



Performance

- Chamber and Federation Chamber
- Community relations and awareness
- Committee services
- Inter-parliamentary relations
- Members' services and corporate support
- Schools hospitality

Chamber and Federation Chamber

Supporting the operations of the Chamber and Federation Chamber is a key focus of the work of the department. The Clerk's Office, Table Office and Chamber Research Office work together to manage the day-to-day operations of the chambers, with other areas contributing as necessary.

This reporting period saw additional demands placed on the department, associated with both the end of the Forty-third Parliament and, following the general election, the commencement of the Forty-fourth Parliament. In addition, we continued to:

- advise the Speaker and members of the House of Representatives
- advise on programming of House business, and provide procedural support
- process and draft bills
- prepare and publish the record of proceedings of the House
- process, provide access to and manage the custody of the documents and records of the House
- undertake procedural and parliamentary research
- produce information and publications on House practice and procedure
- maintain procedural and statistical records on the work of the House
- provide secretariat support to several domestic committees.

In 2013–14, the budget allocation for the component was \$3.138 million and expenditure was \$3.209 million. Staff levels, by location, are shown in Appendix 11.

An election year

The House was dissolved on 5 August 2013, bringing the Forty-third Parliament to an end. The dissolution of the House triggers a range of administrative tasks, including finalisation of House records and other housekeeping functions. The period between the dissolution of the House and the opening of the new parliament on 12 November 2013 (the election period) provided an opportunity for staff to start preparing for the opening of the Forty-fourth Parliament, including making arrangements for the swearing in of all 150 members and the election of a Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Second Deputy Speaker. Following discussions with the incoming government, amendments to the standing orders were drafted, including changes to sitting hours and private members' business. The election period also allowed for significant progress to be made on longer term projects such as the development of the Table Offices Production System (see page 21).

Performance summary

The program component's work is focused on supporting the sittings of the House of Representatives Chamber and meetings of the Federation Chamber. Performance is measured in two ways—qualitatively, through the annual survey of members; and quantitatively, through information on the sittings of the House, the meetings of the Federation Chamber and the business conducted in the Chamber and Federation Chamber.

The annual survey of members (see Appendix 12) showed a continuing high level of satisfaction with the department's support for the Chamber and Federation Chamber. All respondents were satisfied with our advice and support. Respondents were 'extremely satisfied' or 'highly satisfied' with the following areas:

- advice and services received from the Clerks-at-the-Table in the Chamber and Federation Chamber—100 per cent (95 per cent in 2012–13)
- advice and services received from other staff in relation to Chamber and Federation Chamber duties—100 per cent (90 per cent in 2012–13)
- quality and availability of procedural and statistical publications and support in obtaining such information—81 per cent (90 per cent in 2012–13).

Statistical information on the sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber in 2013–14 and the two preceding years is shown in Table 1.

As would be expected in an election year, the statistics show a reduction in the sitting hours of the Chamber and Federation Chamber. After the election, the House did not sit until 12 November 2013; in a full sitting year the House would be expected to sit for several weeks in the period from July to November. In 2013–14, sitting days totalled 53. This figure represents a decrease of six days from the previous year (10.2 per cent fewer days). There was a corresponding reduction in the total number of sitting hours. In 2013–14 the House sat for 79 fewer hours than in the previous year (13.1 per cent less time) and the Federation Chamber met for 104 fewer hours than in the previous year (40.6 per cent less time). However, legislative activity continued at a relatively high level during the period, with 182 bills introduced (241 in 2012–13) and 94 bills passed by both Houses and assented to (228 in 2012–13). The continued high level of legislative activity in a reduced number of sitting days placed significant demands on departmental staff, particularly in the final sitting fortnight, when 46 bills were prepared for assent by the Governor-General—nearly half (48.3 per cent) of all bills assented to during the year.

Detailed information on the business of the House and the Federation Chamber is in Appendix 3 and in the department's publication *Work of the Session* (available on the Parliament of Australia website).

Table 1 Performance summary, Chamber and Federation Chamber, 2011–12 to 2013–14

Aspect of performance	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14 ^a
Number of sittings of the House	68	59	53
Number of meetings of the Federation Chamber	59	55	40
Hours of sittings of the House ^b	691	602	523
Hours of meetings of the Federation Chamber ^b	306	256	152
Number of bills introduced	256	241	182
Number of bills that passed both Houses and were assented to ^c	221	228	94

a Election year.

b Excludes suspensions; rounded to the nearest hour.

c Includes bills that passed both Houses in the financial year but were assented to in the following financial year.

Advice on practice and procedure

The Clerk, Deputy Clerk and other staff members provided advice to the Speaker, members and others on the practice and procedure of the House.

We provided immediate advice and support to the new Speaker, ministers, shadow ministers, members and others as they assumed new roles following the election. We also provided detailed written advice. Subjects addressed included the application of the standing orders and the practice of the House; the content of questions without notice; the election of House officers; procedures for private members' business; delegated legislation and the disallowance process; the requirements of the Constitution and standing orders in respect of financial legislation; privilege matters; and requirements of the House in respect of the registration of members' interests.

Programming and coordination of business

Throughout 2013–14, we continued to provide advice and services to facilitate sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber, including:

- offering programming and procedural advice to ministers, shadow ministers, party whips, other members, their staff and others
- preparing and publishing each sitting day:
 - the *Notice Paper*—a document listing all unresolved business before the House in the proposed order of consideration
 - the *Daily Program* (also known as 'the Blue')—an informal agenda for the day
 - procedural scripts for all items of business for use in the Chamber and the Federation Chamber
- providing chamber support from the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office for sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber to oversee ceremonial and security arrangements and ensure the availability of chamber papers

- processing members' questions in writing to ministers, including editing them for compliance with the standing orders and publishing them in the *Notice Paper* for the next sitting day, and managing answers to questions
- providing a captioning service for the televised and webcast proceedings of the House and Federation Chamber
- publishing *This Week in the House*, a weekly online forecast of expected business for the House, and its counterpart, *Last Week in the House*.

Table 2 provides details of the number of questions in writing to ministers dealt with by the House in the five years from 2009–10 to 2013–14.

All sittings required the coordination of people, documents and actions, and the programming of the following categories of business:

- government business (for example, government legislation)
- private members' business (motions and bills proposed by private members)
- House business (matters potentially involving all members—for example, question time, debate on committee reports or matters of privilege).

A longitudinal view of the amount of time the House (Chamber and Federation Chamber inclusive) devoted to each of these types of business is shown in Figure 4. In the Forty-third Parliament, there was a reduction in the proportion of time allocated to government business and business of the House, which is reflected in the significant increase in private members' business time.

Table 2 Questions in writing to ministers and answers to questions in writing, 2009–10 to 2013–14

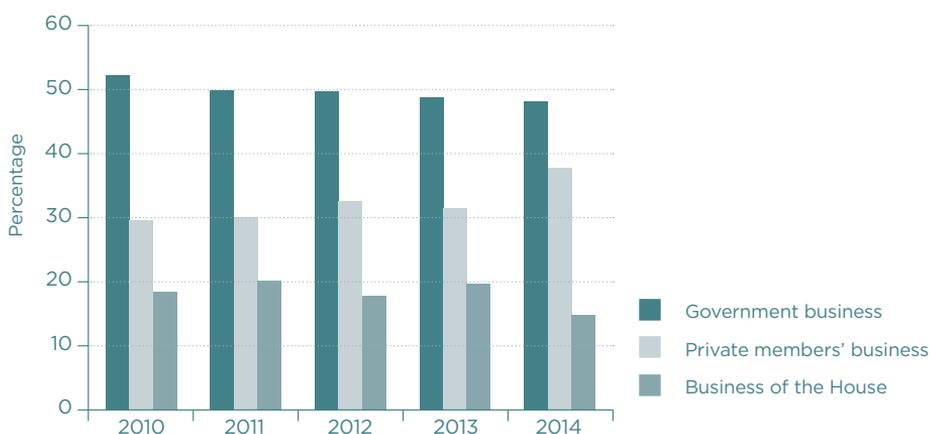
	2009–10	2010–11 ^a	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14 ^a
Questions in writing ^b	571	441	678	411	201
Questions answered ^c	444	335	491	374	126

a Election year.

b Excludes questions withdrawn.

c The responsibility for responding to questions in writing rests with the individual ministers to whom the questions are put.

Figure 4 Government and private members' business and business of the House (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2010 to 2014



Note: Private members' business includes consideration of private members' motions and bills and other opportunities for private members, such as adjournment debates and discussion of matters of public importance.

Processing and drafting of bills

Legislation

Our support for the legislative process in 2013–14 included:

- receiving bills from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and keeping them in custody under embargo before their introduction
- providing bills to ministers for introduction, and to all members in the Chamber after introduction
- uploading bills, explanatory memorandums and proposed amendments to the Parliament of Australia website, and providing an over-the-counter inquiry service for access to hard copies of bills and associated material
- processing all bills and amendments to bills—from introduction to assent for bills initiated in the House, and from introduction in the House until passage by the House for bills initiated in the Senate
- providing a legislative drafting service for private members
- preparing and delivering messages to the Senate—we prepared 162 messages relating to the passage of bills in 2013–14 (242 in 2012–13) and 24 other messages (26 in 2012–13)
- preparing and issuing each sitting day a Daily Bills List, which provides cumulative information on the status of all bills before the parliament or assented to in the current calendar year.

Chamber staff of both Houses continued to work with the developer of the bills system to maintain optimal levels of technical support. The Bills System Advisory Group continued its role in advising the Bills System Advisory Board on system enhancements and satisfying business requirements.

Queries of the bills and legislation collection on the website totalled 21.7 million during the year; an increase of 12.2 per cent from the previous year (19.3 million in 2012–13). This total represented 23.0 per cent of the queries made through ParInfo Search. Work to include bills from earlier parliaments in the electronic storage system continued, but proceeded slowly because of other demands on Table Office staff.

Legislative workload

During the year, 182 bills were introduced (241 in 2012–13), a decrease of 24.5 per cent from the previous year—fewer than the long-term average but not unusual for a year with an election and change of government. Of these, 180 were initiated in the House of Representatives and two were received from the Senate. A total of 94 bills passed both Houses (229¹ in 2012–13), of which 92 were initiated in the House of Representatives (224 in 2012–13) and two in the Senate (five in 2012–13). Table 3 shows the number of bills introduced and assented to in the five years from 2009–10 to 2013–14.

In 2013–14, the House passed 154 bills (221 in 2012–13). This represented 2.9 bills on average for each sitting, compared with 3.7 bills on average in the previous year.

The House amended six (3.9 per cent) of the bills it passed (48 (21.3 per cent) in 2012–13). The Table Office incorporated the amendments into the text of the bills and arranged for their reprinting (as third-reading prints) before transmittal to the Senate. The House also agreed to Senate amendments, made amendments requested by the Senate, or both, to six House bills (17 in 2012–13), with further processing by the Table Office before the bills were presented to the Governor-General for assent. The House made amendments to one bill in place of Senate amendments that were not agreed to (included in the total, above, of House bills with Senate amendments agreed to by the House).

The number of amendments moved during consideration in detail fell sharply, from 923 in 2012–13 to 66 in 2013–14. This reflects the return to majority government and the more usual pattern of amendments, and has eased the burden on departmental staff responsible for the range of processes associated with amendments.

Of the 66 amendments moved, 14 were passed, all of which were government amendments. The House did not amend any bills initiated in the Senate in 2013–14, or in the previous year.

¹ Figure includes the Constitution Alteration (Local Government) 2013, which was passed by both Houses but not submitted to a referendum—see section 128 of the Constitution.

The Table Office prepared six third-reading prints (48 in 2012–13) and 92 assent prints (223 in 2012–13). All documents accurately reflected the decisions of both Houses.

Table 3 Number of bills introduced in the House, and number of bills assented to, 2009–10 to 2013–14

	2009–10	2010–11 ^a	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14 ^a
Bills introduced	236	186	256	241	182
Bills assented to ^b	178	116	221	228	94

^a Election year.

^b Includes bills that passed both Houses in the financial year but were assented to in the following financial year.

Legislative drafting

The department drafts bills, amendments and second-reading (in-principle) amendments for private members, and ensures that these documents comply with the Constitution and the standing orders. The department also prepares bills and amendments in correct form and arranges copies for circulation.

The increase in the number of private members' bills being requested and introduced, noted in last year's annual report, has continued. In 2013–14, seven private members' bills were introduced. Of the 66 amendments moved during the year, 52 were private members' amendments, none of which were agreed to. Table 4 provides chamber statistics for private members' legislation. The table does not reflect all of the department's work in this area, as some drafted material is not introduced into the House.

The department has continued the arrangement entered into in 2010–11 with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) whereby a senior OPC drafter is seconded to the department. This arrangement has had mutual benefits for the department and the OPC.

Table 4 Private members' bills introduced and amendments moved (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2009–10 to 2013–14

	2009–10	2010–11 ^a	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14 ^a
Bills introduced	15	17	25	30	7
Second-reading amendments moved	12	14	17	9	36
Consideration in detail amendments moved ^b	134	292	732	923	66

^a Election year.

^b Includes government amendments.

Record of proceedings and House documents

Votes and Proceedings

The *Votes and Proceedings* continued to provide an accurate, comprehensive and concise record of proceedings. The draft document for each sitting day is published on the Parliament of Australia website, usually within an hour of the adjournment of the House.

The *Votes and Proceedings* is prepared from the *Votes Officer's Minutes*, an electronic draft record of the proceedings of the House and the Federation Chamber. The *Votes Officer's Minutes* (also known as the *Live Minutes*) are more detailed than the *Votes and Proceedings* and are compiled progressively throughout a sitting day. The *Votes Officer's Minutes* enable anyone with access to the internet to follow events in the House and Federation Chamber as they occur. Internal and external clients continued to provide positive feedback on this service.

As noted below, the Table Offices Production System was put into partial production in May 2014. The *Votes and Proceedings* and *Votes Officer's Minutes* were included in the initial release. Staff have met the challenge of continuing to produce the high-quality products that clients expect, while adjusting to the new system and continuing to work with the developers to iron out any problems that become apparent as the system is put into production. This has meant extended hours for some staff.

Documents

During the year, we processed all documents presented to the House and recorded their details in the *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Index to Papers Presented to Parliament*. We made copies available on request to members and their staff and others, principally in Parliament House. The original documents were added to the records of the House, which we continued to maintain. We also continued to review our requirements for tabling stock in light of the ever-improving online availability of documents and declining demand for hard copies.

In 2013–14, documents presented to the House numbered 4,253 (6,116 in 2012–13), a decrease of 30 per cent compared to the previous year.

The implementation of the Table Offices Production System has been particularly important for recording documents presented to the parliament and linking them to the *Votes and Proceedings*. Once all planned functions have been incorporated and expected efficiencies are realised, the recording of and reporting on documents should be greatly simplified. The system has also required increased cooperation with our Senate counterparts to ensure that the shared database is appropriately managed and utilised to safeguard the integrity of the data.

To meet the needs of clients, on each sitting day the Table Office prepares and issues a Disallowable Instruments List in both electronic and hard-copy form. The list provides details of all instruments presented to the House that are subject to disallowance, by the number of sitting days remaining in which a notice of disallowance can be lodged.

Parliamentary Papers Series

The Parliamentary Papers Series consists of documents of a substantial nature presented to the parliament since 1901. As reported last year, the electronic Parliamentary Papers Series became accessible from the beginning of 2013. The repository for the series continues to grow. It enables centralised electronic access to the documents themselves through the ParInfo Tabled Papers Register. The documents section of the Table Offices Production System has helped to streamline the process of uploading Parliamentary Papers to the repository.

The department is responsible for the custody and preservation of, and the provision of access to, the official records of the House, including Acts, bills, the *Votes and Proceedings* and all documents presented to the House dating from 1901. The records are stored in an archive in the basement at Parliament House. We continue to monitor the suitability of the archive environment.



Parliamentary attendants with the Governor-General's proclamation dissolving the House of Representatives for the Forty-third Parliament, August 2013.

Petitions

Australians continue to use the House petitioning process to raise issues of interest and concern to them. Table 5 shows the number of petitions presented to the House, and the number of signatories, for the past five years. In 2013–14, 75 petitions were presented, fewer than the 125 petitions presented in 2012–13. The decrease may reflect the tendency for people's desire to air grievances and raise awareness on major issues to diminish during an election period. The dramatic increase in signatories is due to the presentation in February 2014 of a petition with the greatest number of signatories on record (signatures were first recorded in 1988). The petition, regarding funding support for community pharmacies, was signed by 1,210,471 petitioners. (See also information on the Standing Committee on Petitions on page 20.)

Table 5 Petitions and signatories to petitions, 2009–10 to 2013–14

	2009–10	2010–11 ^a	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14 ^a
Number of petitions presented	163	129	183	125	75
Number of signatories	270,964	445,921	446,619	325,360	1,365,151

^a Election year.

Research

The Chamber Research Office continued in its principal function of collecting, analysing and publishing procedural and statistical information on the work of the House and its committees.

In 2013–14, the office provided:

- advice, and assistance with advice, to the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and members on the application of the standing orders and House practices
- secretariat services to the Standing Committee on Procedure and the Standing Committee on Petitions
- advice about and publications on House statistics, practices and procedure
- information to the public, the media and other parliaments on the operations of the House.

The services of the office continued to be in high demand due to sustained high levels of interest in the procedures and operations of the House.

House pictorial collection

Work continued on upgrading the cataloguing and storage of the House pictorial collection during the reporting period, but it was affected by the continuing need both for extensive research on each photograph for identification purposes and for the office to respond to sustained high levels of demand for its other services. During the election period further progress was made, so that by the end of the reporting period approximately three-quarters of the collection had been catalogued. The project has revealed some records that were not previously documented, and upon completion will enable better access to the department's collection of images as well as ensure the department's compliance with current records management standards.

Publications

The office continued its pattern of producing regular publications that outline significant procedural events and popular statistics. These are usually produced after each sitting fortnight. The *Procedural Digest*, a subject-based record of proceedings, is published online, and the *Procedural Extracts*, a technical document, is also prepared. The office published the *Statistical Digest* after each sitting fortnight. *Work of the Session*, a comprehensive six-monthly overview of the business of the House and committees, was published in August 2013 and January 2014. The series of 21 infosheets on the work of the House was updated in February 2014, and an additional infosheet—on political parties—was created during the year. Together, these publications provide a current and concise record of the work of the House and the more significant aspects of the nature of that work. The department's publications, including the infosheet series, are listed in Appendix 10.

The Chamber Research Office maintains, publishes and distributes the standing orders of the House. The standing orders were reprinted as at 14 November 2013, incorporating a number of amendments made by the House on 13 and 14 November 2013. Inserts were created when the standing orders were amended on 13 February 2014 and 19 March 2014.

Collaboration with the Department of the Senate

The office continued its longstanding collaboration with colleagues in the Department of the Senate, including through participation in orientation seminars for the Australian National Internship Program and the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program (discussed in more detail on page 25).

Collaboration with other parliaments

Through the different formats of its publications, the office caters for a wide variety of readers, and staff are frequently asked to share their experiences and knowledge with counterparts from other parliaments. The office continued to collaborate with colleagues and members from other parliaments by participating in study programs, meetings during delegation visits, and capacity-building work. The systems and skills established over the years to record, analyse and publish information on the procedural work of the House continue to be the subject of discussion and collaboration with colleagues from other parliaments. The office's partnership with colleagues at the South Australian House of Assembly to redevelop the department's procedural database and create the Parliamentary Procedural Records System is discussed on page 22.

Parliamentary committees

The department continued to provide effective secretariat and advisory support to a number of House committees, and to one joint committee dealing with the powers and procedures of the House (see Table 6).

In 2013–14, these committees held a total of 55 meetings (105 in 2012–13) and produced 17 reports (50 in 2012–13). Details of meetings and reports are set out in Appendixes 4 and 5.

Table 6 Committees supported by the Chamber and Federation Chamber component, 2013–14

House committees
Selection Committee
Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration
Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests
Standing Committee on Petitions
Standing Committee on Procedure
Standing Committee on Publications
Joint committee
Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings

Selection Committee

The Selection Committee continued to operate during the reporting period. It has three important roles:

- selecting and programming private members' business and committee and delegation business
- setting speaking times for second-reading debates (the committee has not as yet exercised this role)
- considering all bills introduced and determining whether to refer bills directly to House or joint committees for inquiry.

Following a change to standing orders for the Forty-fourth Parliament, referrals of bills can only be made by a majority decision of the committee (previously an individual member of the committee could have a bill referred). Under this revised procedure, one bill was referred to a committee in 2013–14 (66 in 2012–13).

Another change to the committee's functions was that it ceased to have the power to recommend items of private members' business for a vote in the House.

The committee consists of 11 members: the Speaker (as chair), the chief whips of the three parties, four government members and three non-government members. The committee met 18 times during the reporting period. The Selection Committee is supported by Table Office staff.

Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration

The Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration considers, among other things, estimates of the funding required for the operation of the department each year. When conferring with its counterpart Senate committee—the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations and Staffing—the House committee may consider estimates of the funding required for the operation of the Department of Parliamentary Services each year.

The committee has nine members: the Speaker (as chair), four government members and four non-government members. It is supported by the Clerk, the Serjeant-at-Arms and other officers of the department. During the year the committee met three times and presented one report.

Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests

The Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests met six times during the reporting period. During 2012–13, the committee had suspended its inquiry referred by the House in May 2012 into whether, in the course of a statement made to the House by the Member for Dobell (Mr Craig Thomson MP), the member deliberately misled the House, following the laying of criminal charges against Mr Thomson. As the committee had not completed its work, the inquiry lapsed on dissolution of the House on 5 August 2013. On 24 May 2014, the committee had a new inquiry referred by the House into whether Mr Thomson had deliberately misled the House in the course of his statement to the House and having regard to the findings of the Melbourne Magistrates' Court on 18 February 2014.

Standing Committee on Petitions

The Standing Committee on Petitions continued to assess petitions for compliance with relevant House standing orders, and to enable the presentation of petitions found to be in order and of ministerial responses to petitions presented previously. The committee and secretariat continued to interact with principal petitioners about petitions being prepared for collection of signatures and about 'completed' petitions received by the committee.

On sitting Mondays, the chair of the committee presented 'in-order' petitions that other members had not elected to present, and also presented written responses from ministers to petitions presented earlier on which the committee had sought comment. The 'terms' (the stated reasons for the petition and the action requested) of petitions presented and the corresponding ministerial responses were published in Hansard and on the Parliament of Australia website in accordance with standing orders.

During the year, 75 petitions were presented (a decrease of 40 per cent from the previous year—possibly explained by the completion of the general election) with a total of 1,365,151 signatures (an increase of 319.6 per cent from the previous year). The increase in signatures was due in part to a petition with a record number of signatures (1,210,471) that was considered by the committee and presented to the House in 2013–14.

There were 64 ministerial response letters presented. Responses from ministers explain the government's policies and programs on the subject matter of petitions.

The committee may hold public roundtable hearings with principal petitioners and representatives of relevant government agencies to explore issues with petitioners and to allow public servants to explain the relevant legislation, policy, programs or administration. Roundtable hearings were not held in 2013–14, given that the committee was not established until November 2013 and customarily holds roundtable hearings to consider selected petitions in more detail after presentation and receipt of a response from a minister.

Standing Committee on Procedure

The Standing Committee on Procedure usually meets once each sitting week. The previous committee's report presented in June 2013, *Maintenance of the Standing and Sessional Orders*, formed the basis of a number of technical amendments to standing orders in a package of amendments

that were agreed to on the second day of the Forty-fourth Parliament. The current committee has adopted terms of reference for inquiries into the maintenance of the Standing and Sessional Orders and the use of electronic devices in the Chamber, Federation Chamber and committees.

Standing Committee on Publications

The House Publications Committee met twice in 2013–14, and met with the Senate Publications Committee another three times. The committee presented four reports containing recommendations on which documents presented to parliament should be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series. All recommended documents were agreed for inclusion.

Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings

The *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* requires ABC radio and, in some circumstances, ABC television to broadcast the proceedings of parliament. It is the statutory role of the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings to advise parliament on general principles for the allocation of radio broadcasting time between the two chambers and to determine a more detailed schedule of broadcasting allocations. The committee tabled redrafted general principles and advice to the ABC in June 2013.

As detailed on page 38 of this report, the general principles were adopted by both chambers in December 2013, along with new resolutions also drafted by the committee relating to the broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings.

Under the Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act, the committee has nine members, including the Speaker and the President of the Senate. By tradition, the Speaker is chair and the President is vice-chair. The committee met once during the reporting period, and is supported by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office.

Procedural training

The department continued to support its staff to develop specialised knowledge and skills in the application of parliamentary law, practice and procedure through a range of measures. These measures include:

- regular parliamentary briefings delivered by senior departmental staff
- training programs run by senior departmental staff, including a workshop on parliamentary privilege
- sitting debriefs following each sitting week or fortnight, focusing on matters of procedural interest
- shadowing opportunities, enabling staff to learn specialist skills such as the preparation of House procedures, the *Notice Paper* and the *Votes and Proceedings*. With sufficient experience, the use of shadowing allows chamber support staff to finish work earlier on some sitting nights and provides a backup in the event of staffing absences or turnover
- opportunities for participation in the annual Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table (ANZACATT) professional development seminar
- for a small number of staff, participation in the Graduate Certificate in Parliamentary Law and Practice, currently taught by the University of Tasmania under the auspices of ANZACATT.

Information technology

The first phase of the Table Offices Production System (TOPS), a joint project with the Department of the Senate, was put into production in April 2014 and was used to support sittings during the period commencing on budget day. The system has been used to produce the *Notice Paper*, *Daily Program*, *Votes and Proceedings* and *Live Minutes*. While it has been possible to produce documents, technical issues arising from the complexity of the design and changed business processes have resulted in significant additional demands on staff and in some cases additional hours on already long sitting days. The vendor has been providing onsite support during sitting weeks and working with departmental staff to address issues arising during the warranty period. It is anticipated that there will continue to be some fine-tuning of the system in the coming months, to improve the system's responsiveness and performance.

Planning for the second phase of the TOPS project is well underway. Phase 2 will enable production of the procedural text used by members in the Chamber and Federation Chamber, as well as some further enhancements to the system. It is expected to run through 2014, with the enhancements in place for sittings in the first half of 2015.

Redevelopment of the department's Parliamentary Procedural Records System, in collaboration with the South Australian House of Assembly, was almost complete by year end, with the searchable database of records of procedural events in the House and Federation Chamber undergoing final testing before being released.

Improving performance

With a return to majority government, many of the procedural challenges experienced during the Forty-third Parliament have lessened. However, the change of government led to an increase in the advisory services provided by the department as new members became familiar with parliamentary procedure and as more experienced members assumed new roles. Procedural training and development continued to be a priority during the year.

Outlook

In 2013–14, considerable time and resources were invested in putting the Table Offices Production System into operation. The next reporting period will see a period of consolidation and enhancement of the system and associated workflows, with the hope that the anticipated efficiencies arising from a new system can be realised.

It is expected that 2014–15 will bring a return to the long-term pattern of Chamber and Federation Chamber support activity. The focus will continue to be on providing high-quality services to meet the needs of members and other clients. The department's budgetary situation will remain tight, but within those constraints the department will continue to ensure that staff are well trained and equipped to deal with challenges that might arise.



Staff of the House of Representatives Table Office.

Community relations and awareness

In 2013–14, the department continued to develop its strategy to promote community engagement with the work of the House of Representatives and its committees. While some activities and services were affected by the federal election period, during which the House and its committees were not operating, new opportunities to engage with the community were pursued with success. The International and Community Relations Office (ICRO) continued to lead the implementation of the department's community outreach strategy, working with other departmental areas in delivering a variety of multimedia products and services.

In 2013–14, the budget allocation for the component was \$1.175 million and expenditure was \$0.987 million. Staff levels, by location, are shown in Appendix 11.

Performance summary

Drawing together various community engagement initiatives developed over a decade, the department issued its community outreach strategy for 2013–16. The strategy involves an integrated approach to community outreach using a range of multimedia products and services, with an increasing focus on the use of digital and online media. The popularity of those products, particularly the *About the House* magazine and our social media platforms, is recognised by their central place in the community outreach strategy.

Community liaison

Print and electronic media

Social media moved to the forefront of our efforts to connect the community with the work of the House. The number of subscribers to and followers of our social media accounts and channels grew significantly. We increased our Twitter following by 6,400 to more than 18,800 subscribers. Our Twitter presence has become recognised as a valuable resource by the media, community groups and members of the public, who have provided positive feedback when interacting with us. Our Facebook page now has more than 1,500 fans, an increase of nearly 1,000 since June 2013.

The House of Representatives YouTube channel was launched to coincide with the opening of the Forty-fourth Parliament in November 2013. At 25 June 2014 it had 665 subscribers, and the 88 published videos had been viewed a total of 53,672 times. The videos include parliamentary committee chairs explaining the focus of their committees' work.

The increased use of social media resulted in a decline in subscribers to our email alert service. At 25 June 2014 there were 2,306 subscribers to the alert service, compared with 3,300 at the same time last year.

We introduced a new television segment called *Parliament Diary*, broadcast on the Sky News and Australian Public Affairs (A-PAC) channels on the mornings of House of Representatives sitting days. The segment features the Speaker providing a preview of business before the House. Sky News has indicated that the segment is a welcome inclusion in its popular morning television program.

We continued to produce our other two television programs (*About the House* and *MPI*) which are also broadcast on A-PAC. Segments are also loaded onto our About the House web page and YouTube channel. The *MPI* program was revamped to improve the format and link it more closely to our *About the House* magazine, with a view to including segments of the program in a future digital version of the magazine.

The break in parliamentary work during the federal election period meant that the *About the House* magazine was not published during the year. Because much of the magazine's content is focused on the work of parliamentary committees, it was not possible to publish an edition until the committees had done some detailed work. The first edition for the Forty-fourth Parliament is planned for the first quarter of 2014–15, and we will then transition the magazine into a digital format.

Seminars and presentations

In 2013–14, four seminars were conducted on the work and procedure of the House of Representatives (compared to 11 in 2012–13). Two of these were seminars for individual government departments and organisations.

There were 122 participants in the overall seminar program (a decrease of 198 from 2012–13). The seminar statistics reflected the usual trend of fewer seminars and fewer participants in the year of a federal election. Evaluations by seminar participants were collected electronically; the average ratings are detailed in Table 7.

Table 7 Seminar average ratings, 2013–14 (%)

	Very poor	Poor	Good	Very good	Excellent
Seminar content	0	0	14	57	29
Level of detail	0	0	0	83	17
Presenters	0	0	28	51	21
Material and information in handouts	0	0	14	57	29

Projects and events

In 2013 the parliamentary departments supported the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the occupation of Parliament House. The department took a lead role in coordinating the anniversary Open Day, held on 24 August 2013. The Open Day followed on from a number of events in the first half of 2013 to mark the anniversary, including the publication of a book, *Interwoven: the commissioned art and craft for Parliament House*, and a special morning tea to acknowledge and thank all those who have worked at Parliament House.

ICRO was the principal coordinator for the Open Day, chairing an interdepartmental committee responsible for staging the event. The Open Day attracted more than 8,000 visitors to the building and included tours, exhibitions and a program of events and entertainment. The overall theme was 'Threads of our nation', recognising in particular the art and craft that had been woven into the fabric of the building.

In conjunction with the twenty-fifth anniversary, the department staged an exhibition at Parliament House called 'The people's house'. It focused on the ways in which the community can engage with the House of Representatives, its members and its committees.

As part of the department's community outreach strategy, youth are identified as a particular audience for engagement. Three projects were undertaken during the year to engage young people with the House of Representatives:

- the My First Speech competition for year 10 to 12 students, which involved students submitting a video of the first speech they would make if they were elected to the House of Representatives. The competition attracted 104 entries from senior high school students from across Australia
- the Speaker's University Challenge, which involved a debate between students of the Australian National University and the University of Melbourne at Parliament House during Open Day
- Movement at the House, which was a collaboration with television station MTV, the Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka and Deloitte Digital. It involved the selection of a youth representative (the 'millennial leader') who undertook a week-long program at Parliament House in February 2014 to engage with parliamentarians, lobbyists and the media to better understand how the House of Representatives works and to advocate for issues of particular interest to young Australians.

The winner of the My First Speech competition, Johnson Ye from Perth Modern School in Western Australia, said the opportunity to visit Canberra and present his speech at the Parliament House Open Day was 'a truly exceptional experience'. Olly Tripodi from Victoria, who was chosen as the Movement at the House millennial leader, said his visit to Canberra for the project was 'an invaluable experience' that helped to open doors for him and other youth advocates.

Parliamentary assistants program

In 2013–14 the parliamentary assistants program, successfully run by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, entered its fourteenth year. The program offers university students part-time employment in the House of Representatives in order to promote understanding of and engagement with the work of the parliament. (For further details see page 42.)

Parliamentary internship program

The Australian National Internship Program has operated since 1993 under an agreement between the Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University and the Australian Parliament's Presiding Officers. Australian and international students enrolled at the university under the program undertake an internship placement of about 10 weeks as part of their formal course of undergraduate study.

In the second semester of 2013, because of the proximity of the election, students were not placed with a member or senator. In the first semester of 2014, of the 33 interns, 17 were placed with a member or senator.

The departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate, as well as the Parliamentary Library, assist the program. The House and Senate departments provide an orientation seminar for all students before they take up their placements at Parliament House and elsewhere. During the placement, each student completes a research project on a subject agreed with their host. The report is assessed by the university and counts towards the student's degree.

The program has continued to provide students from around Australia and from other countries with an opportunity to extend and complement their academic studies by studying and working within the parliamentary environment.

Parliamentary exchange program for Australian Defence Force

Each year, a small number of Australian Defence Force representatives spend a week at Parliament House, hosted by a member or senator. This arrangement began in 2003 as an expansion of a program begun in 2001, under which members and senators took up a short placement with Defence personnel and participated in their working lives. Arrangements for participation by members and senators are made through the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence in conjunction with the Department of Defence.

The program usually takes place in September or October, but because of the 2013 election the program for 2013–14 was brought forward to June 2013, with members and senators hosting 15 Defence Force representatives (five from each of the services).

The departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate collaborate to support the exchange program and each provides orientation seminars on the work of the Chamber and committees.

Public visits to the House

Public visits to observe proceedings

In 2013–14, public interest in the sittings of the House of Representatives continued to be high, although there were relatively fewer sitting days during the reporting period as a result of the 2013 election. The interest was reflected in the numbers of visitors to the House of Representatives galleries. Over the 53 sitting days, 43,710 people attended the galleries, and visitor numbers peaked at more than 1,000 visitors per day on 16 occasions. In the budget and budget reply week, more than 4,269 visitors attended some part of proceedings.

The high level of interest partly reflected a number of high-profile parliamentary events during the year. This included the opening of the Forty-fourth Parliament, the new government's first budget and the opposition's first budget reply. More than 1,432 people visited the chamber on budget day (13 May 2014), slightly down from 1,700 in 2013, and 1,720 people visited on budget reply night, down from 3,370 in 2013.

These major events required close coordination between the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office and the Parliamentary Security Service to ensure that all gallery visitors went through a secondary security screening outside the gallery entrances in an efficient and timely manner. Departmental and security staff also worked together to ensure that chamber proceedings continued without interruption as people moved through the galleries.

Parliamentary Education Office

Although administered by the Department of the Senate, the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) is a joint office and receives part funding from the department. Its mission is to provide parliamentary education services to schools, teachers and students. It also provides parliamentary education support services to members and senators.

The two departments liaise closely on the PEO's strategic direction and the content of its teaching, educational material and online resources through the PEO Advisory Committee, jointly chaired by the Deputy Speaker and Deputy President. The committee can also provide the Presiding Officers with advice on the support needs of members and senators in relation to parliamentary education. The committee met in June 2014. The Clerk Assistant (Table) attended as an observer.

In 2013–14, 87,657 students from around Australia participated in the PEO's experiential role-play program at Parliament House (compared with 94,015 students in 2012–13). This represents a decrease of 6.7 per cent, which may be attributable to many factors, including the federal election in 2013, centenary events in adjoining years and the practice of many schools only visiting every two years or longer. Notwithstanding the reduction this year, the attendance figures remain comparable to recent years and reflect the continued popularity of the PEO's role-play program. A number of members of parliament and senators met with student groups when they visited Parliament House. The cumulative total of students who have participated in the role-play programs since the Parliament House building opened on 9 May 1988 is more than 1.8 million.

A new parliamentary venue management system, which includes school tour bookings, has recently been implemented and is undergoing refinement. When fully functional, the system will provide improved information and services to schools and tour operators booking student programs at Parliament House.

The PEO continues to invest in a comprehensive range of outreach strategies to ensure it is able to provide parliamentary education services to a broad student population, not just those able to travel to Canberra.

The PEO website remains a highly effective and popular vehicle for the dissemination of parliamentary education material and resources to teachers and students located around Australia. PEO website patronage increased in 2013–14 to 719,124 visitor sessions. When compared to the 590,827 visitor sessions in 2012–13, this represents a significant increase of over 21 per cent in visitor sessions. The increase may reflect the complete redesign of the website in early 2014, which has improved usability and broadened audience appeal.

During the year the PEO continued to revise and update web content and developed significant new content, including an interactive parliamentary timeline. Additional material for secondary students was also added, and the PEO continued to develop and field information about current parliamentary events and the achievements and statistics of both the Forty-third and Forty-fourth parliaments.

The PEO continued its work with members and senators on a limited scale through a targeted school visit program called Parliament Alive. In the reporting period, visits took place under the program to schools in regional western Victoria, regional eastern South Australia, outback Queensland, northern Tasmania and outer metropolitan Perth in Western Australia. These activities provided participating students with an invaluable opportunity to learn firsthand about the role and work of their federal member or senator. A highlight of the Parliament Alive program was the active involvement of members and senators.

In addition to Parliament Alive, the PEO conducted a number of specially targeted activities at Parliament House involving students, trainee and qualified teachers, parliamentary visitors and Indigenous groups. These activities included overseeing the long-running Rotary Adventure in Citizenship program in budget week and supporting several National Youth Science Forums in January.

The PEO also continued to produce a wide range of educational resources, both in print and online, including several new educational videos for students and teachers. Several short single-subject videos for students and teachers in the 'Snapshots' series were produced and posted online, and an instructional video for teachers to encourage them to role-play the parliament in the classroom was produced. Demand for PEO publications and resources from both teachers and parliamentarians

continued to be strong over the course of the year. PEO publications and resources were regularly reviewed and updated to ensure their currency, accuracy and ongoing relevance.

During the year the PEO actively monitored the development of the national curriculum in civics and citizenship. The draft curriculum has prompted the development of targeted lesson plans for teachers and new resources for secondary students.

Improving performance

The department's community outreach strategy for 2013–16 outlines a clear strategic direction for further developing our multimedia products and services.

We increased our use of social media and online engagement, providing enhanced opportunities to connect the community with the House of Representatives and its committees through cost-effective media.

The new parliamentary venue management system is planned for full implementation next year. The new system should provide a more user-friendly and efficient booking service that enables schools to book visits to the building and building occupants to make committee room and courtyard bookings online.

Outlook

Implementation of the community outreach strategy will remain an important focus of the department's work. An administrative restructure, occasioned by the Presiding Officers' response to a review of the parliament's international program (see page 36), will enable the team to explore new opportunities as the delivery of our services takes a stronger online focus.

We will transition from a print version of the *About the House* magazine to a digital publication. This will provide the opportunity for increased use of video material in connection with the magazine and will ensure that community engagement through the magazine enjoys the benefits of the latest developments in electronic publishing.

We will continue to encourage youth engagement with the House of Representatives through activities such as the My First Speech competition and the Speaker's University Challenge.

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office will continue to meet regularly and work with our colleagues in the PEO and Visitor Services, as well as the wider community, to provide the best possible service to the variety of people who visit Parliament House.

Committee services

The work in this program component is primarily performed by the Committee Office. The office supports parliamentary committees to examine policy and legislation and scrutinise the executive government.

Expenditure on these services in 2013–14 was \$6.984 million, which was \$0.874 million below the budget allocation of \$7.858 million. Staff levels, by location, are shown in Appendix 11.

Performance summary

As the federal election occurred during 2013–14, the year covered two parliaments: the Forty-third Parliament (ending on 5 August 2013) and the Forty-fourth Parliament (commencing on 12 November 2013). On 1 July 2013, nine Committee Office secretariats were supporting nine House investigatory committees and nine joint investigatory committees. At the end of the year on 30 June 2014, the nine Committee Office secretariats were again supporting nine House investigatory committees and nine joint investigatory committees.

In the first half of the financial year there was limited committee activity until the new parliament commenced. Anticipating that parliament might not meet again before an election, committees completed as many inquiries as possible by the June 2013 sittings. During the election period, committee staff worked on a number of committee and departmental projects and prepared for the new parliament. By the second half of 2013–14, committees were well underway with inquiries.

The office supported one joint select committee during 2013–14. The Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia was established in December 2013 to inquire into the development of northern Australia. The committee tabled an interim report on 16 June 2014, and is due to table its final report by 4 September 2014.

Committees supported by the Committee Office in 2013–14 are shown in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 8 Committees of the Forty-third Parliament supported by the Committee Office, 2013–14

House committees
Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and the Arts
Standing Committee on Economics
Standing Committee on Education and Employment
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing
Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications
Standing Committee on Regional Australia
Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs
Joint committees
Joint Committee on the National Broadband Network
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

Note: Six other House committees, mainly those concerned with the domestic operations of the House, and the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings, were supported by other program components of the department and are discussed on pages 19–21.

Table 9 Committees of the Forty-fourth Parliament supported by the Committee Office, 2013–14

House committees
Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry
Standing Committee on Economics
Standing Committee on Education and Employment
Standing Committee on the Environment
Standing Committee on Health
Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs
Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications
Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs
Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue
Joint committees
Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit
Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

Note: Six other House committees, mainly those concerned with the domestic operations of the House, and the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings, are supported by other program components of the department and are discussed on pages 19–21.

The department also supports the Liaison Committee of Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs. While this committee has formal processes, and is chaired by the Deputy Speaker, it is not a formal committee of the parliament but a means by which chairs and deputy chairs of committees administered by the House can discuss aspects of committee administration and support. In previous parliaments the committee generally met every six months, but it met more frequently in the Forty-third Parliament.

The Liaison Committee met once during 2013–14, in June 2014. At that meeting, the committee revised its document setting out the general principles for the administration of parliamentary committees. The document addresses the responsibilities of committee chairs, deputy chairs and committee secretaries, and with the revisions now includes the responsibilities of committee members. The committee also considered and agreed on a process for the attendance of persons other than committee members and secretariat staff at private committee activities.

Committee activity

The first half of 2013–14, which saw the end of the Forty-third Parliament, the federal election and the commencement of the Forty-fourth Parliament, was a period of consolidation and preparation for the Committee Office. The office took time to reflect on the challenges, opportunities and lessons of the Forty-third Parliament, and with the commencement of the Forty-fourth Parliament continued to apply the innovative work practices developed in the previous parliament.

The Forty-third Parliament was notable for the unprecedented levels of bills referred to House and joint committees for inquiry—188 bills were referred to committees supported by the department. In 2013–14 the number of bill inquiries dropped significantly, with committees returning their focus to conventional policy and scrutiny inquiries. In the Forty-fourth Parliament, by the end of June 2014 only two bills had been referred to House or joint committees supported by the department. This is closer to the level of bills referred in previous parliaments (in the Forty-second Parliament, six bills were referred to committees supported by the department).

On 1 July 2013, the investigatory committees supported by the department had 16 ongoing inquiries. This significant drop from the 46 ongoing inquiries at the start of the previous year (1 July 2012) reflects the efforts by committees to complete inquiries by the June 2013 sittings before the anticipated election. Three committees reported out of session in July and August 2013 relating to four inquiries, and the remaining inquiries lapsed at the dissolution of the Forty-third Parliament on 5 August 2013.

During 2013–14, committees of the Forty-fourth Parliament supported by the department started work on 54 new inquiries, presented 21 reports relating to 20 inquiries, and reported by way of oral statement on one occasion. On 30 June 2014, the committees had 34 ongoing inquiries. The inquiry-related activities of committees during 2013–14 are summarised in Appendixes 4 and 5.

During the year the Committee Office supported some inquiries that attracted significant public interest, and innovative methods were required to effectively manage stakeholder engagement. The Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs commenced an inquiry into the child support program. The committee sought to engage people through an online questionnaire. This process enables stakeholders to make a personal contribution to the inquiry, and assists the committee to understand the individual experiences of a broad range of people who might not use the more formal written submission or hearing processes.

By the end of the financial year, the questionnaire had been online for around six weeks and had already received more than 10,000 responses. The website also provided the option for members of the public to submit an expression of interest to participate in community statement sessions being held around the country. At the end of the reporting period, more than 1,000 expressions of interest had been received. The committee has published two snapshot updates online with key figures and a selection of responses on the topic. The committee has used a wide range of other methods to promote, inform and engage stakeholders in the child support program inquiry, including social media (Twitter and Facebook posts) and YouTube videos to provide updates on the inquiry. While the inquiry is still in its early stages, initial feedback received on these approaches has been positive and the Committee Office plans to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the social media and other tools used for this and similar inquiries.

For its inquiry into the role of the technical and further education (TAFE) system and its operation, the Standing Committee on Education and Employment also created an anonymous online survey to encourage participation in the inquiry by those who have experienced TAFE firsthand or are considering TAFE as an option. At 4 June 2014 the committee had received more than 3,600 responses. In June 2014 the committee published a snapshot of the survey online, which included key statistics from the survey and a selection of responses received. The Committee Office has found that using online questionnaires for inquiries that are likely to attract wide community interest is a time- and cost-effective way to obtain community opinion on an issue. This complements the evidence-gathering methods of written submissions and oral evidence.



Members of the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia inspecting a mining site in Borroloola, Northern Territory.

During the year the Committee Office also supported the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters for its inquiry into the 2013 federal election. On 9 May 2014 the committee tabled an interim report on Senate voting practices, making six unanimous recommendations for major reforms to the Senate electoral system. Committee staff supporting the inquiry had an intensive workload—200 submissions were received and 13 public hearings were held in early 2014. The inquiry continues in 2014–15.

Two joint statutory committees supported by the department reached a significant milestone in December 2013, passing the century mark since their original establishing legislation was enacted. The relevant 1913 Acts have since been repealed, but the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit was originally established by the *Committee of Public Accounts Act 1913* (since repealed by the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1951*), and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works was originally established by the *Commonwealth Public Works Committee Act 1913* (later repealed by the *Public Works Committee Act 1969*). These are two of the oldest continuing Commonwealth parliamentary committees.

In 2013–14, the government tabled responses to a number of reports presented in the previous parliament. One government response of note was to a report for an inquiry conducted by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade—*Care of ADF personnel wounded and injured on operations*. The report examined the treatment of personnel wounded and injured on operations, their repatriation to Australia, their ongoing care and their return to work or transition out of the Defence Force. The committee concluded that generally the care provided to Australia's wounded and injured is world class, particularly in the immediate aftermath of a battlefield incident, but developed 25 recommendations to ensure a comprehensive rehabilitation process for the physically wounded veterans who may fall through the cracks of the current system.

The government response, tabled on 6 March 2014, was largely supportive of the committee's recommendations. In a speech in the House on 28 May 2014, Ms Gai Brodtmann MP, a committee member for this inquiry, commented that the inquiry had a 'profound impact' on her and that she was proud to be associated with the inquiry and report, and also noted that the government had supported around two-thirds of the committee's recommendations.

Due to the timing of the election and commencement of the Forty-fourth Parliament, Committee Office staff did not support any committee delegations during 2013–14.

Analysis of performance

A key indicator for the Committee Office is the level of satisfaction with committee advice and services reported by members in the department's annual survey of members (for more detail see Appendix 12). As Table 10 shows, 95 per cent of members stated that they were extremely satisfied, highly satisfied or satisfied with the procedural advice, research, analytical, report drafting and administrative support services in relation to committee activities. In addition to the significant reduction in bills inquiries during the year, the reduction in the number of reports in 2013–14 reflected reduced activity in the first half of the year because of the general election, and increased activity in the preceding year to finalise inquiries before the anticipated general election.

Table 10 Committee Office performance indicators

Indicator	2009–10	2010–11 ^a	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14 ^b
Members' satisfaction rates (%) ^c	100	100	95	100	95
Reports, total ^d	57	42	90 (11)	104 (12)	21 (1)
Staff numbers, Committee Office ^e	63	63	63	64	65

a 2010–11 was an election year. Committees ceased to exist upon dissolution of the House (July to September 2010).

b 2013–14 was an election year. Committees ceased to exist upon dissolution of the House (August to November 2013).

c Members' satisfaction rates represent the proportion of members who stated they were 'satisfied', 'highly satisfied' or 'extremely satisfied' with committee services.

d Oral reports (shown in parentheses) may be given in discharge of a reference from the Selection Committee.

e Staff numbers as at 30 June each year.

Committee support

In addition to providing day-to-day support for committees, the department continued to assist the work of committees by developing support systems and projects to ensure that support staff were equipped to perform their roles effectively.

As mentioned, in the second half of the financial year, committee staff returned to high levels of committee activity. In the first half, when the House and committees ceased to operate during the election period, committee staff worked on a number of projects, including updating a range of key committee publications, reviewing the Committee Office training and development program and developing standard template covers for committee reports. Committee staff also assisted with projects in other sections of the department and some undertook mobility placements at external agencies, which included the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office, the Australian Electoral Commission and the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations. These were short-term assignments that supported corporate goals and individual development, and also helped to broaden the skills and experience of staff. All staff made presentations to the department on their experiences on return.

Training activities during the period included a Committee Office staff development seminar in October 2013 that focused on best practice in committee support and knowledge sharing. This was a well-attended and productive forum that covered practical aspects of committee procedure and practice. It enabled staff to reflect on the Forty-third Parliament and identify lessons and innovations to take into the Forty-fourth Parliament.

Records management and archiving

The Records Management Unit provided ongoing support and advice for staff in the Committee Office during the year as they used the online electronic records management system, e-Trim.

The archiving of paper committee records was a major focus in preparation for the Forty-fourth Parliament. More than seven shelf metres of records were processed and transferred to the National Archives.

Digitisation of committee reports

During the year, the department completed its project to make available online digital copies of all House and joint committee reports tabled since 1901. A total of 417 House and 1,528 joint committee reports have been made available electronically through this project.



Committee Office staff attending a development seminar, October 2013.

Improving performance

The Committee Office has been involved in several ICT projects aimed at improving its operational efficiency and maintaining a high standard of service to its clients and stakeholders.

Database redevelopment

Collaboration with the Department of the Senate continued on the Shared Committee Information Database (SCID). This custom-built program enables the online lodgement of submissions by members of the public. It doubles as a management tool for committee inquiry information and as a publishing tool for inquiry submissions, public hearing information and other associated information to the Parliament of Australia website. It replaces a number of outdated database and publishing tools used in the Committee Office. The rollout and user training began in March 2014, and committee secretariats have since noted the more streamlined approach to managing and publishing committee information.

The department completed a project to upgrade and roll out a new version of CommDocs—a custom-built program that provides a secure and access-controlled web-based interface for committee staff to distribute documents to committee members. CommDocs access for committee members and their staff is now managed by the committee secretariat, creating a more streamlined process.

HTML generator

In addition to making committee reports available in PDF, the department publishes all report content (including graphics, tables and footnotes) as HTML web pages. In this way, the department is seeking to comply with the current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) requirements as set out by the World Wide Web Consortium. Providing reports in this format extends accessibility by enabling screen readers to easily translate information for individuals with vision impairment. At the end of the financial year, 16 reports from the Forty-first Parliament and 46 reports from the Forty-second Parliament were yet to be converted into HTML.

Work continued on developing a new committee report template that will facilitate publishing reports from the Forty-fourth Parliament onwards in PDF, HTML, XML and ePub formats. The template is currently being tested, and rollout is due by the end of 2014.

It is the department's aim to achieve a level of integration between the committee report template, SCID and CommDocs to enable more efficient and effective committee work.

Outlook

The 2014–15 financial year will coincide with the midpoint in the parliamentary cycle, which is typically a period of high activity for the House and committees. Staff will actively support committees in progressing, completing and commencing a variety of inquiries.

In the coming year, development and use of ICT will continue to enhance our support for committee members and our performance. The current projects will be further progressed, and we will facilitate committee members' access to committee information through iPads. Use of social media and other digital tools to improve communication with the public will be pursued. There will also be emphasis on capability development, through limited recruitment, continued training and development, effective performance management and process improvement. Work will be done to further develop performance information and indicators and to monitor the effectiveness of committee operations. The Committee Office looks forward to continued collaboration with our colleagues in the other parliamentary departments on projects to enhance committee operations and effectiveness.

Inter-parliamentary relations

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

Activities and projects in 2013–14 were coordinated primarily through the International and Community Relations Office (ICRO), with input from all four parliamentary departments. ICRO is a joint office which is administered by this department but also receives part funding from the Department of the Senate.

In 2013–14, the budget allocation for the component was \$1.932 million and expenditure was \$1.017 million. Staff levels, by location, are shown in Appendix 11.

Performance summary

In the first half of the financial year there was less visit activity because the federal election was held at that time. With the commencement of the Forty-fourth Parliament, a comprehensive schedule of incoming and outgoing visits provided the opportunity to enhance links with a number of national parliaments. The Australian Parliament continued to play an active role in parliamentary associations to which it belongs. New opportunities emerged to support the capacity building of Pacific parliaments.

Parliamentary engagement

During 2013–14, the department coordinated 13 official visits overseas, which included bilateral visits to seven countries; attendance at five conferences, workshops and seminars; and five other visits (see Appendixes 8 and 9). There were seven official visits to Australia by parliamentary delegations from other countries as guests of the Australian Parliament (see Appendix 6) and 12 other visits. The regional focus of the visits program was maintained. Six of the seven official visits to Australia were from parliaments in the Asia-Pacific region.

For the 2014 outgoing delegations program, committee visits overseas were modified. A visit to one other Pacific region country was added to the longstanding New Zealand committee exchange, to enhance the opportunities for regional engagement. In addition to visiting New Zealand, the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee also visited Vanuatu as part of the exchange in May 2014 to explore issues relating to defence cooperation, international aid and tourism. There was a commensurate change to the annual Asia-Pacific committee visit, which was modified to become a parliamentary committee visit to Asia. The joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works was selected to undertake that visit in July 2014 to inspect new Australian embassy facilities in Indonesia and Thailand, in line with its role of reviewing major public works projects.

Outgoing and incoming delegations gave positive feedback on the quality of the programs, both at debrief meetings and through correspondence. For example, the Deputy President of the Malaysian Senate, who led a parliamentary delegation to Australia in May 2014, wrote to ICRO staff personally to thank them for the arrangements made for the delegation, stating that the assistance was provided 'in a most professional manner'.

To enhance links with parliaments of Latin America, the Presiding Officers approved the introduction of a multi-country Latin American delegation visit to Australia, following strong support for this initiative from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This visit represents a further evolution of the incoming visits program. Invitations were issued to 10 parliaments for the visit, which is scheduled to take place in August and September 2014.

Parliamentary cooperation

The Australian Parliament maintained its commitment to regional and international parliamentary cooperation. In 2013–14, delegations attended the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) assemblies, the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers Conference, and the Australian and Pacific Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference.

The restructure of parliamentary groups, agreed at the end of the Forty-third Parliament, was implemented from the commencement of the Forty-fourth Parliament, resulting in the establishment of 11 new parliamentary networks based on regional groupings. The parliamentary networks, and individual country groups formed under those networks, will provide an important link between the Australian Parliament and other national parliaments, as well as the diplomatic community.

As part of continuing efforts to engage Pacific parliaments with the work of the IPU, ICRO coordinated a two-day regional workshop in Tonga in November 2013, in association with the IPU and the Tongan Legislative Assembly. The workshop theme was 'Modern parliaments: the Pacific perspective', and participants considered three issues: the professional development of parliamentarians; gender-sensitive parliaments; and the role of parliamentarians in progressing policy issues, with a focus on oceans policy. Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from 13 Pacific parliaments attended the workshop, and a 30-point outcomes statement was issued at its conclusion. Funding for the workshop was provided by the Australian aid program, the IPU, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Centre for Democratic Institutions, demonstrating the successful partnerships ICRO has developed to encourage parliamentary cooperation in the region.

As part of transitional arrangements following the withdrawal of the Australian Parliament from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in December 2012, ICRO continued to support the work of the w.comm national women's parliamentary group. This included coordination of a young women's forum in Sydney in November 2013, which brought together young women and women parliamentarians from Australia's federal, state and territory parliaments. This was the second time the forum had been conducted, and for the first time it also included young women and parliamentarians from Pacific island parliaments. A statement of action was issued at the end of the forum to outline ways in which young women's engagement with politics and parliament could be encouraged.

Parliamentary strengthening

Support for democratic development at the international level was provided through established capacity-building programs and by responding to requests for assistance received from other parliaments and international organisations.

The Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program and the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Project have become flagship initiatives to drive capacity building in the region. A range of activities were coordinated under both programs during 2013–14, including:

- parliamentary skills seminars for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff
- exchange programs for parliamentarians
- attachments from and to Australia to provide training and mentoring for Pacific parliamentary staff
- research scholarships
- study visits to Australia focusing on the roles and responsibilities of senior parliamentarians and senior parliamentary staff in managing the parliament
- professional development conferences focusing on library services, research and parliamentary education and outreach
- development of ICT and legal and research strategies
- provision of ICT equipment to improve the systems supporting the work of Pacific parliaments and their members.

The parliamentary development specialist at the UNDP Pacific Centre described the Australian Parliament's set-up for outreach and international work as 'one of the best I have come across'. The Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program is an effective and well-regarded program, with a recent evaluation by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade stating:

The report demonstrates the comprehensive range of training and practical assistance that were delivered and vital networks and relationships that were fostered over the three years. It is clear that the Department of the House of Representatives has a strong facilitation role in building partnerships not only between Pacific and Australian legislatures but with other Pacific and New Zealand stakeholders.

Two new projects were established under the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program with funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Centre for Democratic Institutions. The new projects will provide capacity building to support the re-establishment of the Fiji Parliament and the ongoing development of the Papua New Guinea Parliament.

Eleven study visits from parliaments from Africa, Asia and the Pacific were also arranged in response to requests received. The study visits focused on a diverse range of parliamentary issues, including practice and procedure, administration, services to parliamentarians, and outreach.

The Clerk of the House participated in two capacity-building activities for the Myanmar Parliament in May and June 2014: executive management training for the parliament's senior management team and assistance in developing the parliament's strategic plan. The activities formed part of the capacity-building activities being coordinated by the IPU and UNDP, and follow on from support provided to the Myanmar Parliament over the previous two years.

Improving performance

Digital apps were introduced for outgoing parliamentary delegations to enable all material to be provided to delegation members in electronic form. Feedback from delegation members at debrief meetings after visits has indicated that they find the apps useful and strongly support this initiative.

Video reports from delegations were introduced, involving filmed interviews with delegation leaders, in addition to the more traditional paper reports presented to the Houses. The videos have been loaded onto the international program web page and the House of Representatives YouTube channel, enhancing the information available to the community on the work parliamentarians undertake on delegations.

Outlook

A review of the international program was commissioned by the Presiding Officers in 2013. That review reported in April 2014 and the Presiding Officers responded in June 2014. The response provides strong endorsement of the international program as an integral part of the work of the Australian Parliament. The Presiding Officers concluded that the international program should continue to have a core focus on serving the interests of parliamentarians and, increasingly, of committees. They also welcomed the Australian Parliament's significant and growing role in assisting capacity building and strengthening of other parliaments in the region.

The Presiding Officers' response to the review will be implemented during 2014–15. The major aspects of the response are the establishment of an advisory group and the restructure of the administrative support functions. An Inter-Parliamentary Relations Advisory Group, consisting of two parliamentarians (appointed by the Presiding Officers in consultation with the whips), the heads of the parliamentary departments and the parliamentary librarian, will be established to provide advice to the Presiding Officers and develop a strategic plan for the international program. A restructure of the administrative support functions will be effected through the creation of two new offices, retained within the department. An International and Parliamentary Relations Office will be established to manage the incoming and outgoing delegation programs, membership of inter-parliamentary organisations, and the international interests and travel of members and senators. A Parliamentary Skills Centre will be established to take responsibility for the delivery of all parliamentary capacity-building and strengthening initiatives.

New projects established under the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program will commence activities during 2014–15. It should be noted that the parliament does not have dedicated funding to support the various parliamentary capacity-building initiatives that it engages in; rather, the parliament has limited resources and when donor funding is identified the parliament must apply for funding allocations in competition with other providers. This places a clear limit on the extent to which the parliament can become involved in parliamentary strengthening work. Nevertheless, subject to the parliament's strategic plan, it is hoped that, given Australia's standing as a mature and stable democracy, whenever developing parliaments, particularly those in the region, are in need of support in capacity building, the parliament will be able to play its part.

Members' services and corporate support

The members' services and corporate support program component provides advice, services and support to members and their staff in Parliament House; pays members' salaries and allowances; and provides corporate services, advice and support to the department. The program component's responsibilities include:

- providing a concierge service to members and their staff
- paying members' salaries and allowances
- providing the department with advice and support on financial and human resource management, and records management, publishing and office services
- organising members' office accommodation, furniture and fittings; providing mail and courier services; and handling bookings for committee rooms and chamber galleries
- maintaining and publishing key information about members and former members.

These responsibilities are undertaken by the four areas reporting to the Serjeant-at-Arms: the Finance Office, the Knowledge Management and Publishing Office, the People Strategies Office and the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office.

The department is the primary contact for providing concierge services to members. We liaise closely with colleagues from the Department of Finance and the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) on a range of matters.

The expenditure for the members' services and corporate support program component in 2013–14 was \$9.282 million. The budget allocation was \$7.142 million. The actual expenditure includes expenses not requiring appropriation made up of depreciation expense, amortisation expense and resources received free of charge. Staff levels, by location, are shown in Appendix 11.

Performance summary

A high priority for the program component is to provide advice and support to the Speaker and the Speaker's Office on the control and management of the precincts, chamber and gallery security, and ceremonial and other events at Parliament House. We work closely with colleagues in the Department of the Senate, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Australian Federal Police and DPS.

We also work in partnership with parliamentary departmental colleagues to drive and deliver major projects, such as enhancing ICT systems that have a whole-of-parliament application. In addition, we represent the department and support the interests of the House and members on a number of inter-parliamentary committees and boards that provide whole-of-parliament governance.

During the reporting period, we continued to work on ICT projects to achieve innovation and efficiency, including developing and replacing many of the support systems for the Chamber, committees and members' services. All projects are now close to completion.

We continued to work with the other parliamentary departments to consolidate and integrate ICT services within DPS. This remains a major change project for the parliamentary administration, and is of particular significance given the central importance of ICT to the work of the parliament and the department.

Work on the office furniture replacement project continued. In the reporting period, installations were completed in areas including the Leader of the Opposition's suite and the Speaker's suite, as well as offices used by departmental staff. Work also included the office designs and procurement of furniture for the suites of the government and opposition whips as well as for the remaining departmental work areas. All installations are due to be completed in mid-2015.

A Parliament House Open Day was held on 24 August 2013. The department's International and Community Relations Office led the planning and coordinated the parliamentary departments to provide for over 8,000 visitors. Tours in key areas of the House were very popular, including tours in both chambers of parliament, the Speaker's and President's offices, the Prime Minister's Office and the

courtyard. There were a variety of displays on how the parliament and its staff work, and a particular highlight was a special visit by principal design architect Romaldo Giurgola. The day was a great success and the department received a considerable amount of positive feedback from visitors.

The 2014 members' survey indicated their levels of satisfaction with the department's services. The services provided by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office again achieved a 100 per cent satisfaction level. This year, as in 2013, all members responding were extremely or highly satisfied. All members were satisfied with their home pages on the Parliament of Australia website—62 per cent were either extremely or highly satisfied, which was the same as in 2013. This year 95 per cent of members were satisfied with services for salary, electorate allowances and deductions, which compares to 100 per cent in 2013.

Services and advice

Chamber enhancements

During the reporting period, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker sought enhancements in the Chamber and the Federation Chamber, for which they are respectively responsible. These enhancements include the introduction of screens identifying the business before the House in the Chamber and the restructure of the Deputy Speaker and Clerk's dais in the Federation Chamber. The work is being coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office together with DPS, and is expected to be completed in late 2014.

Media services

The Serjeant-at-Arms and staff continued to work with the various media bureaux and the governing committee of the Parliamentary Press Gallery to ensure compliance with the *Rules for media related activity in Parliament House and its precincts*. The Presiding Officers adopted the rules in 2012, and their administration has been delegated to the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod. The rules clarify the areas in the building and precincts where media activity is permitted, permitted only after prior approval, or not permitted at all. They also set out the circumstances where still photography by accredited media personnel is permitted in the chambers, and where filming and photography are more broadly permitted throughout the parliamentary precincts. It is a condition of access to the building that occupants comply with the rules, and a graduated range of sanctions may be applied for non-compliance.

During the year, the Serjeant-at-Arms, the Usher of the Black Rod and their delegates liaised closely with the press gallery to balance media access, security and parliamentary requirements at major events, including the opening of the Forty-fourth Parliament and the swearing in of His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) as Governor-General.

On a day-to-day level, the Serjeant-at-Arms and her delegates work with ministers' offices, representatives of the press gallery and the Parliamentary Security Service to ensure that media events on the precincts are conducted in compliance with the rules and with minimum inconvenience to all.

During the year, the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office responded to some 175 requests to film or photograph within the private areas of the building.

Broadcasting of proceedings

On 9 December 2013, the House adopted a new resolution for the broadcast of parliamentary proceedings. A very similar order was adopted by the Senate two days later. Both the House resolution and the Senate order replace earlier equivalents and authorise the broadcast and re-broadcast of the proceedings and excerpts of proceedings of the two chambers and their committees. The resolution and the order were drafted by the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings during the Forty-third Parliament, following the committee's 2012 review of media-related activity in Parliament House.

The resolution and the order simplify and harmonise previous conditions of broadcast, and recognise that television and radio are no longer the only broadcast media (given the increase of other media platforms such as internet-based social media) and that previous distinctions between

broadcasting and re-broadcasting are becoming less relevant with new technology. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate continue to retain control over broadcast content, which still needs to be supplied by authorised parliamentary staff in accordance with guidelines approved by the Presiding Officers.

The resolution and the order also include the general principles for the radio broadcast of parliamentary proceedings by the ABC, which were tabled in the first half of 2013 by the committee and required to be adopted by the chambers before they could come into force. The general principles determine that the allocation of the live radio broadcast between the two chambers should be approximately equal. For question time, either the House or the Senate session is broadcast live and the other is broadcast later in the day. These general principles are complemented by standing determinations that provide more detailed advice to the ABC for the radio broadcasts.

Information services

To help keep members and their staff informed about developments in the House, three editions of the members' bulletin, *House Update*, were published during the year. In addition, the annual series of briefings on procedural and other developments in the House was continued. Seven briefings were held during the year.

The department continued to operate its drop-in centre every sitting Tuesday to enable members and their staff to get information or provide feedback on any of the services provided by the department. During the year, the drop-in centre held 12 sessions, and during these sessions there were nine queries. As in previous years, the sessions were staffed by senior departmental staff members, with a customer service officer from DPS invited to attend to increase the value of the service to members.

Accommodation services

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office provides a concierge service for members and, as part of this, coordinates accommodation, capital works and routine maintenance services in the House of Representatives wing.

During the year, the office arranged some 180 office relocations as a result of the 2013 election and the change in government. These relocations reflected the comparatively high number of new members following the 2013 election. The office worked closely with the government and opposition whips to make sure the suites were ready as quickly as possible. The office also coordinated 723 requests to supply and move furniture (significantly more than in the previous year), which arose from the settling in of new members and the movement of members to and from the ministerial wing. All tasks were performed within agreed timeframes and to agreed standards, and to the satisfaction of the whips and individual members.

We worked with DPS on a number of accommodation projects affecting suites in the House of Representatives wing, including the conversion of meeting rooms back into members' suites in view of the heavy demand for members' suites after the 2013 election.

Replacement of office furniture

Work continues on the replacement of office furniture for departmental staff and the staff of certain parliamentary office holders. The furniture being replaced has been in use since 1988. Work completed to date includes replacing 54 per cent of workstations used by departmental staff, as well as those used by staff of the Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition.

The office furniture used by the remainder of departmental staff and by staff of the government and opposition whips, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the Manager of Opposition Business will be replaced in 2014–15.

Maintenance, access and transport services

Maintenance requests for work in members' suites are coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, and include both emergency and routine work. During the year, the office coordinated 420 emergency requests, which were all attended to within five minutes of receipt. In addition, the office coordinated 285 routine maintenance requests for repairs or alterations to suites or common

areas. We take a proactive approach by performing office shutdowns and inspections over the autumn and winter recesses, so that issues can be identified, reported and repaired while parliament is not sitting. The office coordinated 418 requests for assistance with telephone faults, relocations and allocations of telephone numbers. Faults reported were referred to telephone support in DPS within five minutes of receipt, and appropriate timeframes for the matters to be resolved were agreed with that area.

As the area responsible for access to members' suites, the office approved 1,103 requests by DPS for access to suites and general circulation areas for general maintenance and services.

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office also provides a Transport Office to coordinate transport services for members, including managing the COMCAR shuttle service on behalf of the Department of Finance during sitting weeks.

In 2013–14, the Transport Office managed 8,960 bookings by members. This represents fewer bookings than in the previous year, and reflects reduced COMCAR use in Canberra during the election period. During sitting weeks the Transport Office operates morning and evening shifts, opening at 6.00 am each morning for members coming to Parliament House and remaining open in the evening until at least 9.00 pm or until an hour after the House rises.

The Transport Office is also open from 4.00 pm to 10.30 pm on the Sundays prior to sitting weeks to take bookings and facilitate the pick-up of members at Canberra airport as they arrive.

Parliament House security

The Serjeant-at-Arms represents the department on the Security Management Board. The board is established pursuant to section 65A of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* to provide advice to the Presiding Officers on security policy and the management of security measures for Parliament House. The board met seven times during the year. Matters considered included:

- security screening arrangements
- planned reviews of the pass policy and perimeter security
- a proposed strategic framework for security at Parliament House.

Police access to the parliamentary precincts

Officers of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) must seek the permission of the Presiding Officers before attending the parliamentary precincts. Traditionally, the permission of the Presiding Officers has been sought by the AFP officer-in-charge at Parliament House through the Serjeant-at-Arms or the Usher of the Black Rod, as appropriate. In early 2013, the Presiding Officers agreed that approval of requests for access to the House of Representatives or Senate wings would be through the Serjeant-at-Arms or the Usher of the Black Rod, respectively.

Authorised Assembly Area

DPS has responsibility for managing events on the Authorised Assembly Area at the front of Parliament House. The area is allocated variously to individuals, community groups and organisations to promote their causes and hold events. Under the authorisation signed by the Presiding Officers, the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod are to be notified as soon as is practicable of any protests, other public assemblies, functions or events on the precincts that may disrupt the smooth running of the building or affect the security or decorum of the chambers.

Security screening

Guests of government and parliament are subject to automatic exemption from security screening on entry to Parliament House. Approvals for any other exemptions from security screening are jointly made by the Usher of the Black Rod and the Serjeant-at-Arms. During the year, exemptions from security screening were approved for 16 groups or individuals (compared with 43 in 2012–13).

Heritage Advisory Board

The Heritage Advisory Board held eight meetings during the year. The primary function of the board is to oversee and provide advice to the Presiding Officers on the heritage management of Parliament House. The board is also required to oversee detailed heritage issues for Parliament House. The

members of the board are the Secretary of DPS (chair), the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod. In May 2014, the Presiding Officers decided to disband the board in June 2014, as the work of the board would be substantially complete. The board met for the last time on 12 June 2014.

Matters considered by the board during the year included:

- the development of a conservation management plan for Parliament House, and the establishment of an expert advisory panel to provide high-level and independent advice to aid the development of the plan
- the management of cultural heritage items at Parliament House.

Information and communications technology

In response to the recommendations of the 2012 review of information and communications technology for the parliament, the ICT responsibilities of the chamber departments were transferred to DPS on 1 July 2013. As part of this process, four departmental staff and funding for ICT assets were transferred to DPS.

The Joint Management Committee, which comprises senior parliamentary department staff, oversaw the transfer of ICT responsibilities to DPS. The committee is now responsible for monitoring ICT issues and performance against the service-level agreement. The Serjeant-at-Arms represents the department on the committee.

A one-stop shop for ICT support has been established for members and senators and will be applied more generally to the chamber departments in 2014.

Software and hardware services

The department continued to drive and develop innovative projects for ICT solutions.

Projects to replace many of the ICT support systems for the Chamber, committees and members' services continued throughout the year. These systems included:

- the Table Offices Production System (see page 21)
- the Parliamentary Procedural Records System (see page 22)
- the Shared Committee Information Database (SCID—formerly the Senate Committee Information Database)
- the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office booking system—the venue management system—for school visits, chamber gallery reservations and committee room bookings.



Staff of the International and Community Relations Office setting up for the Parliament House Open Day, August 2013.

Work continued on a new committee report template that will make it easier to publish committee reports in PDF, HTML and ePub format.

The rollout of e-Trim has been implemented across the department, and more than 95 per cent of departmental staff now use the system to file and manage their records electronically. Since the implementation of e-Trim in 2012, the number of records and files created in the system has increased by one-third. All new staff receive e-Trim training as part of their induction. In addition, ongoing tailored one-on-one e-Trim support is provided to existing staff.

Internet and intranet services

The rollout of the redeveloped SCID took place in early April 2014. This project was undertaken by the department and the Department of the Senate and involved the development of a bespoke management system for committee inquiry content. SCID doubles as a web publishing tool that is used to create and manage inquiry web pages. Training in the use of SCID commenced in March 2014 and will continue during the deployment phase.

The upgraded version of CommDocs, a secure intranet portal for committees, was deployed at the beginning of the Forty-fourth Parliament. The new version includes several enhancements, most notably the ability for committee secretariats to manage their own site permissions and a simplified method of site creation.

The department commenced a project to develop and distribute digital publications via the Adobe Digital Publishing Suite. Digital publications have been created and distributed for the New Members Seminar and several outgoing delegations. A publicly available interactive seating plan has been released, and several more digital publications are in development.

The department continued to use the Ooyala video streaming platform to provide a video-streaming service on the Parliament of Australia website, and expanded its use to include our social media channels. Ooyala uses adaptive bitrate streaming technology and can be accessed by desktop, iOS and Android devices. Closed captioning for pre-recorded videos is provided on this service.

Printing

The department's in-house printing service produced around 1.3 million impressions in 2013–14 (a decrease from around 2.7 million in 2012–13). The decreased volume was a direct result of the election period in the first half of the financial year, when no chamber documents were required and committee report printing ceased.

In response to the changing economic environment, we are now producing more committee reports internally and reducing the number of reports printed while increasing our online presence.

Parliamentary assistants program

The parliamentary assistants program, managed by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, entered its fourteenth year. Parliamentary assistants are university students who perform the duties of messengerial attendants for an average of 10 hours per week; rosters are planned around student commitments and the requirements of the House of Representatives.

There were six students in the program this year: three were existing assistants, and three were new appointments. The applicants came from metropolitan and country New South Wales, Canberra and Victoria, and all were studying at universities in Canberra. Former parliamentary assistants were also engaged in the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office to work at the front counter and in other areas of members' services.

Members' salaries

All processing of members' salaries and entitlements by the People Strategies Office was in accordance with legislation and administrative decisions. In the 2014 members' survey, 81 per cent of members were extremely or highly satisfied (69 per cent in the 2013 survey), and in total 95 per cent were satisfied with services in relation to their base salary, electorate allowances and deductions (100 per cent in the 2013 survey). Annual expenditure on members' salaries and other entitlements was \$45.235 million.

The base salary of members was adjusted by Remuneration Tribunal Determination 2013/13 from 1 July 2013, and the increase was processed by the People Strategies Office in the same month. The additional salary of office holders, ministers and shadow ministers was adjusted accordingly.

The office processed the cessation of office holders' allowances at the dissolution of the parliament. Forty-two members' entitlements ceased either at the date of dissolution or on the day before election day. The office also processed the payment of resettlement allowances, which were payable to former members who met certain criteria.

The 42 new members were paid their initial entitlements within two weeks of their poll being declared.

Corporate support

The human resources section provided corporate services advice and support to the department and a shared-service payroll service to DPS and the Parliamentary Budget Office. In November 2013, the department ceased providing payroll services to DPS.

Operational performance indicators for finance, human resources and other corporate support services were met, and the department was in compliance with internal and external governance and reporting requirements. Also during the year:

- the department's business continuity network was established and met, and work began on updating office-level business resumption plans for each work group
- leadership training and development programs were implemented for the Executive, directors and committee secretaries.

Related information is detailed in the 'Management and accountability' section of the report.

Improving performance

It was a demanding year for the program component, which carried out its ongoing advisory, operational and project responsibilities in a context of administrative change and significant financial pressure. Strategies to enhance and sustain performance levels included planning, people management, relationship building, innovation, sound governance arrangements and reviews. Performance was again at a high standard, sustained by the professionalism of staff.

The department continues to work closely with the Department of the Senate and DPS on a range of matters and on a range of interdepartmental boards and groups.

Outlook

In 2014–15 the department will continue to provide advice and services of a high standard to support the Speaker, members in Parliament House and the department.

We anticipate that important priorities for the members' services and corporate support program component during the year will include:

- continuing the rollout of the new venue management system in conjunction with the Senate and DPS
- completing the furniture replacement project
- reviewing departmental performance information and reporting, in accordance with the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*
- progressing the implementation of e-Trim through the remaining areas of the department
- integrating COMCAR's booking system into our Transport Office
- further developing capability within the program, including through the documentation of systems and processes and the use of supplementary and backup resources
- preparing for the drafting and negotiation of a new enterprise agreement for departmental staff.

Schools hospitality

The department receives a special appropriation in order to provide modest hospitality to school groups visiting Parliament House.

In 2013–14, the administered appropriation for program component 2.1 was \$0.325 million and expenditure was \$0.314 million.

Performance summary

School visits to Parliament House are coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, working in partnership with the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) and Visitor Services.

In 2013–14 there was a small decrease in the number of school students participating in educational tours of Parliament House, with 113,709 students recorded, down from 115,651 in the previous year. The number of students from New South Wales and the Northern Territory decreased, while all other states recorded slightly higher numbers than in the previous financial year (see Table 11).

All visiting students participated in a guided tour and visited both chambers. Of those, 84 per cent (97,383) received hospitality and 77 per cent (87,657) participated in the PEO program, a small decrease on the previous financial year (see page 25 for more information on the PEO's activities).

Table 11 Students visiting Parliament House, by location and year, 2009–10 to 2013–14

Year	ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	Tas.	Vic.	WA	Other	Total
2009–10	3,703	70,294	623	15,845	4,618	1,394	17,041	4,378	59	117,955
2010–11	2,730	67,715	707	16,411	4,205	1,262	17,458	4,048	62	114,598
2011–12	1,637	66,036	899	17,389	5,059	1,676	17,312	4,706	80	114,794
2012–13	1,657	67,955	881	16,395	4,742	1,471	17,245	5,064	241	115,651
2013–14	1,859	62,597	835	18,193	5,390	1,581	17,766	5,488	–	113,709

Improving performance

In previous years, school bookings were only taken for the next financial year from 1 July of that year. From 2014, bookings were taken on a rolling basis for the following calendar year. This avoided the deluge of bookings that would be received each 1 July, smoothing the booking workload for the Serjeant-at-Arms Office.

Outlook

By 30 June 2014, we had already booked 27,940 students from 732 schools for the following 12 months.