



Part 2

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Annual performance statement 2017–18

Introductory statement

I, as the accountable authority of the Department of the House of Representatives, present the department's 2017–18 annual performance statement, as required under section 39(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). In my opinion, this annual performance statement accurately reflects the performance of the department, and complies with section 39(2) of the PGPA Act.

David Elder, Clerk of the House

Purpose

The department's purpose, as set out in its 2017–18 Corporate Plan, is:

to support the House of Representatives, and the wider Parliament, in the role of a representative and legislative body primarily by providing advice and services, and through engaging with the community and other parliaments. (Outcome 1)

Data sources

The results and analysis presented in this annual performance statement are based on data from several sources. These include a survey of members of the House, interviews with members who have specific roles in supporting the operation of the House, and a survey of departmental staff. Data from these sources has been supplemented with formal and informal feedback from stakeholders, including the Presiding Officers, visiting dignitaries and external clients, such as seminar participants and beneficiaries of the department's inter-parliamentary capacity-building activities.

Members' survey

Following on from the inaugural online survey of all 150 members of the House in 2017, all members in 2018 were again invited to complete an online questionnaire, with hard copies available on request. The survey was open from 21 May to 30 June 2018 and members were advised that their responses would be anonymous.

The survey asked members to indicate whether they were satisfied with each of the following:

- » the quality and timeliness of chamber procedural support and advisory services
- » the quality and availability of procedural and statistical publications, and support to obtain these
- » the quality and timeliness of parliamentary committee advice and services
- » the standard of committee report drafting
- » support for participation in official international delegations
- » support for their House of Representatives office accommodation
- » support for their salary payments
- » support for transport coordination.

Members could provide specific comments about each service and, at the end of the survey, they were invited to provide additional comments on any aspect of the services supported by the department.

Eighteen members completed the questionnaire online, with an additional two members completing the survey in hard copy. With five of the 150 seats vacant in the House of Representatives at the time of the survey, this represents a response rate of 14 per cent.

Members' interviews

To complement the members' survey, the Clerk wrote to 26 members on the basis that they were either government or opposition whips, served on the Speaker's panel or were non-aligned members, inviting them to participate in an in-depth face-to-face interview with a senior member of departmental staff. The members were advised that the department was conducting the interviews to receive feedback on the level and quality of its advice, information and services, and to gain an insight into service provision, particularly as it relates to their role as office holders or non-aligned members. Areas covered in the interviews were:

- » the quality of the support provided for their work in the Chamber and Federation Chamber
- » the usefulness of the panel member's induction and the support offered, including the support as chair in the Chamber or Federation Chamber
- » the quality, availability and usefulness of procedural publications and resources
- » the quality and usefulness of advice and support received in relation to work on parliamentary committees, including the quality of report drafting
- » the support received from the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office in relation to accommodation in Parliament House and support services such as transport, stationery, salaries and allowances
- » any additional advice, support or services that would assist members in their parliamentary work.

The members were advised that their responses would be compiled into a summary report on satisfaction levels and areas for improvement or new initiatives, and that individual responses would remain confidential.

Interviews were conducted in May and June 2018 with 22 members, a participation rate of 85 per cent of those invited to be involved.

Staff survey

The departmental staff survey for 2017–18 was available online from 21 May to 30 June 2018. The purpose of the survey was to understand staff opinions of the department's working environment, performance, governance and leadership. Staff were advised that results of the survey would be distributed to staff of the department, addressing key trends, and that individual responses would not be identified.

A total of 125 staff responded to the survey, a participation rate of 70 per cent.

Other data sources

In addition to the members' survey and interviews, feedback on the services provided by the department is sought from the Speaker's Office through interviews with the Speaker's chief of staff and advisers. Formal feedback is also received through surveys completed by participants in official parliamentary delegations, beneficiaries of the department's inter-parliamentary capacity-building activities and participants in the department's seminar programs.

Activity information

The department monitors its work output by collecting information on specific activities throughout the year. Comparisons with data from previous years provide a longitudinal perspective and an indication of the extent to which various outputs are affected by the parliamentary cycle.

As is typical of the middle year of the parliamentary cycle, the activity information reflects a very busy year for the department, dominated by parliamentary sittings and committee work.

Commentary

Following a 2017 audit of the department's performance measures, the department developed a more refined performance framework, with a revised purpose statement and more rigorous processes to collect performance information. The revised purpose statement and performance measures are presented in summary in the department's 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, and in more detail in the department's 2017–18 Corporate Plan.

The department is committed to considering its performance from the perspective of its key client groups. The revised purpose statement indicates that the department's support for the House of Representatives as a representative and legislative body is primarily delivered through the provision of advice and services. As recipients of the advice and services, members are the department's principal clients. Quantitative and qualitative data gathered from members via the members' survey and via interviews with the selected cohort of members provides crucial performance information. However, it is important to note that only 20 of the 145 members responded to the survey, a response rate of 14 per cent, and that the respondents were self-selected rather than randomly selected. This highlights the continuing importance of the face-to-face interviews with members, and feedback provided by the Speaker's Office.

For the first time the revised purpose statement also captures other aspects of the department's role, including its role in facilitating community engagement with the work of the House, and supporting activities to enhance engagement with other parliaments in Australia and overseas. As noted, improved performance measures and more rigorous data collection processes have been implemented to assess the department's performance for these activities.

Results and analysis

Activity 1: Chamber and Federation Chamber

Performance criterion	Target			
Level of satisfaction among surveyed members with the quality and timeliness of chamber support, procedural, statistical publications, analysis and advisory services	90 per cent satisfied			
Criterion source				
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 13; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18				
Result against performance criterion				
Target met.				
One hundred per cent of members who responded to the members' survey indicated satisfaction. Feedback from interviewed members was largely consistent with the survey results. The majority of interviewed members reported a high degree of satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of chamber support.				
With respect to procedural and other publications, interviewed members indicated a high level of appreciation for the quality and availability of the department's procedural and statistical publications. While some indicated that they did not use the publications frequently, all interviewed members had an awareness of the breadth of material available.				
Performance criterion	Target			
Chamber support service standards met for sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber and processing of bills, votes, messages, and other chamber documents with a high degree of accuracy and within timeframes	100 per cent			
Criterion source				
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 13; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18				
Result against performance criterion				
Target met.				
Chamber support service standards were met, with no significant errors identified by the data source, being the internal chamber support standards. Processing of proposed legislation and other business was completed within agreed timeframes and no significant errors were identified.				
Activity measures (no targets set)				
Source				
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 13				
	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17^a	2017–18
Number of sittings of the House	77	60	64	60
Number of meetings of the Federation Chamber	57	41	59	59
Number of bills introduced	203	162	248	222

a. Election year.

Analysis: Chamber and Federation Chamber

The 2017–18 Corporate Plan details the performance measures for Chamber and Federation Chamber support, and sets the target of 90 per cent of members satisfied with the quality and timeliness of chamber support, procedural, statistical publications, analysis and advisory services. Results from the members' survey indicate that the target was achieved.

At interview, feedback from members was also very positive in relation to the quality and timeliness of chamber support. A number of members expressed interest in attending advanced training to better understand their work in the Chamber and Federation Chamber. In addition to the induction available to members when they are newly elected to the House, the department provides opportunities for members and their staff to learn more about various aspects of the work of the House through regular 'House briefings' that are offered during sitting weeks. The department is currently investigating ways to enhance the opportunities already available to members and their staff, with a focus on diversifying the content and format of training resources, and making use of technology to offer learning opportunities online.

A target of 100 per cent was set for chamber support service standards which include providing support for sittings of the House and Federation Chamber, and the timely processing of chamber documents with a high degree of accuracy. The department achieved this target. The Table Office will continue its close attention to detail to ensure the ongoing accuracy of its work in support of the Chamber and Federation Chamber. Following feedback in the members' interviews, one area that will be considered is possible changes to the procedural scripts which assist members in their chamber work, particularly members who are chairing proceedings.

The interviews also highlighted an interest among members of the Speaker's panel to convene more frequently and less formally, and to use such meetings to receive more informal training. The department will further consider support opportunities in consultation with the Speaker.

Activity 2: Community awareness

Performance criterion	Community is aware of, and engages with, published information about legislative and other parliamentary processes				Target	Interaction with the work of the House increasing over time (per cent change on prior year)			
Criterion source	2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 14; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18								
Result against performance criterion	<p>Target met.</p> <p>Using subscription data and publication circulation data as the data sources, the number of engagements on the department's social media platforms were found to have increased as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Facebook: 6,472 followers (increase of 11 per cent) » Twitter: 42,810 followers (increase of 6 per cent) » <i>About the House</i> newsletter: 1,840 subscribers (increase of 71 per cent) » YouTube: 4,736 subscribers (increase of 30 per cent) <p>Posts to the department's Twitter page received a total of 3,264,848 impressions, and videos published by the department were viewed approximately 232,700 times.</p>								
Performance criterion	Clients are satisfied with seminars				Target	90 per cent of seminar participants are satisfied			
Criterion source	2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 14; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18								
Result against performance criterion	<p>Target met.</p> <p>Using the seminar feedback forms as the data source, seminar satisfaction rates have continued to exceed targets with 94 per cent of participants satisfied with seminars and 93 per cent of those surveyed meeting their objectives in attending seminars.</p>								
Activity measure (no target set)									
Source	2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 14								
	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17^a		2017–18				
Community contacts with the department's publications	No data available	No data available	No data available	@AbouttheHouse Twitter account received over 3.2 million impressions. Website hits: 331,870 ^b					
Number of seminar programs conducted	7	8	9		10				

a. Election year.

b. Website hits defined as unique page views on the Chamber Documents page (including subpages) and the Powers, Practice and Procedure page (including subpages, with access to formal procedural publications including *House of Representatives Practice, Guide to Procedures*, standing orders, and infosheets, as well as *Live Minutes* providing draft minutes of House and Federation Chamber proceedings in real time).

Analysis: Community awareness

Ensuring that the wider community has access to information on the work of the House and its committees is an important activity for the department. The department's 2017–18 Corporate Plan included revised performance measures for community awareness, focusing on engagement through social media and other forms of communication, and on satisfaction with seminars offered by the department.

Contacts with the department's publications can vary depending on public interest in the parliament in a given period. This reporting period has seen steady growth across all of the Department's community outreach products with increased subscriptions across all digital platforms, a highlight being the 71 per cent increase in subscriptions to the *About the House* newsletter.

Data also indicates an increased demand for seminars offered by the department, and high levels of satisfaction from seminar participants. It is anticipated that the first six months of 2018–19 will see a large jump in seminar numbers due to paid promotional activity conducted at the end of the reporting period.

Activity 3: Committee support

Performance criterion	Target			
Level of satisfaction among surveyed committee members with the thoroughness, accuracy and timeliness of advice, standard of committee reports and other committee support services provided	90 per cent satisfied			
Criterion source	2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 15; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18			
Result against performance criterion	<p>Target met.</p> <p>One hundred per cent of members who responded to the members' survey indicated satisfaction.</p> <p>Feedback from members interviewed for the data source members' survey indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the work of the staff of the committee secretariats, and found the level of support provided by those staff to be excellent. While the majority of members interviewed indicated a high degree of satisfaction with secretariat services, concern was raised by a small number regarding the provision of advice.</p>			
Activity measures (no targets set)	Target			
Level of satisfaction among surveyed committee members with the standard of committee reports	90 per cent satisfied			
Source	2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 15			
	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17^a	2017–18
Number of committee meetings ^b	574	555	541	693
Hours of meetings ^b	1,018	912	845	1,285
Number of committee reports ^b	70	72	46	73

a. Election year.

b. Excludes internal committees.

Analysis: Committee support

Results of the members' survey indicate that members are satisfied with the support provided by the department in relation to the activities of committees administered by the department. Performance targets for thoroughness, accuracy and timeliness of advice as well as the standard of committee reports and other committee support services were all met during the reporting period.

Members' comments about their experiences with committees continue to be positive, and focus on the preparation of draft reports, positive experiences of committee procedures, and the high level of support received. The members' interviews also revealed concern by several members that some committees might not be as well-resourced as they could be.

Some members suggested that the committee system as a whole could be reviewed, noting some duplication of subject matter in both House and Senate inquiries. A few members also commented that the number of committees that each member serves on has left them feeling over-committed. These issues are being considered in the context of the committee structure for future parliaments; however, these are matters ultimately for members to resolve.

The enthusiasm for further training that was expressed in relation to chamber procedure was repeated in relation to committee practice, with some members suggesting additional training for committee chairs and deputy chairs. The department is reviewing the advisory services available, with a view to ensuring continuous training opportunities for chairs and deputy chairs throughout the life of a parliament.

Activity 4: Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building

Performance criterion	Target
Level of satisfaction of Presiding Officers and delegates with arrangements for incoming and outgoing delegations	90 per cent satisfied
Criterion source	
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 16; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18	
Result against performance criterion	
Target met.	
Using a survey tool as the data source, 100 per cent of respondents to the online survey of delegates who participated in incoming and outgoing delegations were either very satisfied or satisfied with arrangements. Positive feedback was received from the Presiding Officers and their staff on arrangements for incoming and outgoing delegations during the year, including for the Presiding Officers' own travel.	
Good verbal and written feedback was received for the support provided to incoming delegations. All incoming delegation respondents indicated a high degree of satisfaction with arrangements made.	
For outgoing delegations, feedback indicated that members were satisfied with itinerary and program arrangements, and that visit objectives were achieved or partially achieved. Survey responses that raised some practical issues have been reflected in office procedures as appropriate. Delegation members also expressed satisfaction with the support provided by delegation secretaries and the relevant Australian Embassy and High Commission personnel.	

Performance criterion	Target			
Level of satisfaction among parliaments with capacity-building activities	90 per cent satisfied			
Criterion source				
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 16; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18				
Result against performance criterion				
Target met.				
All participants in capacity-building activities were surveyed for their feedback and 100 per cent of respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the training and support provided.				
These activities included Inter-Parliamentary Study Programs conducted for Deputy Speakers of Pacific parliaments and for staff of other parliaments, the conclusion of a program of parliamentary support to the Legislative Assembly of Samoa, a forum conducted under a Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships project now concluded, attachments facilitated as part of a Fijian parliamentary support program, and study visit programs conducted for staff of the Indian, Kenyan and Philippines parliaments.				
Activity measures (no targets set)				
Source				
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 16				
	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17^a	2017–18
Number of delegations managed	48	47	46	59
Number and nature of parliamentary capacity-building activities	44	29	19	24
» Occasions equipment supplied to Pacific parliaments	7	7	1	3
» Staff attachments and study visits	32	18	13	12
» Conferences, seminars and workshops	5	4	5	9

a. Election year.

Analysis: Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building

All members who participated in hosted incoming and outgoing delegations indicated their satisfaction with the arrangements made. Nineteen responses were received from a total of 28 participants (68 per cent) in outgoing delegations undertaken from February 2018 when surveying commenced. Oral and written feedback from participants of incoming delegations and from diplomatic representatives involved in the 2017–18 official delegation program was positive, as was the feedback from the Presiding Officers.

Suggestions from delegates for improvements that could be made to arrangements for the parliament's outgoing delegations included ensuring that voice-only phones provided to members work properly; ensuring that delegates' online portal is operational; and visit program suggestions such as staggering early starts and late evenings while travelling and including cultural elements in programs. Office procedures were amended as appropriate and the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) was requested to assist with the phones matter.

The department is committed to assisting in the building of capacity of other parliaments in our region. The conclusion of a program of parliamentary support to the Legislative Assembly of Samoa, a forum conducted under a Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships (PWPP) project and attachments facilitated as part of a Fijian parliamentary support program as well as study visit programs conducted for the staff of the Indian, Kenyan and Philippines parliaments all demonstrate the department's investment in this capacity-building work. Surveys of participants in all programs indicated a very high degree of satisfaction with the training and support provided.

Detailed evaluations were conducted at the conclusion of the externally funded Samoa and PWPP projects, and also after each Inter-Parliamentary Study Program, for which feedback from other stakeholders was also sought. Improvements to the conduct of successive study programs have included scheduling more co-presented sessions with officers of the Department of the Senate to enhance program outcomes, and clearer advice to participants about insurance arrangements.

Activity 5: Members' and corporate support

Performance criterion	Target
Level of satisfaction of the Speaker with the overall quality of support services provided, including accommodation, office support, transport coordination, salary processing and other members' support services	Very satisfied
Criterion source	
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 17; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18	
Result against performance criterion	
Target met.	
The data source is direct feedback from the Speaker and the Speaker's chief of staff on the overall quality of non-chamber support services provided to the Speaker, the Speaker's Office and other members.	
The Speaker's Office indicated that it was overall very satisfied with the support services provided by the department to the Speaker, the Speaker's Office and the members collectively.	
Feedback from the Speaker's Office was that informal and formal advice from the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office is timely and of good quality, and indicated satisfaction with the services provided. The Speaker had not received any complaints from members with respect to this.	
The Speaker's Office was very supporting of the work of the Chamber Research Office and the International and Parliamentary Relations Office.	
The Speaker's Office also confirmed that the support provided to the Speaker as chair of both the Appropriations and Administration Committee and the Selection Committee was appropriate.	
Performance criterion	Target
Level of satisfaction among members with the overall quality of support services provided, including accommodation, office support, transport coordination, salary processing and other members' support services	90 per cent satisfied
Criterion source	
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 17; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18	

Result against performance criterion

Target met.

The relevant data source is the members’ survey. An average of 95 per cent of respondents to the members’ survey indicated satisfaction with accommodation services and office support, salary processing and transport coordination. In responding to the survey, a few members raised issues with office support services that are the responsibility of other entities. Several members commented on below-standard cleaning services for their suites. These services are provided by DPS. Another member commented on lengthy delays in processing entitlement forms. Depending on the type of payment, processing of entitlements is the responsibility of either the Department of Finance or the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority.

Feedback from interviewed members was consistent with the survey results, with the majority of members interviewed expressing satisfaction with their office accommodation and office support services. Suggestions for improvement included a request for access to a wider range of stationery items and comments related to improved cleaning services for members’ offices. The department will continue to liaise with DPS to ensure service levels for members’ offices are met, and work with members so that there is a good understanding of who is responsible for various aspects of service delivery to members. General stationery for members’ use in Parliament House is limited by the whole-of-government contract. The Stationery Store stocks only items in high demand, however other allowable items can be provided upon request. This will be communicated more clearly to members.

Results from the members’ survey outlined a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the corporate advice and services provided by the department, particularly in relation to the COMCAR service and accommodation services.

Interviewed members reflected this level of satisfaction, with members highlighting the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the shuttle COMCAR arrangement.

Performance criterion

Level of satisfaction among staff with the quality of corporate advice and services provided by the department

Target

90 per cent satisfied

Criterion source

2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 17; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18

Result against performance criterion

Target not met.

The relevant data source is the staff survey. The survey asked a number of questions of staff, providing five response options: strongly agree, agree, sometimes agree/disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

When the question was put to staff ‘I am satisfied with the quality of corporate advice and service provided by the department’, 72 per cent of staff either agreed or strongly agreed. Overall it is noted that only 6 per cent of staff disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. The 22 per cent of respondents who ‘sometimes agree/disagree’ complicate the assessment and make it difficult to confirm whether the target satisfaction rate of 90 per cent has been reached.

Activity measures (no targets set)				
Source				
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 18				
	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18
Number of Parliament House accommodation and office support services	331	361	617	718 ¹
Number of transport coordination services provided to members	15,995	13,129	14,892	13,086

a. Election year.

1. Before 2017–18 this figure was for accommodation services only. From 2017–18 it also includes office support.

Analysis: Members' and corporate support

The results of the members' survey show that, on average, the target of member satisfaction with the overall quality of support services provided, including accommodation, office support, transport coordination, salary processing and other members' support services, was met; however, the survey indicates that 11 per cent of respondents were not satisfied with accommodation support. As with previous years, to some extent, the result recorded for accommodation and office services reflects members' dissatisfaction with a number of services that are not the department's responsibility (for example, office cleaning services and ICT services). While the department has communicated these concerns to DPS, this department continues to work closely with members to assist them to have any matters promptly resolved.

The assistance of corporate support to departmental officers was reviewed in the annual staff survey. The department processes salaries and allowances for members and departmental staff. The survey showed that 85 per cent of departmental staff were satisfied with pay and conditions, 83 per cent were satisfied with the consistency of the management of those conditions, and 84 per cent were satisfied with the working environment. While these are strong results, they fall short of the 90 per cent target set in relation to the level of satisfaction among staff with the quality of corporate advice and services provided by the department. However, as outlined above, a complicating factor with these results is the option to answer 'sometimes agree/disagree' when a staff member is asked whether they support a proposition, such as 'I work in a safe workplace'. In response to this proposition, 93 per cent of respondents agreed; however, only 1 per cent of staff disagreed with the proposition. The 7 per cent of respondents who 'sometimes agree/disagree' complicate the assessment of the survey when the department is seeking to establish whether the 90 per cent satisfaction threshold has been met. The question will be reworded in the 2018–19 survey to ensure clarity.

The level of satisfaction by the Speaker and his chief of staff with the overall quality of non-chamber support services provided—including accommodation, office support, transport coordination, salary processing and other members' support services—met the target of 'very satisfied'.

Activity 6: Schools hospitality

Performance criterion	Target 2017–18			
Percentage of visiting school groups provided hospitality in accordance with booking	100 per cent			
Criterion source				
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 19; 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, page 18				
Result against performance criterion				
Target not met.				
The data source is exception reporting from DPS and school groups. A total of 119,088 students toured Parliament House during the reporting period. Of those students, 89,259 participated in a Parliamentary Education Office program and 96,979 requested and received hospitality. In 2017–18, there was one report of where hospitality was not provided to a school group that had requested it.				
Activity measures (no targets set)				
Source				
2017–18 Corporate Plan, page 19				
	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17^a	2017–18
Number of visiting school students booked	120,216	115,774	117,654	119,088

a. Election year.

Analysis: Schools hospitality

The delivery of hospitality to schools at their request is a combined effort between the parliamentary departments. The department provides a booking service for school groups, and liaises with the Department of the Senate (which hosts the Parliamentary Education Office) and with DPS (which provides a guide service and hospitality for students in school groups where hospitality has been requested). Data about hospitality provision relies on exception reporting from DPS or school groups. There was a single instance of exception reporting during the reporting period where a school contacted the department to indicate that it did not receive hospitality as requested. The department has liaised with DPS in relation to this incident.

Summary

The department is committed to the delivery of high standards of service to the House of Representatives, parliamentary committees and members; to the wider parliament; and to the public. This includes working closely with other agencies that provide services to members to ensure that the services are provided as seamlessly as possible.

Overwhelmingly the department has met the targets outlined in its corporate plan. There are two targets that the department did not assess itself as meeting. The department has reported that the wording of a question in the staff survey makes it difficult to confirm a 90 per cent satisfaction rating, and is undertaking a review of the style of questioning with a view to removing the current uncertainty. The department did not meet its 100 per cent target in relation to catering to school children, and will continue to work with DPS to ensure

that all requests for catering to schools are met. However, the department is pleased that these two items are the exception and considers the investment it has made in people and processes is reflected in the results outlined in this annual performance statement.

Particular strategic priorities for the department include developing and maintaining a capable and experienced workforce to ensure the department has sufficient and sustainable capability and capacity to undertake the range of activities required to achieve its purpose. An additional priority involves identifying ways to improve information management and processes, using a risk-based approach to identify and prioritise information management projects and initiatives.

The department acknowledges that a 14 per cent participation rate in the members' survey limits the quantitative basis on which to measure some aspects of the department's performance. In order to take steps to mitigate this shortfall in quantitative analysis, the department supplements the survey with members' interviews to ensure a greater depth of assessment of performance is gathered. The department will continue to consider other methods that may be utilised when assessing performance, with a particular focus on ensuring its performance measures are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound.

Chamber and Federation Chamber

The Clerk's Office, Table Office, Procedure Office and Chamber Research Office work together to support the day-to-day operations of the Chamber and Federation Chamber, with other areas contributing as necessary.

During the reporting period we continued to:

- » advise the Speaker and members of the House of Representatives
- » advise on the 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
- » provide professional development resources and activities on parliamentary procedure.

In 2017–18 the budget allocation for this activity was \$3.611 million and expenditure was \$3.062 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 17); staff levels are shown in Table 12.

In January 2017, some of the additional funding (\$2.1 million over four years) received in 2016–17 for parliamentary strengthening through publications and systems was used to create the role of Clerk Assistant (Procedure). This position was established for an initial 18-month period, and oversees the Chamber Research Office and the newly formed Procedure Office. Following an independent review, the Procedure Office and Clerk Assistant (Procedure) position will remain on an ongoing basis.

Performance summary

The focus of the offices is on supporting the sittings of the House of Representatives Chamber and meetings of the Federation Chamber. Our performance is usually measured in two ways: qualitatively, based on an annual survey of members; and quantitatively, based on information relating to the sittings of the House, meetings of the Federation Chamber, and business conducted in the Chamber and Federation Chamber.

The annual survey of members was supplemented by interviews with party whips, non-aligned members and members of the Speaker's panel. Feedback from members on the range and standard of the services provided was generally positive. This result was largely consistent with comments received during the reporting period about the procedural resources available online and in hard copy, and the briefings on parliamentary topics of interest to members and their staff. The annual performance statement on page 17 provides more detailed analysis of the results of the survey and interviews.

Statistics on sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber in 2017–18 and the two preceding years are shown in Table 1.

There were 60 sitting days in 2017–18, a decrease of four days (6.25 per cent) on 2016–17. In 2017–18, the House sat for 22 fewer hours than in the previous year (3.9 per cent less time), and the Federation Chamber met for six fewer hours than it did in the previous year (2.5 per cent less time). Legislative activity continued at a high rate during the period: 222 bills were introduced (compared with 248 in 2016–17) and 128 bills were passed by both Houses and assented to (compared with 126 in 2016–17).

Changes to the House's program in the Forty-fifth Parliament included an earlier adjournment on Mondays and Tuesdays and a change to the order of business for the Federation Chamber, making the optional Tuesday afternoon meeting a permanent fixture and adding a further 2 hours and 45 minutes of private members' business on Monday afternoons.

Detailed information on the business of the House and the Federation Chamber is provided in Appendix 1 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, 2015–16 to 2017–18

Aspect of performance	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18
Number of sittings of the House	60	64	60
Number of meetings of the Federation Chamber	41	59	59
Hours of sittings of the House ^b	592	570	548
Hours of meetings of the Federation Chamber ^b	132	237	231
Number of bills introduced	162	248	222
Number of bills that passed both Houses and were assented to ^c	118	126	128

a. Election year.

b. Excludes suspensions and 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

During proceedings, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and other staff members provided immediate support and advice on the practice and procedure of the House to the Speaker, the Leader of the House, ministers, shadow ministers, members and others. They also provided detailed written advice on subjects such as the application of the standing orders and the practice of the House; the content of questions without notice; procedures for private members' business; delegated legislation and the disallowance process; the requirements of the Constitution and standing orders with respect to financial legislation; privilege matters; and requirements of the House for the registration of members' interests. Since the House adopted a resolution on 4 December 2017, advice has been provided also in relation to members' statements in relation to citizenship.

New citizenship register for members supported

Following seven judgments of the Court of Disputed Returns in relation to section 44(i) of the Constitution in 2017, the House passed a resolution requiring members to provide a statement to the Registrar of Members' Interests with details of their Australian citizenship and any possible citizenship of another country. In the final week of sittings in 2017 and working to a tight timeframe, the Clerk's office coordinated staff in several offices in developing and applying new processes to support members of the 45th Parliament in making their declarations to the Registrar. The new citizenship register is published on the Parliament of Australia website.

Programming and coordination of business

During the year, we provided advice and services to facilitate sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber by:

- » 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 and providing information about committee memberships and other matters
 - » 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 Federation Chamber
- » providing staff from the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office to:
 - » support sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber
 - » oversee ceremonial and security arrangements
 - » ensure the availability of chamber papers
- » processing members' questions in writing to ministers, which involved:
 - » editing them for compliance with the standing orders
 - » publishing them in the *Notice Paper* for the next sitting day
 - » managing answers to questions
- » providing a captioning service for the televised and webcast proceedings of the Chamber and Federation Chamber that describes the current item of business
- » 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 shows the number of questions in writing to ministers and answers that were processed by the House in the five years from 2013–14 to 2017–18.

Table 2 Questions in writing to ministers and answers to questions in writing, 2013–14 to 2017–18

	2013–14 ^a	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18
Questions in writing ^b	201	633	1,310	761	987
Questions answered ^c	126	623	1,235	247	945

a. Election year.

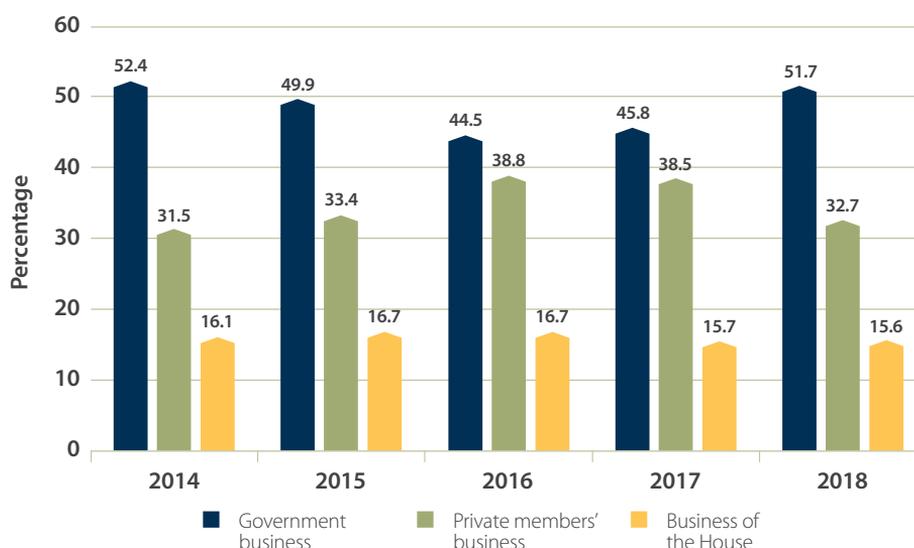
b. Excludes questions withdrawn.

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

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

- » government business (e.g. 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 and matters of privilege).

A longitudinal view of the amount of time the House (Chamber and Federation Chamber inclusive) devoted to each of these three types of business is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Government and private members' business and business of the House (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2014–18

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

Support for the legislative process in 2017–18 included our traditional responsibilities of:

- » receiving bills from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and keeping them in custody under embargo before their introduction in the House
- » providing bills to ministers for introduction, and to all members in the Chamber after introduction
- » uploading to the Parliament of Australia website bills, explanatory memorandums and proposed amendments, and providing an over-the-counter service for access to hard copies of bills and associated material
- » processing all bills and amendments to bills:
 - » initiated in the House—from introduction to assent
 - » initiated in the Senate—from introduction in the House until passage by the House
- » providing a legislative drafting service for private members
- » preparing and delivering messages to the Senate; during 2017–18, we delivered 199 messages relating to the passage of bills (170 in 2016–17) and 16 other messages (30 in 2016–17)
- » preparing and issuing a Daily Bills List for each sitting day; the list 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 computerised bills processing system to maintain optimal levels of technical support. This included testing of upgrades to the system. Staff also provided input to the Bills System Advisory Group, which continued its role of overseeing the operational governance of the system, the quality of service and the fulfilment of business requirements.

Queries on the bills and legislation collection on the Parliament of Australia website totalled 2.1 million in 2017–18, representing 18.2 per cent of the 11.6 million queries made via searches through ParlInfo, the database that includes all library publications as well as Hansard, bills, committee documents and the parliamentary handbook.

During the year, 222 bills were introduced (248 in 2016–17), a decrease of 10.5 per cent on the previous year. Of these, 202 were initiated in the House of Representatives and 20 were received from the Senate. A total of 130 bills passed both Houses (126 in 2016–17), of which 113 were initiated in the House of Representatives (121 in 2016–17) and 17 in the Senate (five in 2016–17). Table 3 shows the number of bills introduced in the House and assented to in the five years from 2013–14 to 2017–18.

In 2017–18, the House passed 194 bills (150 in 2016–17), an average of 3.2 bills for each sitting (a substantial increase on the previous year, in which an average of 2.3 bills for each sitting were passed).

The House amended 28 (14.4 per cent) of the bills it passed, compared to 12 (8 per cent) in 2016–17. 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 agreed to Senate amendments, made amendments requested by the Senate, or did both, in relation to 16 House bills (13 in 2016–17). After further processing by the Table Office, the bills were presented to the Governor-General for assent. The House did not make any amendments to bills in place of Senate amendments that were not agreed to.

The number of amendments moved during consideration in detail increased from 173 in 2016–17 to 599 in 2017–18. Of these, 456 were passed, of which three were opposition amendments. The House amended one bill initiated in the Senate in 2017–18.

The Table Office prepared 27 third-reading prints (12 in 2016–17) and 112 assent prints (121 in 2016–17). All documents accurately reflected the decisions of both Houses.

Table 3 Number of bills introduced in the House, and number of bills assented to, 2013–14 to 2017–18

	2013–14 ^a	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18
Bills introduced	182	203	162	248	222
Bills assented to ^b	94	168	118	126	128

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 those documents comply with the Constitution and the standing orders. We also arrange copies for circulation in the Chambers.

In 2017–18, 35 private members' bills were introduced (including five private senators' bills). Of the 599 amendments moved during consideration in detail, 146 were private members' amendments, three of which were agreed to. Table 4 provides chamber statistics for private members' legislation for the past five years. The table does not reflect all of the department's work in this area, because some material is drafted but is not introduced into the House.

Since 2010, the department has had an arrangement with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel for one of its senior drafters to be seconded to the department. That arrangement continues to be mutually beneficial.

Table 4 Private members' bills introduced and amendments moved (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2013–14 to 2017–18

	2013–14 ^a	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18
Bills introduced	7	12	21	35	35
Second-reading amendments moved	36	22	16	40	45
Consideration-in-detail amendments moved ^b	66	303	119	173	599

a. Election year.

b. Includes government amendments.

Record of proceedings and House documents

Votes and Proceedings

The *Votes and Proceedings*—the official record of the proceedings of the House—continued to provide an accurate, comprehensive and concise record of proceedings. The draft document for each sitting 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* (better known as the *Live Minutes*), which is an electronic draft record of the proceedings of the Chamber and Federation Chamber. The *Votes Officer's Minutes* are more detailed than the *Votes and Proceedings*, and are compiled progressively throughout a sitting. Because they are available in real time, they provide a practical means for members, staff and the public to follow House proceedings online. Internal and external users continued to rely on this service and provided positive feedback.

Table Offices Production System

Further enhancements were made to the Table Offices Production System (TOPS) during 2017–18. The system is used to produce chamber documents, including the *Notice Paper*, the *Daily Program*, the *Votes and Proceedings*, and the *Live Minutes*. A final set of scheduled enhancements was completed in April 2018. Further defects were identified and work will continue on these in 2018–19.

Documents

During the year, the Table Office processed all documents presented to the House and recorded their details in the *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Index to Papers Presented to Parliament*. Copies were made 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 are maintained by the Table Office. Tabling stock requirements continue to be reviewed in light of the online availability of documents and the declining demand for hard copies.

In 2017–18, a total of 3,354 documents were presented to the House, a decrease from the 3,702 presented in the previous year.

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, listed by the number of sitting days remaining in which a notice of disallowance can be lodged.

Parliamentary Papers Series

The Parliamentary Papers Series comprises documents of a substantial nature presented to the parliament since 1901. An electronic repository for the series, instituted in 2013, enables centralised electronic access to the documents through the ParInfo Tabled Papers Register. The documents section of TOPS has helped to streamline the process of uploading parliamentary papers to the repository.

The Presiding Officers advised that 2016 would be the last year in which hard copies of the series would be distributed to the 27 external recipients. In 2015–16, the department took over responsibility from the external service provider for administering the distribution of the printed copies, and work continued during 2017–18 on clearing the distribution backlog.

On 28 March 2018, on the recommendation of the Publications Committee, the House resolved to classify as parliamentary papers all reports previously included in the Parliamentary Papers Series. The resolution was in response to a recommendation of the Joint Committee on Publications inquiry into printing standards for documents presented to parliament (discussed in more detail on page 39).

The department is responsible for the custody and preservation of, and 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 of Parliament House, in a suitable, monitored archive environment.

Records of the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry

The Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry was established in May 1986, under the *Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry Act 1986*, to inquire into allegations concerning the conduct of then Justice of the High Court, the Hon Lionel Keith Murphy. The Act required the commission to inquire into and advise the parliament of whether any conduct of Justice Murphy had been such as to amount, in its opinion, to ‘proved misbehaviour’ within the meaning of section 72 of the Constitution.

In September 1986, following Justice Murphy’s diagnosis with a terminal illness, the parliament passed the *Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry (Repeal) Act 1986*, which had the effect of ceasing the commission and placing its records into the custody of the Presiding Officers.

The commission’s records are divided into class A and class B records. The class B records contain material mostly relating to the interpretation of section 72 of the Constitution. The Presiding Officers authorised the publication of these records on the Parliament of Australia website on 19 December 2016.

The class A records of the commission contain material relating to the conduct of Justice Murphy. Processes to prepare the documents for publication were carried out. These processes included contacting persons named in the records, and the closest living relatives or legal representatives of deceased persons, to notify them of the forthcoming publication of the documents; scanning of documents; and redaction of personal information such as addresses and signatures. The records were then presented in the House and the Senate on 14 September 2017, and published on the Parliament of Australia website.

Petitions

The House petitioning process enables Australians to raise issues with the House that are of interest to them. Table 5 shows the number of petitions presented to the House, and the number of signatories, for the past five years. In 2017–18, a total of 424 petitions were presented, compared with 185 in 2016–17. The number of signatures increased to 371,491 from 235,751 in the previous year.

Table 5 Petitions and signatories to petitions, 2013–14 to 2017–18

	2013–14 ^a	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18
Number of petitions presented	75	101	87	185	424
Number of signatories	1,365,151	250,369	118,846	235,751	371,491

a. Election year.

Research

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

In 2016–17, 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 practice
- » secretariat services to the Standing Committee on Procedure
- » advice about and publications on House statistics, practice 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, reflecting sustained high levels of interest in the procedures and operations of the House.

Publications

The Chamber Research Office continued to produce regular publications outlining significant procedural events and popular statistics for a variety of readers. After each sitting fortnight, two publications were produced: the *Procedural Digest*, an online, subject-based record of proceedings; and the *Statistical Digest*, a statistical record of the work of the House. *Work of the Session*, a comprehensive six-monthly overview of the business of the House and committees, was published in July 2017 and January 2018. The series of 22 information sheets (the *Infosheet* series) on the work of the House was updated to incorporate changes introduced in the Forty-fifth Parliament.

Together, these publications provide a current and concise record of the work of the House and the more significant aspects of that work. The department's publications, including the *Infosheet* series, are listed in Appendix 4.

The Chamber Research Office maintains, publishes and distributes the standing orders of the House. The standing orders were reprinted as at 4 December 2017, incorporating the resolution of the House in relation to the creation of a citizenship register.

The Chamber Research Office continued to expand and diversify its publications about the work of the House, to cater to the wide range of needs and interests of members, staff and the public. The intention is to increase procedural capability and understanding of the House's role and formal processes. Nine editions of *House Review*, a publication that provides a plain-English analysis of significant events in the House in the previous fortnight, were

published on the Parliament of Australia website. *House Review* is prepared by the Procedure Office and is published on the second Friday of the sitting fortnight. It is intended for a general audience and complements *Last Week in the House*, which collects and outlines the business transacted each week in the House, and the *Procedural Digest*, which provides more technical, procedural analysis.

Collaboration with the Department of the Senate

The Chamber Research 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 45).

Collaboration with other parliaments

Staff members are frequently asked to share their experiences and knowledge with counterparts from other parliaments. The offices continued to participate—together with colleagues and members from other parliaments—in study programs, meetings during delegation visits and capacity-building work. Colleagues from other parliaments continued to be interested in the longstanding practices of the department in recording, analysing and publishing information on the procedural work of the House.

Parliamentary committees

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

In 2017–18, those committees held 57 meetings and produced 22 reports. Details of meetings and reports are set out in Appendixes 2 and 3.

Table 6 Committees supported by the Chamber and Federation Chamber activity, 2017–18

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

Selection Committee

Table Office staff support the Selection Committee in fulfilling three important roles:

- » selecting and programming private members' business and committee and delegation business
- » selecting items of private members' business and committee and delegation business for referral to the Federation Chamber or return to the House
- » considering all bills introduced and determining whether to refer bills directly to House or joint committees for inquiry.

The committee has 11 members: the Speaker (as chair), the chief whips of the three largest parties, four government members and three non-government members. The committee met 15 times during the reporting period and presented 14 reports.

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 DPS 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 two reports.

Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests

The Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests met 11 times during the reporting period, and presented two reports to the House.

The report of the committee's *Inquiry concerning the former Member for Dunkley in the 44th Parliament: possible contempts of the House and appropriate conduct of a Member* (presented 26 March 2018) followed its consideration of two formal matters relating to the Hon Bruce Billson during his term as the Member for Dunkley in the last parliament. The task for the committee was to consider whether, as a member, Mr Billson had acted in a manner contrary to the House resolutions on the registration of members' interests, or whether his actions gave rise to any issues that either constituted a contempt of the House or concerned the appropriate conduct of a member, having regard to their responsibilities to their constituents and to the public interest. The central issues were that while Mr Billson was the Member for Dunkley, he had accepted an appointment as a paid director of the Franchise Council of Australia, and he did not include this interest on his statement of registrable interests, as required by resolutions of the House.

The committee concluded that Mr Billson had failed to comply with the requirements in relation to his registrable interests when he was the Member for Dunkley, that this was an interest 'where a conflict of interest with a Member's public duties could foreseeably arise or be seen to arise' and that his decision to accept the paid role while he was a member fell below the standards expected of a member of the House. The day after the report

was presented, the House passed a resolution censuring the former member for failing to discharge his obligations as a member in taking up paid employment for services to represent the interests of an organisation while he was a member, and failing to fulfil his responsibilities as a member by appropriately declaring his personal and pecuniary interests in respect of this paid employment in accordance with the resolutions and standing orders of the House.

The committee presented two sets of alterations of members' interests and volume 6 of the statements of registrable interests during the period. Also, in February 2018, the committee reported on its operations in connection with the registration and declaration of members' interests in 2017.

Standing Committee on Procedure

The Standing Committee on Procedure usually meets once each sitting week. The committee presented two reports during the reporting period, one into the provisions relating to disorder in the House, and one (interim report) into the maintenance of the standing orders.

Standing Committee on Publications

The House Publications Committee makes recommendations to the House on which of the documents presented to the House (and on which the House or the Senate has not already made a determination) should be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series. The committee may confer with the Senate Publications Committee, forming the Joint Committee on Publications. The House Publications Committee held two meetings in 2017–18, and met with the Senate Publications Committee on four other occasions. The committee presented five reports containing recommendations on documents for inclusion in the Parliamentary Papers Series. All recommended documents were agreed for inclusion.

On 5 December 2017, the Joint Committee on Publications presented the report of its inquiry into printing standards for documents presented to parliament. The report contained five recommendations, one of which was implemented on 28 March 2018 when the House passed a resolution to the effect that documents previously included in the Parliamentary Papers Series on the recommendation of the Publications Committee be made parliamentary papers on their presentation to the House. The other four recommendations were aimed at optimising digital accessibility of documents presented to the parliament.

Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings

The *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* requires Australian Broadcasting Corporation (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 House and the Senate chambers, and to determine a more detailed schedule of broadcasting allocations. The committee is supported by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office.

Under the Act, the committee has nine members, including the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. By tradition, the Speaker is chair and the President is vice-chair. The committee meets when required and did not meet during the reporting period.

Procedural training and resources

The department continued with its strong commitment to the development of procedural knowledge and skills of members and staff, particularly through the work of the Procedure Office. Sitting-day briefings for staff who act as Clerk-at-the-Table and Deputy Clerk-at-the-Table in the Federation Chamber continued during the reporting period. These briefings complement the sitting-day briefings traditionally provided by the Deputy Clerk, for staff who are rostered for duty as Clerk and Deputy Clerk in the House. Both sets of briefings provide an opportunity for staff to prepare for the day's events and discuss procedural issues in general.

The regular program of House briefing sessions for members and their staff continued; it included topics such as opportunities for members during the budget debate, the legislative process and reading legislation. Two new publications were designed by the Procedure Office for use by members and by the Speaker's panel of chairs.

The sixth edition of the *Guide to Procedures*—a concise and practical introduction to the procedures of the House—was launched by the Speaker at a House briefing in February 2018. A separate launch was held for departmental staff. The guide is popular because of its plain-English style, and because it is concise it allows readers to easily obtain a broad understanding of all elements of parliamentary procedure. The content does not include history and analysis; this is contained in the department's flagship publication, *House of Representatives Practice*.

Last year's annual report anticipated that the 2017–18 financial year would see the publication of the seventh edition of *House of Representatives Practice*. However, publication was delayed to await the judgment in the matter of questions referred to the Court of Disputed Returns pursuant to section 376 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (Cth) concerning the citizenship of Senator Katy Gallagher. This decision was taken because if the High Court found there was a vacancy in the representation for the Australian Capital Territory in the Senate, this was likely to have significant implications for four sitting House members. On 9 May 2018, the High Court sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns unanimously determined that Senator Katy Gallagher was 'a citizen of a foreign power', and was therefore incapable of being chosen or of sitting as a senator by reason of section 44(i) of the Constitution when she nominated for election on 31 May 2016. Following this ruling, four House members in comparable circumstances resigned their seats. Relevant updates were made to the text of the seventh edition of *House of Representatives Practice*, which has now been finalised. Launch is scheduled for August 2018.

A package of new procedural learning opportunities for departmental staff commenced during the reporting period. In June 2018, the first in a series of nine lunchtime discussions titled 'A taste of procedure' was presented. Together, the sessions will provide broad coverage of most aspects of parliamentary procedure. Each session is delivered by one or more senior staff members from the Procedure, Table and Chamber Research offices in collaboration. The first in a series of six drop-in sessions also commenced in June, hosted by the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) and Clerk Assistant (Table). These sessions provide opportunities for staff to ask questions of senior colleagues in an informal environment, to help them to understand more about the House environment and operations. After the last of the lunchtime sessions, the

offices will again be collaborating to offer a tutorial course in procedure, which is currently being developed. These longer sessions will explore key procedural knowledge components in greater depth, and will include skill development for staff beginning to work as Deputy Clerks-at-the-Table in the Federation Chamber.

Another new project that the Chamber Research Office has commenced, in collaboration with the Parliamentary and Business Information Services Office (PBIS), is the production of a catalogue of short educational videos using footage from the House and Federation Chamber, to explain key elements of House procedure for Clerks-at-the-Table and others: the CATTalogue. A web page is currently being developed to host the videos on the departmental intranet, with the first videos expected to be available in the latter half of 2018.

The Chamber Research Office also prepared content for use by PBIS in a series of infographics to be posted online by its social media team. The content included procedural information, statistics and other material relating to the operations of the House, such as the legislative process, terminology and question time.

The department continued to use a range of measures to support its staff to develop the specialised knowledge and skills required for applying parliamentary law, practice and procedure. These included the following:

- » debriefs following each sitting week or fortnight, focusing on matters of procedural interest—the format was changed to include videos of some of the more complex events, allowing for easier explanation and analysis
- » regular parliamentary briefings and training provided by senior departmental staff or external experts
- » specialist training and coaching for departmental staff who undertake duty as Clerks and Deputy Clerks in the Chamber and Federation Chamber—the number of these sessions was increased, and supporting written materials were made more detailed and formal
- » shadowing opportunities that enable staff to learn specialist skills such as preparing House procedures, the *Notice Paper* and the *Votes and Proceedings*—once the trainee staff have sufficient experience, the use of shadowing allows chamber support staff to finish work earlier on some sitting nights, and provides a back-up in the event of staffing absences or turnover
- » opportunities for participation in parliamentary conferences, including the annual Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table (ANZACATT) professional development seminar
- » participation in the Graduate Certificate in Parliamentary Law and Practice, currently taught by the University of Tasmania under the auspices of ANZACATT.

Independent review of Clerk Assistant (Procedure) Office

In April 2018, an independent consultant was engaged to undertake a review of the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) Office, which was established in December 2016 for an initial period of 18 months. At that time, the Clerk announced that there would be an independent review

of the office before any decisions were made about future changes, including whether to establish the office on an ongoing basis.

The terms of reference for the review focused on the office's contribution to the objectives of providing additional support and procedural advice and support to both members and departmental staff. The review also examined whether the office should continue and, if so, what its future focus would be and what resources would be needed to support it. Staff were invited to make written submissions or to request interviews with the external reviewer (or both), which took place from 30 April to 4 May. In addition, a workshop was convened and interviews were held with other stakeholders.

In June, a summary comprising the conclusions of the review was circulated by the Clerk to staff, together with the department's proposed response. Staff were invited to comment on either the review's findings or the proposed departmental response. Shortly after the end of the reporting period the Clerk announced that, in line with the review's recommendations, the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) Office would be ongoing, and consequently an ongoing vacancy at the SES Band 1 level would become available.

Improving performance

The department's commitment to procedural training and development continued to be a priority during the year, and the range of new resources and activities continued to be developed; where possible, these resources and activities have been designed so that they can be easily adapted for use by more general audiences. The debate in the House on the Marriage Amendment (Definitions and Religious Freedoms) Bill 2017 in particular also saw a renewed interest in the procedures of the House from the media and the broader public. Publications such as *House Review* are designed to provide a current, non-technical follow-up to House proceedings that can be useful to a wide audience.

Outlook

Further improvements to TOPS and the Parliamentary Procedural Records System will make them easier to use and will result in further efficiencies. The long-term pattern of chamber support activity that resumed in 2016–17 continued in 2017–18, and is expected to continue in 2018–19.

Our focus in 2018–19 will continue to be on providing high-quality services to meet the needs of the Speaker, members and others, and on increasing the understanding of the role and operations of the House.

In 2018–19, highlights for the Procedure Office will include the publication of the seventh edition of *House of Representatives Practice*, additions to the *Infosheet* series, and a continued focus on the development of resources to improve the procedural knowledge and skills of members and departmental staff.

Community awareness

The department promotes the work of the House through a range of activities aimed at different sectors of the community. Expenditure on these activities in 2017–18 was \$0.635 million, which was \$0.348 million below the budget allocation of \$0.983 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 19).

Performance summary

During 2017–18, the department grew its communications channels to inform the public of the work of the House and committees it supports. The seminar program continued to experience strong participation and positive feedback, with enrolments increasing towards the end of the period.

The department continued its role in supporting school visits and providing background support to the Parliamentary Education Office. The My First Speech competition offered school students the opportunity to imagine themselves making their first speech as a parliamentarian, and hundreds of entries were received from across Australia. The parliamentary internship program continued its success in 2017–18, with 67 students placed with a member or senator during the period.

Media and publications

The department uses its electronic media distribution channels to expand the reach of parliamentary business and educational information. Its Twitter and Facebook handles provide valuable information to subscribers, and through these platforms the department receives consistently positive feedback. During the reporting period, the department's Facebook subscriber base increased by 11 per cent (from 5,837 to 6,466 subscribers) and its Twitter following increased by 6 per cent, surpassing 42,000 followers.

The department also produces the fortnightly *About the House* newsletter. This publication aims to promote committee activity, and provide information about the House and its procedures. It also enables the public to engage with the House through a regular 'Ask us anything' segment, which provides a channel for interested members of the community to have their questions answered. Launched at the beginning of the Forty-fifth Parliament, the newsletter has 1,840 subscribers, an increase of 71 per cent occurring during the 2017–18 period.

To promote committee inquiries, hearings and reports, the department facilitates the distribution of a large volume of media releases on behalf of committees. During the reporting period, the department transitioned to a new media release distribution platform in order to increase the reach of its media releases, and to target journalists according to specific geographic areas and topics. This transition has led to increased awareness of committee activity by media organisations, and an improved rate of publication of media release information by news outlets.

Seminars

The department's seminar program is designed to raise awareness of the work of the House, particularly among employees of government agencies. The program includes a series of seminars covering the parliament, the budget, and the processes relating to legislation and committees, as well as custom seminars for individual departments.

During 2017–18, nine seminars were held with a total of 231 participants. Feedback was positive, with 92 per cent of surveyed attendees agreeing that their objectives were met, and over 97 per cent giving a positive score for the content, detail and presenters.

My First Speech competition

In November 2017, the department held the fifth annual My First Speech competition. The competition is open to Australian school students in Year 10. Entrants are asked to imagine themselves as a newly elected member of the House of Representatives, and to write a three-minute speech on issues they are passionate about and record themselves presenting it.

Submissions were reviewed by a panel of members. Finalists were flown to Canberra to receive their awards at a ceremony on 30 November 2017, and were also given a personalised tour of the Australian Parliament.

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of Parliament House

2018 marks the 30th anniversary of the opening of Parliament House. Throughout 2017–18 the department has been collaborating with parliamentary stakeholders to develop a program of activities to celebrate this milestone. The program will culminate with the Parliament House Open Day scheduled for 6 October 2018.

Parliamentary assistants program

In 2017–18, the parliamentary assistants program, managed by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, entered its eighteenth year. The program offers university students part-time employment in the House of Representatives to promote understanding of, and engagement with, the work of the parliament. (See page 65 for further details.)

Parliamentary internship program

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

In the second semester of 2017, 26 students were placed with a member or senator. In the first semester of 2018, 41 students were placed with a member or senator.

During their placement, each student completes a research project on a subject agreed to by their host. The report is assessed by the university and counts towards the student's degree.

The department continued to have a representative on the Australian National Internships Program's advisory board and parliamentary steering committee.

Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program

Each year, a small number of Australian Defence Force representatives spend a week at Parliament House, hosted by a member or senator. Arrangements for participation by members and senators are made through the Assistant Minister for Defence in conjunction with the Department of Defence. In August 2017, 16 Defence Force representatives were hosted by senators and members through the program. The departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate collaborate to support the program and provide orientation seminars on the work of the chambers and committees.

Parliamentary Education Office

Jointly funded by the departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) delivers parliamentary education services to teachers, students and others across Australia through:

- » experiential learning programs that enable students and teachers to understand and engage with the work of the parliament
- » teaching resources aligned to the Australian civics and citizenship curriculum, including seven websites covering fundamental concepts such as representation, law-making, the separation of powers and responsible government.

To date, almost 2.3 million students have expanded their knowledge of the role, function and value of the Australian Parliament through participating in a PEO program.

In addition to operational management from both departments, the PEO is guided by the PEO Advisory Committee. Co-chaired by the Deputy Speaker of the House and the Deputy President of the Senate, the committee offers advice on the strategic direction of the PEO, and forms an additional conduit between the PEO and parliamentarians. The committee reports to the Presiding Officers and meets twice a year, with the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) attending as an observer.

Education programs: on site, digital and outreach

The PEO delivers education programs on site at Parliament House, in classrooms across Australia through its outreach program Parliament Alive, and digitally through videoconferencing.

The PEO's immersive learning program at Parliament House is regarded as a highly effective method of parliamentary education. The program continued to run at capacity, with 89,259 students from 1,646 schools across Australia participating in 2017–18. These figures represent a small (one per cent) increase on 2016–17 student participation rates.

The PEO also delivered a number of tailored education programs, including:

- » 'Rotary Adventure in Citizenship', a week-long program for 36 Year 11 students from around Australia
- » committee and chamber debate role-play sessions for 400 Year 12 students participating in the 2018 National Youth Science Forum
- » professional development to assist 80 science teachers to incorporate civics and citizenship in their work as part of the Australian Science Teachers Association's STEM X Academy.

In 2017–18, the PEO delivered outreach to 1,037 students in Queensland. Additional outreach is planned for the 2018 calendar year to New South Wales and Western Australia.

The PEO commenced delivering programs to Australian classrooms via videoconferencing in 2018. This new platform for program delivery allows the PEO to engage with schools across Australia, particularly those in regional and remote areas. In the first six months of operation, 598 students have participated in a videoconference program, paving the way for a substantial increase in the reach of the PEO.



Parliamentary educator Penny Jurkiewicz watches as a Blighty Public School student tries out the Mace. Students from Blighty Public School, Conargo Public School and Mayrunga Public School visited Parliament House together in April. Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.

Content: online and print

The PEO's primary website, www.peo.gov.au, continued to perform strongly. A total of 1,001,776 users (representing 2.47 million unique page views) were recorded over the past year, representing an increase of 4 per cent on 2016–17 traffic. The website and six associated sub-sites provide information about parliament and curriculum-aligned teaching resources for all Australian teachers and students.

To better support civics and citizenship teachers, the PEO introduced *Session Notes*, an e-newsletter for teachers. Distributed four times per year, *Session Notes* provides teachers with information about programs and content available to support their classroom practice. The first edition of *Session Notes* was sent to 370 subscribers in September 2017 and subsequently the number of subscribers more than tripled to 1,235.

The PEO produced and distributed a range of publications during the reporting period, including the *Australian Constitution* pocket edition, produced in partnership with the Australian Government Solicitor; *Get parliament*, an easy-to-understand booklet that explores

Australia's system of governance; and *Role-play the parliament: a teacher's guide*, a step-by-step guide to conducting immersive parliamentary education in the classroom.

Services for members and senators

The PEO provides dedicated support to encourage and assist members and senators to engage with schools and students. In 2017 an e-newsletter, *Click*, was introduced to better support member and senator engagement. The newsletter was opened by 73 per cent of recipients, suggesting that it is a valuable resource for members and senators.

Members and senators are offered a complimentary annual allocation of education and information materials for students, teachers and others in their communities. In 2017–18, 123 members and 42 senators requested their allocation, an increase of 27 per cent from 2016–17.

The PEO's customised materials for members and senators continue to be popular. In 2017–18, personalised versions of *Representing you*—a tailored brochure outlining the role of a parliamentarian and the issues in their electorate or state or territory—were created for 20 members and eight senators.

Outlook

The department will continue to raise community awareness of the work of the parliament through a range of activities. In the forward period, it will seek to further grow its communications channels to expand the reach of parliamentary information, and will enhance its website to improve accessibility and navigation. The department also looks forward to celebrating the 30th anniversary Parliament House Open Day, when the community is invited to participate and take a tour of the House of Representatives and Senate chambers.

In early 2019 the renewed PEO website will be launched, along with a redeveloped print resource for teachers, *Parliament: a classroom guide*. Ongoing support for students and teachers who are unable to visit Canberra will be delivered through the expansion of videoconferencing and through continued delivery of professional learning programs and associated content directed at teachers. Ongoing review and evaluation of programs and content will ensure that the PEO understands and meets the needs of Australian students and teachers.

With advance bookings for learning programs at Parliament House likely to remain high, the PEO will continue to operate at capacity and will explore strategies to effectively meet demand while ensuring program quality in 2018–19.

Committee support

The Committee Office supports parliamentary committees in their work of examining policy and legislation, and of scrutinising the executive government. In 2017–18, the Committee Office comprised 10 secretariats that supported 14 House committees and 11 joint committees (see Table 7).

Expenditure on these services in 2017–18 was \$8.652 million, which was \$0.826 million below the budget allocation of \$9.478 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 20); staff levels are shown in Table 12.

Table 7 Committees of the Forty-fifth Parliament supported by the Committee Office

House committees	Joint committees
Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources	Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit ^a
Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Standing Committee on Economics	Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy	Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training	Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport	Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia
Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs	Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth
Standing Committee on Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources	Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities	Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security ^a
Standing Committee on Petitions	Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works ^a
Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs	Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition Relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 2018 (19 March 2018–ongoing)
Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue	
Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralisation (1 June 2017–28 June 2018)	
Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare Dependence (24 May 2018–ongoing)	

a. Joint statutory committee.

Note: Five House internal committees (Appropriations and Administration, Procedure, Publications, Selection, and Privileges and Members' Interests) and the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings and Joint Committee on Publications are supported by other areas of the department, and are discussed on pages 37–39.

Committee Office activity

In 2017–18, the Committee Office's support for the diverse work of committees involved:

- » facilitating committees' private meetings, public hearings and site inspections
- » providing procedural and inquiry-related advice to committees and stakeholders
- » fielding inquiries from interested stakeholders about the purpose and progress of inquiries
- » promoting committee inquiries and reports
- » conducting research and analysing evidence received by committees
- » drafting chairs' reports
- » facilitating the adoption and tabling of committee reports.

Overview

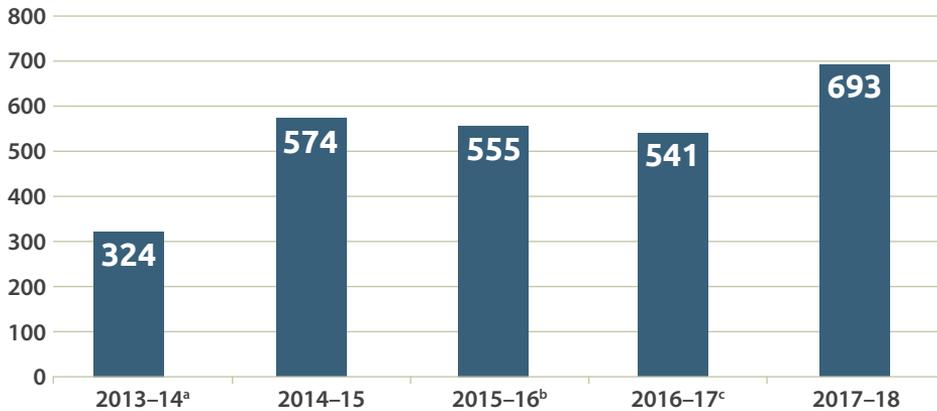
During the year, the Committee Office experienced a consistently high workload, with high numbers of inquiries, meetings and reports tabled. In this period, several committees undertook simultaneous inquiries, which resulted in a heavy workload. In addition, the department supported two House select committees and one joint select committee. Despite this heavy workload, the Committee Office was successfully able to support all committees within its remit. This was evidenced in the tabling speeches of many members in the Chamber, in which the contributions and professionalism of committee staff were acknowledged. The Committee Office has received positive informal feedback throughout the year from members satisfied with the level of support provided by the Committee Office.

As in each reporting period, committees inquired into and reported on a diverse range of topics, including a review into Australia's major banks, Australia's electricity grid, modern slavery, the impact of section 44 of the Constitution on Australian democracy, and educational opportunities for Indigenous students. Appendix 3 lists all reports tabled over 2017–18 and current inquiries.

The sustained workload of committees is evidenced in Figures 5 and 6, which highlight the number of committee meetings and reports tabled in the year.

The committees supported by the Committee Office held 693 meetings in 2017–18. Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of that activity by committee. Figure 5 shows the number of meetings held by committees over the past five years.

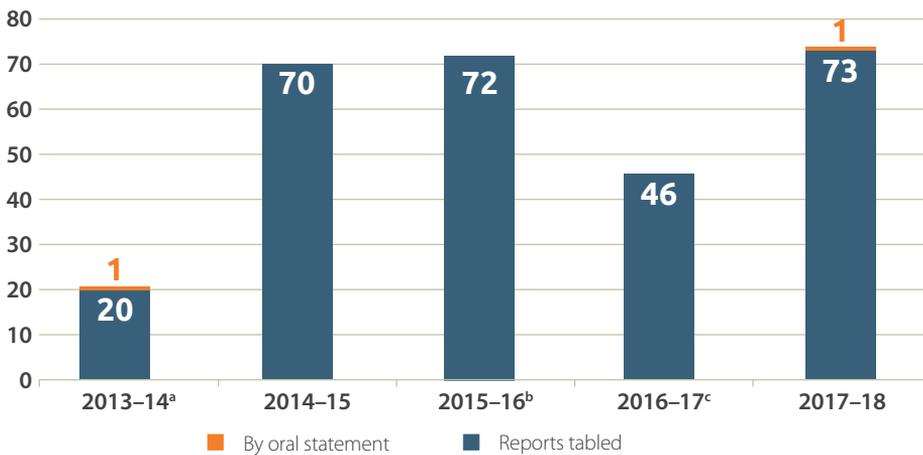
Figure 5 Number of committee meetings supported by the Committee Office, 2013–14 to 2017–18



- a. The Forty-fourth Parliament opened on 12 November 2013.
- b. The Forty-fourth Parliament ended with the dissolution of both Houses on 9 May 2016.
- c. The Forty-fifth Parliament opened on 30 August 2016.

The Committee Office tabled 73 reports in 2017–18. Appendix 3 provides a breakdown of that activity by committee. Figure 6 shows the number of reports tabled by committees over the past five years.

Figure 6 Number of reports tabled by committees, 2013–14 to 2017–18



- a. The Forty-fourth Parliament opened on 12 November 2013.
- b. The Forty-fourth Parliament ended with the dissolution of both Houses on 9 May 2016.
- c. The Forty-fifth Parliament opened on 30 August 2016.

Government responses to committee reports

The government is required by resolution of the House to respond to recommendations contained in a report by a House or joint committee within six months of the report's tabling. This resolution was adopted by the House on 29 September 2010.

During 2017–18, 42 of the 84 tabled reports contained recommendations that required a government response. Government responses to seven reports were received within the six-month timeframe; two reports received partial government responses in the required timeframe and the other 33 reports are awaiting responses.

Information and communications technology

The Committee Office continued to rely on its use of information and communications technology (ICT) to increase the efficiency of work and to provide greater access for stakeholders interested in engaging with committees. The videoconferencing room in 1R3 at Parliament House was used regularly for committee work, allowing committee members to conveniently hold public hearings with stakeholders from around Australia. Members have provided positive feedback to committee staff about this flexible service because it allows public hearings to be held with interstate organisations during busy sitting weeks. Members also noted the savings and efficiencies in time and travel costs.

Shared Committee Information Database and Report Builder

The Committee Office continued to collaborate with the Department of the Senate and DPS on the Shared Committee Information Database (SCID), an important data management and publishing tool for the office. Report Builder, a template for drafting committee reports, is closely integrated with SCID. Through SCID, Report Builder links committee and inquiry information, and enables web publishing of reports in PDF, HTML and e-book formats.

A number of Report Builder defects have been resolved throughout 2017–18, and the template now provides the Committee Office with a functional drafting and publishing tool. Other defects are expected to be resolved in the ongoing year.

Facilitating international visits

The Committee Office facilitated several overseas visits that related to particular inquiries. The Joint Standing Committee on Migration visited Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States between 2 and 16 July 2017 to investigate matters relevant to the committee's inquiry into migrant settlement outcomes. In each location the committee met with a range of individuals and organisations to gain a better idea of international experience in the areas of violent extremism and terrorism, gangs and criminality, and migration and settlement.

Highlights from the trip included meeting with police organisations in Sweden and the United Kingdom. The delegation members were impressed with the District Mothers Program in Germany, where migrant women are trained and employed to assist migrant families with integration, education and employment.

In the United States, the committee received a briefing from the Federal Bureau of Investigation on anti-gang initiatives and the work of gang taskforces, including the Mara

Salvatrucha (MS-13) taskforce and 18th Street taskforce. They also met with Homies Unidos, which provides youth life skills and parenting programs for target families and youth either at risk of involvement or already involved with gangs.

The Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport conducted, and reported on, its inquiry into the use and marketing of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), which attracted considerable public attention within Australia and also internationally. The inquiry received a total of 352 submissions, 1,704 signatories to three form letters, and 45 exhibits. The committee subsequently held three roundtable public hearings nationally, and three briefings with various groups and individuals from the United Kingdom. Members of the committee also travelled to New Zealand to learn about the process that country is taking to legalise e-cigarettes. The inquiry entered into an already populated arena of reports on the matter, which looked at e-cigarettes from health, consumer and regulatory perspectives. The committee recommended maintaining the status quo, which was non-legalisation of e-cigarettes, with a focus on conducting research into the future.

In July, four members of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy travelled to Germany and the United States as part of the committee's inquiry into modernising Australia's electricity grid. The visit sought to gather insights from jurisdictions with varying approaches to energy policy, and at different stages of the grid modernisation process. The visit program—which was prepared by the secretariat, and facilitated by the International and Parliamentary Relations Office and relevant Australian diplomatic posts—enabled members to meet with fellow parliamentarians, government bodies, regulators, academics, non-government organisations and the private sector. The outcomes from the visit, and the intensive time spent together by members, made a strong contribution to the committee being able to deliver a bipartisan report in what was a contentious area of public policy.



Delegation from the Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy in Germany meeting with counterparts from the Bundestag Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy. Image: secretariat.

Outlook

The Committee Office is currently supporting many ongoing inquiries and it is expected that this high level of committee activity will continue throughout 2018–19.

In the coming year, members of parliament will continue to be professionally supported by the Committee Office. Continuing to invest in our staff—in important areas such as procedural knowledge and leadership skills—will remain a key priority.



Public hearing of the Standing Committee on Economics. Image: Michael Masters, Auspic/DPS.

Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building

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

The program's activities and projects in 2017–18 were coordinated by the International and Parliamentary Relations Office (IPRO) and the Parliamentary Skills Centre (PSC), with input from all four parliamentary departments. IPRO and PSC are offices administered by the department, and IPRO receives some funding from the Department of the Senate.

A decision taken last year, to co-locate the two offices and for these to be managed by one director, continues to provide efficiencies in management of work and knowledge-sharing. IPRO manages incoming and outgoing delegation programs, membership of international parliamentary organisations, and the international interests and travel of members and senators. PSC is responsible for all parliamentary strengthening and capacity-building programs of the Australian Parliament, including study programs for visiting parliamentarians and staff of other parliaments.

IPRO manages the administration of Parliamentary Regional Networks and Parliamentary Country Groups, as established under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It also administers the parliament's non-country Friendship Groups.

Information security issues remain a concern for international parliamentary travel. Hence, IPRO continues to facilitate the provision of security advice to members and senators travelling overseas as part of official delegations and also for travel in a private capacity.

In 2017–18, the budget allocation for the program was \$1.922 million and expenditure was \$1.877 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 21); staff levels are shown in Table 12.

Performance summary

A comprehensive program of incoming and outgoing visits during the year strengthened bilateral relations with several national parliaments. The Australian Parliament continued to support the capacity-building of parliaments in the region, and played an active role in parliamentary associations to which it belongs.

Parliamentary engagement

During 2017–18, IPRO coordinated 23 official overseas delegation programs, which involved visits to 31 countries; attendance at seven assemblies, conferences, workshops and seminars; and other visits, including Presiding Officer visits (see Appendix 7). There were also 34 visits to Australia from other countries: four hosted visits by parliamentary delegations (see Appendix 5); and 30 other visits, including for a range of capacity-building activities (see Appendixes 6 and 8).

A regional focus was maintained in the visits programs. Of the 34 visits to Australia, 16 were from parliaments in the Asia–Pacific region, including the annual visit by a combined delegation from Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. Of the 23 overseas visits, nine were to countries in Asia or Oceania.

The Australian Parliament’s participation in MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia) continued, with the President of the Senate attending the third annual Speakers’ Consultation in Istanbul, Turkey, in October 2017.

During the reporting period, the Australian Parliament welcomed visits by a number of Presiding Officers, including His Excellency Mr José Carlos Mahia, Speaker of the parliament of Uruguay; Mr Urban Ahlin, Speaker of the parliament of Sweden; and the Right Honourable Trevor Mallard MP, Speaker of the parliament of New Zealand. Other high-level visits included Mr Fahri Hamzah, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia; Professor Norbert Lammert, former President of the German Bundestag; and the Right Honourable Dr Keith Rowley MP, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

The work of incoming and outgoing parliamentary delegations continued to be promoted through the Parliament of Australia website, including publication of short articles and video interviews with delegation leaders.

Outgoing and incoming delegations gave positive feedback on the quality of the programs, both at debrief meetings and through correspondence. For example, the Ambassador of Uruguay commented that the delegates ‘were very pleased with the diverse agenda ... that showcased a variety of ideas and industries of interest to the members of the delegation’. The Swedish parliament thanked IPRO for ‘organising such a great programme in Australia’ and said ‘the whole delegation is extremely happy about the visit, and all the logistics worked perfectly too’. The German–Australian Chamber of Industry and Commerce conveyed ‘a huge thank you for the outstanding, very friendly and professional support provided during our first-ever Canberra Delegation’.

To create further opportunities for outgoing and incoming delegations to provide feedback, an online survey was introduced in 2017–18. The survey seeks to gauge the level of satisfaction with the arrangements made by IPRO and provide an opportunity to make suggestions for improvements. All delegation members are emailed a link to the survey. All survey respondents for outgoing delegations indicated that they were either ‘satisfied’ or ‘highly satisfied’ with the arrangements made by IPRO, and all survey respondents for incoming delegations were ‘highly satisfied’ with logistical and program arrangements made by IPRO.

Parliamentary cooperation

The Australian Parliament maintained its strong commitment to regional and international parliamentary cooperation in 2017–18. Delegations attended Inter-Parliamentary Union assemblies; the United Nations General Assembly; the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly; the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Parliamentary Assembly; and the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (for more detail, see Appendix 7).

In June 2017 the Presiding Officers convened a meeting of all interested senators and members, which agreed that the parliament should apply to reconstitute the

Commonwealth of Australia branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). The parliament's branch had withdrawn from the CPA in 2012, owing to concerns over the governance arrangements and financial accountability of the CPA. Noting that progress had been made to address the parliament's concerns, senators and members in attendance unanimously agreed to apply to reconstitute the branch. The decision to readmit the branch was ratified by the CPA General Assembly, which met in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 7 November 2017. The branch formally re-joined the CPA with effect from 1 January 2018.

Since re-joining the CPA, the branch has met, adopted rules to govern its operations and elected an executive committee. The branch currently has 63 members, more than a third of whom (22) are women parliamentarians. A meeting of women members of the branch was convened, and a Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians group for the parliament was re-established.

Parliamentary strengthening

The PSC has responsibility for coordinating the parliament's capacity-building activities. With the generous support of members, senators, former members and colleagues from throughout the parliamentary service, as well as some state and territory parliaments, the centre facilitates the Australian Parliament's capacity-building and parliamentary strengthening activities with the parliaments of Pacific island nations and other countries.

The PSC continued to coordinate activities under the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program and the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Project (PWPP), which was funded under the Australian Government's Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development initiative. The major focus of the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program during the year was work with the parliaments of Fiji and Samoa.

Support for the parliament of Fiji was arranged in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It included placements of parliamentary researchers from DPS and the Victorian parliament to assist with the Fiji parliament's budget analysis and provide mentoring support for Fiji's parliamentary sittings.

A seminar was held in Apia, Samoa, for members and staff of the Samoan Legislative Assembly on the topics of parliamentary privilege, procedure and ethics. This was conducted with the help of a former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ms Anna Burke, and senior officers from the department. Two staff undertook attachments to the Samoan Legislative Assembly to assist with committee and procedural support. Comprehensive handbooks for members and staff were prepared to provide guidance on practical matters, procedural rules and conventions.

The Samoa project concluded in 2017, whereas the Fiji program was extended until January 2020.

During the year, the major activities of the PWPP involved organising the fifth PWPP forum in Honiara, Solomon Islands, and facilitating research scholarships for parliamentary officers from the Autonomous Region of Bougainville (Papua New Guinea), Fiji and Samoa. Feedback on the project and the forum in Honiara was positive, with the Speaker of one Pacific island parliament observing 'the women's full participation, strong and serious discussions, openness with no reluctance to share and obvious tremendous confidence', and saying 'I was

pleased to observe the changes in the women, comradeship as a big family of supporters for each other. The PWPP concluded at the end of 2017.

Departmental staff and colleagues from all parliamentary departments, with coordination by the PSC, contributed to study programs for visiting members and staff of numerous overseas parliaments including India, Kenya, Myanmar and the Philippines. Feedback from participants on the study visit programs was consistently positive.

The department continued to support the UNDP's parliamentary strengthening program at the Myanmar parliament. The Clerk and a senior executive officer delivered executive and mid-level management training to parliamentary staff, and another departmental officer supported a program for committee development work.

The annual Inter-Parliamentary Study Program was conducted for senior parliamentary staff, with 15 participants from overseas parliaments including Brazil, China, India, Morocco, Nepal and Vietnam. There were also two participants from the Victorian and Northern Territory parliaments, which are in twinning arrangements with two of the Pacific participants: Fiji and Niue.

In November 2017, an inaugural Inter-Parliamentary Study Program for Deputy Speakers of Pacific island parliaments was held at the Australian Parliament. Twelve participants from across the region benefited from a unique professional development and networking opportunity with their peers, and from a program that involved input from the Deputy Presiding Officers, former Speaker Mr Harry Jenkins AO and senior officers from the department.

Improving performance

The streamlined approval process for all overseas delegation travel by the Presiding Officers—made possible by the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017—continues to allow flexibility and agility in the strategic management and forward planning of the international program. The co-location of IPRO and PSC also continues to allow for greater knowledge-sharing between the offices, and efficiencies in the coordination of the international program through the sharing of resources.

Increasingly, delegation members make use of the online delegation portal (where appropriate), as a secure and effective way to electronically access visit information and written briefs in a timely manner, both before and during official visits. Delegates' responses lodged via the new online survey platform are helping IPRO to refine its processes.

Outlook

The year ahead will include a full program of delegation visits, with the continued implementation of the 2016–19 delegations program, as approved by the Presiding Officers. In the first half of 2018–19, 15 outgoing delegations (including committee visits, a parliamentary field visit and attendance at assemblies) and five official incoming parliamentary delegations are scheduled.

Activities associated with the parliament's membership of the CPA will continue and are likely to increase.

Parliamentary strengthening programs administered through the PSC will remain a priority area for the international program. An Inter-Parliamentary Study Program will be offered for Speakers of all Pacific island parliaments, and study visit programs are planned for delegations of members and staff from parliaments of African and Indo-Pacific countries.

The Australian Parliament largely relies on funding from government or other sources, such as the UNDP and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to support much of its parliamentary strengthening work with other parliaments. The PSC will continue to respond to invitations to the Australian Parliament to collaborate on parliamentary strengthening, giving due consideration to the limited resources available for such work.



Delegation of ASEAN parliamentarians together with the Presiding Officers (centre), President of the Senate, Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon Tony Smith MP, and Hon Mark Coulton MP (right), November 2017. Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.

Members' and corporate support

Members' and corporate support is provided by the Finance Office, the Parliamentary and Business Information Services Office, the People Strategies Office and the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, all of which report to the Serjeant-at-Arms. The offices liaise with the Department of Finance and DPS to provide comprehensive services to departmental staff as well as to members and their staff, including:

- » facilitating committees' private meetings, public hearings and site inspections
- » advice and support on financial and human resource management, as well as records management, publishing and office services
- » payment of members' salaries and allowances
- » organisation of members' office accommodation, furniture and fittings
- » provision of mail and courier services, and a booking service for committee rooms and chamber gallery seating
- » maintenance and publication of key information about members and former members.

Expenditure on these services in 2017–18 was \$8.237 million, which was \$1.116 million below the budget allocation of \$9.353 million. There were expenses of \$2.924 million which did not require an appropriation; the budget allocation for these was \$2.900 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 23).

Dual citizenship

During 2017, under section 44 of the Constitution, the circumstances of members holding dual citizenship were called into question. Following resignations and judgments by the Court of Disputed Returns, seven by-elections were required. Three by-elections took place during the 2017–18 financial year. Following the endorsement of writs, returning or new members are required to make and subscribe an oath or affirmation of allegiance before being admitted to the House of Representatives and taking their seat in the Chamber.



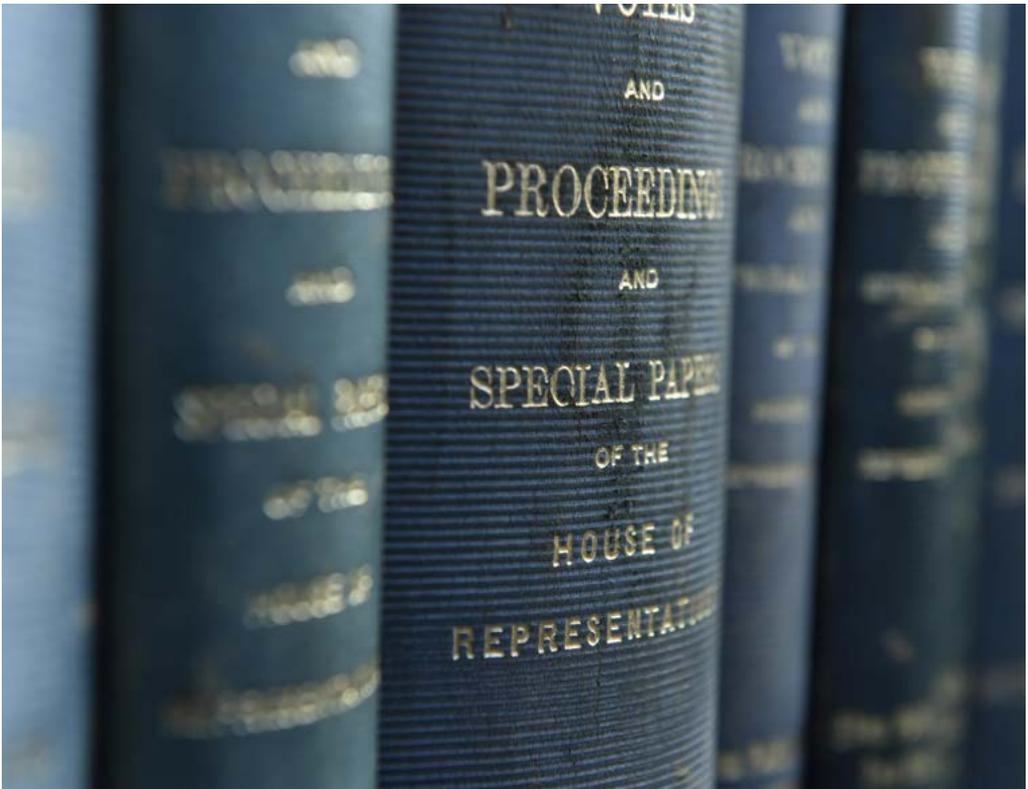
The Serjeant-at-Arms, James Catchpole, admits the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, Mr John Alexander OAM and the Hon Ken Wyatt MP into the Chamber for the swearing-in of Mr Alexander. Image: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.



Mr John Alexander OAM making and subscribing the oath of allegiance. Image: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.



The House is adjourned: retiring Assistant Serjeant-at-Arms, Lynne Eveston, removes the Mace from the Table and escorts the Speaker from the Chamber. Images: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.



Bound volumes of the Votes and Proceedings. Image: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.

Performance summary

A high priority for the program area 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. Staff work closely with colleagues in the Department of the Senate, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Australian Federal Police and DPS.

The ongoing program of building works to improve security at Parliament House was a particular area of focus during the year. In cooperation with colleagues from other agencies, staff implemented revised arrangements to support the operation of a temporary entrance to the House of Representatives wing; relocated members, their staff and departmental staff as needed to facilitate the works; and provided access for tradespeople and technicians to the House of Representatives wing and surrounds. Throughout these works, staff ensured that the House was still able to effectively meet and discharge its responsibilities.

Services and advice

Media services

The Serjeant-at-Arms and staff continued to work with the various media bureaus and the governing committee of the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery to ensure compliance with the rules for media-related activity in Parliament House and its precincts.

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 on a daily basis and at major parliamentary events such as budget day.

The Presiding Officers approved special access to Parliament House for the TV series *Secret City*, which is a political thriller based on a book by Chris Uhlmann and Steve Lewis.

On a day-to-day level, the Serjeant-at-Arms and delegates work with members' and ministers' offices, representatives of the press gallery, the Australian Federal Police and the Parliamentary Security Service to ensure that media events in the precincts are conducted in compliance with the media rules and with minimum inconvenience to all. There were some breaches of the media rules whereby show-cause letters were issued to a number of media bureaus, resulting in sanctions being imposed against some members of the press gallery.

During the year, the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office responded to around 120 requests to film or photograph in the private areas of the building.

Information services

As part of the department's commitment to keep members and their staff informed about developments in the House, four editions of the members' bulletin, *House Update*, were published, and seven procedural briefing sessions were held during the year.

Accommodation services

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

During the year, the office arranged 27 office relocations as a result of changes to the ministry reshuffles and office-holder positions. That number is significantly lower than the 73 relocations in 2016–17 (which included many changes due to the general election). The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office worked closely with the government and opposition whips to ensure that the relocations were completed quickly. The office also coordinated over 700 requests to supply and move furniture. That number is significantly higher than the previous year (600 requests), which reflects increased activity due to numerous members' suites having their furniture replaced with new office furniture for staff, and security project works that have taken place in the House of Representatives wing. All tasks were performed within agreed timeframes, to agreed standards, and to the satisfaction of the whips and individual members.

Office furniture replacement project

The second phase of the furniture replacement project continued during 2017–18. As at 30 June 2018, 124 of the 125 suites had been completed, with only one suite outstanding. This suite is scheduled to be completed in the first two weeks of July 2018. Furniture has been ordered to meet requirements for the immediate future.

Maintenance, access and transport services

Requests for maintenance 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 217 emergency requests, all of which were attended to promptly. In addition, the office coordinated 125 routine requests for repairs or alterations to suites or common areas. The office takes a proactive approach by performing office shutdowns and inspections over the autumn and winter recesses, so that issues can be identified, reported and addressed while parliament is not sitting.

The office coordinated 932 requests for assistance with telephone faults, relocations and allocations of telephone numbers (compared with 1,321 requests in 2016–17). The decrease reflects a regular sitting year (after the previous election year). Faults reported were referred to telephone support in DPS within five minutes of receipt, and appropriate timeframes for resolution were agreed with the affected areas.

As the area responsible for access to members' suites, the office approved 962 requests by DPS for access to suites and general circulation areas for works related to general maintenance, services and projects. This is a small increase on the previous year (919 requests), reflecting a continued increase in project works in the House of Representatives wing.

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office operates a Transport Office that delivers a parliamentary shuttle service during sitting periods. The shuttle provides a readily available, secure car-with-driver service in Canberra for members. In 2017–18, the Transport Office managed some 7,800 bookings from members, compared with 9,390 bookings in 2016–17 (figures exclude unbooked shuttle trips from the House of Representatives entrance, and bookings accepted by COMCAR but serviced by the Transport Office). This represents a 17 per cent decrease in bookings on the previous year, in part reflecting a reduced number of sitting days in the period.

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 advise the Presiding Officers on security policy and the management of security measures for Parliament House. The board met seven times during the reporting period.

The department is also represented on three other security-related consultative groups, all chaired by the Australian Federal Police. The Incident Planning and Response Committee is attended by representatives of the parliamentary departments and several external agencies. It meets before meetings of the Security Management Board in order to provide specialist advice to the board. The Joint Management Group is attended by representatives of the parliamentary departments, the Department of Finance and the Australian Federal Police. This group meets weekly to consider security-related matters and coordinate responses at the operational level. The third group, the Emergency Management Group, was established in 2017–18 and is also attended by representatives of the parliamentary departments, the Department of Finance and the Australian Federal Police. The primary role of the Emergency Management Group is to develop, coordinate and facilitate security exercises at Parliament House, as determined and scheduled by the Incident Planning and Response Committee.

The department has established a business continuity network to coordinate contingency plans for work areas in the event of business disruptions. The department ran a desktop exercise in November 2017 for committee staff, to test their responses in the event that they had to unexpectedly operate off-site. Further exercises are planned for other areas of the department. An updated business continuity plan and business resumption plans were also completed and distributed to departmental staff during the year.

Security screening

Certain guests are exempt from security screening on entry to Parliament House. Approvals for any other exemptions are made jointly by the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod. During the year, exemptions were approved for 21 groups and individuals (compared with 36 in 2016–17).

Information and communications technology

Under the revised information and communications technology (ICT) service-delivery framework, most of the department's ICT functions are provided by DPS. In support of this arrangement, the department continued to participate in a range of ICT advisory and management committees. A revised memorandum of understanding and service-level agreement with the other parliamentary departments was signed on 6 June 2018.

The Joint Management Committee, which comprises senior parliamentary staff, oversees the service-level agreement; it met three times in the reporting period. The Serjeant-at-Arms is the department's representative on the committee. The same senior parliamentary staff, meeting as the ICT Project Prioritisation Group, consider the priorities for DPS capital expenditure on replacing or upgrading parliamentary business systems.

Information services

During the year, the department in conjunction with DPS began a program of enhancement work to a number of ICT systems supporting the work of the House, parliamentary committees and members. Requirements analysis was conducted for the upgrade or replacement of several key business systems, including:

- » the Members Information Database (to be replaced by the new Parliamentarian Information Portal)
- » CommDocs (a distribution portal for parliamentary committees)
- » the e-petitions system
- » the Parliamentary Procedural Records System (used to record and retrieve procedural events and precedents)
- » the Parliamentary Relations Office database (used to support the international activities of the parliament).

The department continues to use its electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) to file and manage records electronically, and has been collaborating with the other parliamentary departments on a joint upgrade to reduce running costs. A project to identify methods of improving access to electronic records was initiated, and a solution is planned for implementation in 2018–19. The department is committed to meeting the targets under the National Archives' Digital Continuity 2020 Policy by December 2020.

The department continued to support House of Representatives pages on the Parliament of Australia website, the consolidated intranet portal for senators and members, the portal for outgoing parliamentary delegations and the departmental intranet site. Several projects that are focused on improving the design and functionality of intranet and Parliament of Australia website pages commenced in May 2017, with expected completion in 2018–19.

Printing

The department's in-house printing service was overhauled in 2017–18, with the replacement of print devices and software. New monochrome and colour print machinery was installed, as was new finishing and book-binding equipment. As a result of this investment, the House and committees can benefit from reduced completion times, and smaller, more cost-effective print runs. The service is now able to deliver a high-quality, responsive service for the parliament at reduced costs.

Parliamentary assistants program

The parliamentary assistants program is managed by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office. Parliamentary assistants are university students who perform the roles of messengerial attendants for an average of 10 hours per week with rosters planned around student commitments and the requirements of the House.

Six students took part in the program in 2017–18: two were existing assistants, and four were new appointments. The new assistants came from New South Wales, and all are studying at universities in Canberra.

Members' salaries

All processing of members' salaries and entitlements by the People Strategies Office was in accordance with legislation and administrative decisions. In the 2018 members' survey, 95 per cent of members said that they were satisfied with support for salary payments. Annual expenditure on members' salaries and other entitlements was \$47.585 million.

Corporate support

The People Strategies Office provides corporate services and advice to the department. Operational performance indicators for finance, human resources and other corporate support services were met in 2017–18, and the department was in compliance with internal and external governance and reporting requirements.

Outlook

In 2018–19, the department will continue to provide advice and services of a high standard to support the Speaker, members in Parliament House and the department. In the course of the year the parliament is very likely to be prorogued and the House dissolved before a general election and the beginning of the Forty-sixth Parliament. This will be a busy period for the program area. It is anticipated that subsequent activity levels will be consistent with those that are normal during the first year of a parliamentary cycle.

It is anticipated that other priorities for the members' and corporate support program during the year will include:

- » supporting the completion of major capital works projects in the House of Representatives wing, including the re-opening of the House of Representatives entrance, and working with other agencies on upgraded technology for access to individual suites
- » completing the second phase of the furniture replacement project
- » in consultation with DPS, continuing to explore the proposed transfer of ownership of 'Status B' furniture to that department, including development of a draft memorandum of understanding and related service-level agreements
- » planning for the hosting of a regional Serjeant-at-Arms conference at a suitable time after the next election, after a proposed larger international conference scheduled for July 2018 was postponed
- » supporting the deployment of the new Parliamentarian Information Portal to replace the Members Information Database.

Schools hospitality

The department receives a special appropriation to provide modest hospitality to school groups visiting Parliament House. School visits are coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, working in partnership with the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) and the Visitor Experience Office of DPS.

In 2017–18 the administered appropriation for the schools hospitality program activity was \$0.320 million, and expenditure was \$0.313 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 26).

Performance summary

In 2017–18, 119,088 school students participated in educational tours of Parliament House, up from 117,582 in the previous year. The number of students from New South Wales and Western Australia decreased, while all other states and territories recorded higher numbers than in the previous financial year (see Table 8).

Table 8 Students visiting Parliament House, by location and year, 2012–13 to 2017–18

Year	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Other	Total
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
2014–15	2,158	67,385	819	19,489	5,061	1,750	18,531	5,023	–	120,216
2015–16	3,004	64,438	654	16,056	5,849	1,621	18,950	5,159	13	115,744
2016–17	2,783	65,653	686	15,828	5,610	1,683	19,971	5,440	–	117,654
2017–18	3,030	64,366	788	17,131	5,896	1,942	20,810	5,125	–	119,088

All visiting students participated in a guided tour and visited both chambers; 81 per cent (96,979) received hospitality and 75 per cent (89,259) participated in the PEO program (see pages 45–47 for more information on the PEO's activities).

Improving performance

Bookings continue to be taken on a rolling monthly basis for the next two calendar years. This process has brought our booking schedule into line with the schedules of other designated agencies on the visits program, and it continues to be well received.

The online availability calendar and new booking form with a 'submit' option was placed onto the 'Organise a school visit' page on the Parliament of Australia website. This means that schools and agents can readily view availability of school programs at Parliament House before making a booking. In conjunction with the PEO, the school visits section of the website was further updated to make it easier for users to access information and make bookings.

Outlook

By 30 June 2018 120,205 students from 1,848 schools had been booked for the following 12 months. Last year at the same time 112,383 students from 1,703 schools had been booked.

