Office—Kent Town, South Australia

Phone: 08 8362 8600

CLERK'S OFFICE

Clerk of the Senate

Richard Pye

Email: clerk.sen@aph.gov.au

Phone: 02 6277 3350

Deputy Clerk of the Senate

Jackie Morris

Email: depclerk.sen@aph.gov.au

Phone: 02 6277 3360

TABLE OFFICE, SENATE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

Clerk Assistant (Table)

Tim Bryant

Email: ca.table.sen@aph.gov.au

Phone: 02 6277 3020

PROCEDURE OFFICE, PARLIAMENTARY EDUCATION OFFICE

Clerk Assistant (Procedure)

Rachel Callinan

Email: ca.procedure.sen@aph.gov.au

Phone: 02 6277 3380

COMMITTEE OFFICE

Clerk Assistant (Committees)

Toni Matulick

Email: ca.committees.sen@aph.gov.au

Phone: 02 6277 3371

BLACK ROD'S OFFICE

Usher of the Black Rod / Chief Operating Officer

John Begley

Email: blackrod.sen@aph.gov.au

Phone: 02 6277 3398



References

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- ▶ List of requirements_____137
- ▶ Alphabetical index_____141

Glossary and abbreviations list

amendments and requests for amendments	Proposals to alter a bill, which may be moved by any senator or member. Any amendments made by one House must be agreed to by the other House before a bill can become law. The Senate may not amend bills imposing taxation or appropriating money for the Commonwealth's ordinary annual services; nor may it amend a bill so as to increase a charge or burden on the people. The Senate may, however, 'request' the House of Representatives to make such amendments.
AFMPA	Association of Former Members of the Parliament of Australia
AusTender	Australian Government tender information system
bill	A proposal for a law that is introduced into Parliament. Bills are considered consecutively by the House of Representatives and the Senate. The two Houses must agree to a bill in identical terms before it can be transmitted to the Governor-General for assent, which marks its passage into law.
committee of the whole	A committee consisting of all the members of the Senate formed to consider a bill in detail.
COVID-19	Stands for novel coronavirus disease 2019, which is the illness caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2).
DPS	Department of Parliamentary Services
estimates hearings	The term commonly used to describe the consideration by Senate legislation committees of the annual and additional estimates of expenditure of government departments and agencies.
IPRO	International and Parliamentary Relations Office
motions	Proposals for the Senate to agree to something, which must be expressed in a way that conforms with the standing orders.
pandemic	A worldwide spread of an infectious disease.
parliamentary privilege	Two significant aspects of the law relating to parliament: the privileges or immunities of the Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament; and the powers of the Houses to protect the integrity of their processes, particularly the power to punish contempts.
PBO	Parliamentary Budget Office
PBS	Portfolio Budget Statements
PEO	Parliamentary Education Office
PGPA Act	<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i>

Presiding Officers	The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives are the Presiding Officers. Each presides over the proceedings of his or her respective House. Administratively, each is responsible for his or her respective House department and together they are responsible for the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Parliamentary Budget Office.
procedural scripts	Scripts containing both routine and complex wording to be used by senators to ensure compliance with standing orders when taking part in proceedings in the Senate.
questions on notice	When referred to in the context of the Senate, these are written questions to ministers from other senators. Questions on notice in the context of estimates proceedings are written or oral questions from committee members to a minister and/or the minister's departmental officers, which require written answers from the minister or the minister's department.
second reading amendments	Proposed resolutions which comment on or affect the passage of bills, but do not propose specific changes to the text of bills.
SES	Senior Executive Service
SPIO	Senate Public Information Office
Standing Orders	Procedural rules that govern the conduct of proceedings in the Senate and its committees.

List of requirements

PGPA Rule reference	Description	Requirement	Location
General			
17AD(g) & 17Al	Letter of transmittal	Mandatory	iii
17AJ(a)	Table of contents	Mandatory	v
17AJ(b)	Alphabetical index	Mandatory	141
17AJ(c)	Glossary and abbreviations list	Mandatory	135
17AJ(d)	List of requirements	Mandatory	137
17AJ(e)	Contact officer	Mandatory	ii, 131
17AJ(f) & (g)	Department's website and electronic address of report	Mandatory	iv
Clerk's review			
17AD(a)	A review by the accountable authority	Mandatory	3
Departmental overview			
17AE(1)(a)(i)	Role and functions	Mandatory	7
17AE(1)(a)(ii)	Organisational structure	Mandatory	8
17AE(1)(a)(iii)	Outcome and program structure	Mandatory	9
17AE(1)(a)(iv)	Purposes as included in corporate plan	Mandatory	15
17AE(1)(aa)	Information on the accountable authority	Mandatory	8
17AE(1)(b)	Portfolio structure	Portfolio departments - mandatory	N/A
17AE(2)	Variations to outcomes and programs	If applicable, mandatory	N/A
Report on performance			
Annual performance statements			
17AD(c)(i); 16F	Annual performance statements	Mandatory	13–25
Report on financial performance			
17AF(1)(a)	Discussion and analysis of the department's financial performance	Mandatory	14, 84–86
17AF(1)(b)	Table summarising the total resources and total payments of the department	Mandatory	125
17AF(2)	Significant changes in the financial results	If applicable, mandatory	N/A

PGPA Rule reference	Description	Requirement	Location
Management and accountability			
Corporate governance			
17AG(2)(a)	Information on compliance with section 10 (fraud systems)	Mandatory	76
17AG(2)(b)	Fraud control certification by the accountable authority	Mandatory	iii
17AG(2)(c)	Corporate governance structure and processes	Mandatory	73–76
17AG(2)(d)-(e)	Reportable non-compliance with finance law	If applicable, mandatory	76
Audit Committee			
17AG(2A)(a)	Charter of the Audit Committee (direct electronic address)	Mandatory	74
17AG(2A)(b)-(e)	The name, qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience of each member. Information about the attendance of each member at committee meetings and their remuneration.	Mandatory	75
External scrutiny			
17AG(3)	Developments in external scrutiny	Mandatory	77
17AG(3)(a)	Judicial decisions and decisions of administrative tribunals and by the Australian Information Commissioner that may have a significant effect on operations	If applicable, mandatory	77
17AG(3)(b)	Reports on operations of the department by the Auditor-General (other than report under section 43 of the Act), a parliamentary committee, or the Commonwealth Ombudsman	If applicable, mandatory	77
17AG(3)(c)	Capability reviews on the department released during the period	If applicable, mandatory	N/A
Management of human resources			
17AG(4)(a)	An assessment of the departments' effectiveness in managing and developing employees to achieve department objectives	Mandatory	78–81
17AG(4)(aa) and (b)	Statistics on the department's APS employees on an ongoing and non-ongoing basis	Mandatory	78–81, 127–129
17AG(4)(c)	Employment arrangements	Mandatory	79
17AG(4)(c)(i)	Number of SES and non-SES employees covered by employment agreements	Mandatory	79
17AG(4)(c)(ii)	Salary ranges by classification level	Mandatory	127

PGPA Rule reference	Description	Requirement	Location
17AG(4)(c)(iii)	A description of non-salary benefits provided to employees	Mandatory	79
17AG(4)(d)	Performance pay	If applicable, mandatory	N/A
Assets management			
17AG(5)	Effectiveness of assets management where asset management is a significant part of the department's activities	If applicable, mandatory	N/A
Purchasing			
17AG(6)	Department performance against the Commonwealth Procurement Rules	Mandatory	82
Reportable consultancy contracts			
17AG(7)(a) and (b)	A summary and statement regarding the number of new and existing reportable consultancy contracts, including total actual expenditure	Mandatory	82–83
17AG(7)(c)	A summary of the policies and procedures for selecting and engaging consultants and the main categories of purposes for which consultants were selected and engaged	Mandatory	82–83
17AG(7)(d)	A statement that <i>'Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on reportable consultancy contracts. Information on the value of reportable consultancy contracts is available on the AusTender website.'</i>	Mandatory	82–83
Reportable non-consultancy contracts			
17AG(7A)(a)	A summary statement regarding the number of new and existing reportable non-consultancy contracts, including total actual expenditure	Mandatory	83
17AG(7A)(b)	A statement that <i>'Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on reportable non-consultancy contracts. Information on the value of reportable non-consultancy contracts is available on the AusTender website.'</i>	Mandatory	82
Additional information			
17AD(daa) & 17AGA	Additional information about organisations receiving amounts under reportable consultancy contracts or reportable non-consultancy contracts.	Mandatory	82-83
Australian National Audit Office access clauses			
17AG(8)	Australian National Audit Office access clause	If applicable, mandatory	N/A

PGPA Rule reference	Description	Requirement	Location
Exempt contracts			
17AG(9)	Contracts or standing offers with a value greater than \$10,000 (inclusive of GST) which have been exempted from being published in AusTender	If applicable, mandatory	N/A
Small business			
17AG(10)(a)	Statement regarding support of small business participation	Mandatory	82
17AG(10)(b)	An outline of the ways in which the procurement practices of the department support small and medium enterprises	Mandatory	82
17AG(10)(c)	Statement recognising the importance of ensuring that small businesses are paid on time	If applicable, mandatory	82
Financial statements			
17AD(e)	Financial statements	Mandatory	91
Executive remuneration			
17AD(da)	Executive remuneration	Mandatory	115–116
Other information			
17AH(1)(a)(i)	Statement regarding advertising campaigns conducted	If applicable, mandatory	N/A
17AH(1)(a)(ii)	If the department did not conduct advertising campaigns, a statement to that effect	If applicable, mandatory	87
17AH(1)(b)	A statement regarding grants awarded	If applicable, mandatory	N/A
17AH(1)(c)	Outline of mechanisms of disability reporting, including reference to website for further information	Mandatory	87–88
17AH(1)(d)	Website reference to where the department's Information Publication Scheme statement pursuant to Part II of FOI Act can be found	Mandatory	88
17AH(1)(e)	Correction of material errors in previous annual report	If applicable, mandatory	N/A
17AH(2)	Information required by other legislation	Mandatory	87–88

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