



# Part 3

## Management and accountability

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*Ms Claessa Surtees, Clerk of the House of Representatives, with Australia Day Achievement Medallion recipients Mr Glenn Worthington (left) and Mr Richard Selth (right).*

*Image: Department of the House of Representatives.*

# Corporate governance

The department is responsible for the provision of procedural, information and administrative services to members, the House, and the broader parliament. As Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives, the Speaker's role is in some ways analogous to that of a minister of state in relation to an executive government department. The *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* restates the principles that the legislative arm of government is separate from the executive arm, and that its staff are responsible to the Australian Parliament rather than to the government of the day. The Speaker oversees administration of the department and is accountable to the House in respect of that role. The Clerk, who is responsible under the *Parliamentary Service Act* for leading the department and its day-to-day management, reports to and advises the Speaker on departmental matters.

The department's corporate functions and staff provide critical support that enables the department to deliver programs and services. The department's corporate area is focused on providing quality, timely services, and on being responsive to the changing policy and operational needs of the department. This section discusses the department's governance structure and support services, which provide a framework to ensure accountability and the overall effectiveness of the department.

## Governance structure

### Legislation

The Australian parliamentary service, established by the *Parliamentary Service Act*, includes the Department of the House of Representatives as one of the four parliamentary departments. The Act also provides for the independence of the Clerk in that person's advisory functions; it establishes an office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives; and it confers responsibility for managing the department on the Clerk, under the Speaker.

The department's operations are governed by the *Parliamentary Service Act* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). Other legislation, including the *Fair Work Act 2009*, also applies to the operations of the department. Together, these Acts set out the Clerk's formal responsibilities for managing the department.

## Executive and senior management

As at 30 June 2020, the department's Executive comprised the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and four Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 1 staff: the Clerk Assistant (Table), Clerk Assistant (Procedure), Clerk Assistant (Committees) and the Serjeant-at-Arms. Each SES Band 1 officer is responsible for one or more of the department's offices (see Figure 1 on page 10). The roles and responsibilities of the Executive are described on page 11.

The senior management of the department comprises the Executive and managers at the Executive Band 2 level.

## Departmental management committees

### Executive

In 2019–20, the department's Executive held 11 formal meetings to consider and take decisions on a range of departmental management and administrative matters. As well as standing items relating to finance and people strategies, during the year the Executive discussed:

- » matters arising out of the departmental and Executive planning sessions
- » corporate planning, risk management and information management
- » arrangements for the 28th Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum
- » COVID-19 responses and planning
- » areas of cooperation with the other parliamentary departments
- » information and communications technology (ICT) projects and security
- » workforce and succession planning initiatives
- » various departmental policies and strategies.

### Audit Committee

The department's Audit Committee provides independent assurance to the Clerk on the department's risk, control and compliance framework, and its external accountability responsibilities, with specific reference to the Clerk's position of accountable authority under the PGPA Act. Guided by the Audit Committee's charter (available at [www.aph.gov.au/dhr/AuditCharter](http://www.aph.gov.au/dhr/AuditCharter)), the members of the Audit Committee play an essential role in ensuring the integrity and transparency of the department's reporting.

### Chair

**Mr Paul Groenewegen** joined as chair of the department's Audit Committee in early 2018. Mr Groenewegen is an experienced executive and consultant with a background in fiscal management; governance practice; strategy development and implementation; compliance and risk activities; and government operations involving regulation and policy.

Mr Groenewegen's current and previous roles include governance and review work with government and industry organisations, executive roles with Defence Housing Australia, the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) and the Private Health Insurance Administration Council (PHIAC), and several financial management roles involving a range of functions from the oversight of whole-of-government payments through to the financial management of complex multi-program organisations. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Graduate Diploma of Applied Corporate Governance and is a certified practising accountant and graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

### Independent members

**Mr Tim Courtney** joined the committee as an independent member in 2015. Mr Courtney is a First Assistant Commissioner at the Australian Electoral Commission, a position he has held since 2014.

As head of the Capability Division he oversees the information technology, finance and business services, legal services and funding and disclosure functions within the Australian Electoral Commission. In the lead-up to the 2016 federal election, Mr Courtney led the Senate Reform Program to implement the most comprehensive Senate voting reforms in 30 years, one of a number of major projects he has led. From 2010 to 2013, Mr Courtney was the Chief Information Officer for the Australian Electoral Commission and oversaw key advances in the use of technology by the agency, including the development of online enrolment services, electronic certified lists at polling places and the use of cloud services for the election results system.

Mr Courtney has held membership on a number of Commonwealth agency audit committees, and is a full member of the British Computer Society and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

**Mr Dermot Walsh** joined the committee as an independent member in 2015. At 30 June 2020, Mr Walsh was Senior Assistant Ombudsman at the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman. He is an experienced executive and has had roles in both the Commonwealth and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Public Service, in a diverse range of organisations including the ACT Land Development Agency, ACT Economic Development Directorate, Comcare, the National Gallery of Australia, the Defence Service Homes Insurance Scheme and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Mr Walsh has significant experience in government financial management, governance and risk management, human resource management, project management, ICT and program delivery. He has a Bachelor of Commerce degree, and is a certified practising accountant and member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

### Members

**Mr Peter Banson** has been a member of the committee since 2017 and is the Clerk Assistant (Table) in the Department of the House of Representatives. He is responsible for the areas of the department that provide programming, procedural and legislative support to the Chamber and Federation Chamber of the House, as well as the parliament's international program. He acts as Clerk-at-the-Table of the House of Representatives.

Mr Banson has worked in the Department of the House of Representatives for 19 years in various roles including in the Procedure Office, Table Office and Speaker's Office and as a committee secretary and Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms. He has a Bachelor of Science from the Australian National University and an Executive Master of Public Administration through the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

**Ms Catherine Cornish** has worked in the Department of the House of Representatives since 1994. Her roles have included Clerk Assistant (Procedure); Clerk Assistant (Table); Director, Chamber Research Office; and Director, Clerk's Office. Ms Cornish was also a committee secretary for many years. She has degrees in law and public administration from the Australian National University.

Ms Cornish was appointed Deputy Clerk of the House of Representatives in September 2019, and subsequently resigned from the committee.

**Mr Stuart Woodley** joined the committee in September 2019 and is the Clerk Assistant (Committees) in the Department of the House of Representatives. He is responsible for the committee support area of the department which provides a range of support services to House of Representatives committees and some joint committees.

Mr Woodley has worked in the department for seven years in various roles in the Committee Office, Clerk's and Speaker's offices, and Procedure Office. Prior to this he worked for the Attorney-General's Department, and as a solicitor in general practice. He has degrees in law and political science from the University of New England and an Executive Master of Public Administration through the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

### Observers

The Serjeant-at-Arms, Mr James Catchpole—who manages the department's corporate functions—attends committee meetings as an adviser, together with representatives of the Australian National Audit Office, the department's internal audit team, and the Chief Finance Officer.

### Audit Committee meeting attendance

**Table 8: Audit Committee meeting attendance, 2019–20**

Member	Sep 2019	Dec 2019	Mar 2020	Jun 2020
Peter Banson	x	x	✓	✓
Tim Courtney	✓	✓	✓	✓
Catherine Cornish	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
Paul Groenewegen	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dermot Walsh	✓	✓	✓	x
Stuart Woodley	✓	✓	✓	✓

### Audit Committee remuneration

In 2019–20, the chair of the Audit Committee, Mr Paul Groenewegen, was paid \$12,156 for his services. No other committee members received remuneration for their work on the committee.

## Other departmental committees

### Consultative Committee

The Consultative Committee is an important mechanism for communicating and consulting with staff on workplace issues. Chaired by the Deputy Clerk, the committee's membership includes three other representatives from the department's Executive, two elected staff representatives, and two union-nominated representatives. The committee met six times during 2019–20.

Standing agenda items for the meetings are:

- » implementation and monitoring of the enterprise agreement
- » proposals for change and developments affecting staff
- » reviews of implemented changes
- » reports on departmental activities.

Other matters discussed in the reporting period included:

- » the department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- » the new enterprise agreement bargaining process
- » appointment of workplace equity and harassment contact officers, and work health and safety representatives
- » various policies and guidelines, including the managing underperformance policy and the bullying and harassment policy
- » the establishment on an SMS alert service for business continuity events
- » progress of the Department of Parliamentary Services' (DPS's) proposed Corporate Business Operations Centre
- » the proposed structure and results of the annual staff survey.

### **Knowledge Management Steering Committee**

The Knowledge Management Steering Committee is a forum to discuss issues in information and knowledge management, and advocate for the sharing of departmental knowledge and skills. The committee has an advisory and monitoring role, and it may also make recommendations to the Executive for decision and undertake roles as requested by the Executive. The committee serves as the department's Information Governance Committee under the National Archives' Digital Continuity 2020 Policy.

The committee is chaired by the Clerk Assistant (Table), and includes representatives from all areas of the department. The committee met twice in the period and discussed the:

- » results of the department's assessment of information systems against ISO 16175
- » department's review of its Digital Operating Model
- » Australian Parliament Digital Strategy 2019–2022
- » planned migration to Windows 10 and Office 365, including potential use cases for Microsoft Teams
- » review of the department's Records Authority
- » development of a policy for access requests made for committee records.



## Collaboration across parliamentary departments

### **Meetings of heads of parliamentary departments**

In 2019–20, the Clerk, the Clerk of the Senate, the secretary of DPS and the Parliamentary Budget Officer held four formal meetings. Matters discussed included:

- » business continuity arrangements for the summer bushfire smoke and COVID-19 pandemic response and planning
- » ICT governance arrangements and the structure of ICT service delivery areas
- » security-related capital works
- » the parliamentary reconciliation action plan.

The parliamentary departments continued to work together under the Australian Parliament's *Strategic plan for parliamentary administration*, which brought together key priorities across the whole of the parliamentary administration, identifying shared goals and formalising a collaborative approach to achieving optimal outcomes in providing support and services to the parliament. The development of a replacement document—the *Strategic framework for the parliamentary service*—was a focus for the year. The Clerk took over responsibility for chairing the group in 2020.

### **Parliamentary Administration Advisory Group**

In 2019–20, the Parliamentary Administration Advisory Group met five times to discuss matters of common interest across the parliamentary departments. Membership comprises the Serjeant-at-Arms, the Usher of the Black Rod, an assistant secretary of DPS, and the Assistant Parliamentary Budget Officer from the Parliamentary Budget Office. The Serjeant-at-Arms became chair of the group in 2020.

Matters discussed over the reporting period included:

- » work health and safety policies across the four parliamentary departments
- » progress on possible shared services arrangements for the parliamentary departments
- » proposed amendments to the Parliamentary Service Classification Rules
- » the strategic framework for the parliamentary service
- » registers of gifts and benefits.

### **Other inter-parliamentary department forums**

In 2019–20, the department was active in a number of other inter-parliamentary department forums that considered matters of common interest, particularly ICT and security. During the period, ICT governance arrangements changed substantially, and the department now participates in a number of new forums. Departmental representatives participated in meetings of the following groups:

- » Joint Management Group—this group considers security-related matters. It is chaired by a senior representative from the Australian Federal Police, and the department is represented by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.

- » Incident Planning and Response Committee—this committee manages security and emergency incident planning and response operations. The committee is chaired by a senior representative from the Australian Federal Police, and the department is represented by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.
- » Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group—this group is the governing body responsible for the parliamentary service's *Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–2022*. The department is represented by its Reconciliation Action Plan Champion Mr Stuart Woodley, the Clerk Assistant (Committees).
- » Emergency Management Working Group—this group develops, coordinates and facilitates security exercises at Parliament House. The group is chaired by a representative from the Australian Federal Police, and the department is represented by an Assistant Serjeant-at-Arms.
- » ICT Portfolio Board—this board makes the key decisions to ensure the effective delivery of prioritised and funded ICT projects. It is chaired by the DPS Chief Information Officer and the department is represented by the Serjeant-at-Arms.
- » Product Family Boards—these boards prioritise, approve and oversee ICT projects related to their areas of focus. The department is represented on the following boards: Parliamentary Business Systems; Corporate Systems; Research, Modelling and Policy; Internal User Experience; Public User Experience; and Platforms and Cyber Security.
- » Strategic ICT Group—this group is the strategic ICT committee for the parliamentary departments. It provides strategic advice on priorities for ICT projects and initiatives, and considers issues relating to ICT strategy, policy and risk. It is chaired by the DPS Chief Information Officer and the department is represented by the Serjeant-at-Arms.
- » Service Delivery Working Group—this group is responsible for operational oversight of the *Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between parliamentary departments in relation to the provision of Information and Communication Technology Services*. It provides advice to the Strategic ICT Group, and the department is represented by the Director, Parliamentary and Business Information Services.
- » Information Security Working Group—this group is a forum to progress information security initiatives which require input from all parliamentary departments. The group is responsible for providing feedback and advice to the DPS Director of Cyber Security, to ensure a consistent and effective approach to information security across the parliamentary service. The department is represented by the Director, Parliamentary and Business Information Services.
- » Continuity Coordination Group—this group was established by DPS to coordinate that department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Serjeant-at-Arms was invited to attend meetings of the group to ensure consistency in coordination and communication.



## Departmental planning

The department recognises the importance of continuing to strengthen its corporate planning and performance reporting, to both comply with its statutory obligations and improve performance, transparency and accountability.

The corporate plan is the department's primary planning document. As required under the PGPA Act, the department's *Corporate Plan 2019–20* was published in August 2019.

It covered 2019–20 and three forward years to 2022–23. The corporate plan sets out the department's purpose, the activities undertaken to achieve that purpose, and the measures for assessing the department's performance. It also describes the environment in which the department operates, planned capability initiatives, and the department's risk management and oversight systems.

The department fosters a collegiate approach to preparing the corporate plan, and some program areas and individual offices in the department develop their own business plans with a more operational focus, to complement the corporate plan.

The department seeks to embed the corporate plan through its comprehensive work performance management framework that applies to all staff, as well as through regular reporting sessions to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk and the broader department.

### **Departmental accountability and reporting**

The department's main formal external accountability mechanisms are the Portfolio Budget Statements and the annual report, prepared pursuant to section 65 of the Parliamentary Service Act. The annual report for 2018–19 provided an assessment of the department's performance against the targets set in the 2018–19 Portfolio Budget Statements and corporate plan, and presented the department's financial statements.

The department's annual report and Portfolio Budget Statements were made available to all members and published on the department's website. The department's annual report was also published on the Commonwealth Transparency Portal.

## Managing risk

### **Risk assessment and management**

The department's approach to risk and management of risk is underpinned by its *Risk management policy and framework 2019–21* and *Risk management plan 2019–21*.

The risk management policy and framework details the department's commitment to embedding systematic risk management into governance, management and planning processes. It outlines the department's risk appetite and tolerance, and allocates responsibility for aspects of planning, mitigation, oversight and reporting to identified staff at various levels. The risk management plan identifies the key strategic risks for the department and the treatments to be applied, and is accompanied by separate operational risk management plans for specific business areas or subject matter.

The policy and plan are available to all staff via the departmental intranet. The department has a monitoring and reporting framework that requires regular reporting on risk and risk treatment to the Executive and to the Audit Committee.

During the year, much of the department's risk management focus was on the 2019–20 bushfire season and the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the development and implementation of specific risk assessments and management plans.

### ***Comcover benchmarking***

The Comcover risk management benchmarking program survey is now conducted biennially, with the next survey planned for 2021. The most recent survey in 2019 assessed the maturity of the department's risk management capability against the nine elements of the Commonwealth risk management policy. Based on the results of the 2019 survey, the department achieved a risk maturity level of 'advanced', which is higher than the previous year's assessed level of 'systematic' and higher than the average maturity state of all survey participants ('integrated').

### ***Business continuity***

A departmental business continuity plan was in force throughout the reporting year, complemented by office-level business resumption plans. The plan is managed by the Serjeant-at-Arms and endorsed by the Clerk. The business continuity network, with representation from across the department, is responsible for business continuity governance and oversight.

The plan requires scenario-based exercises designed to test aspects of the department's business continuity capability, with a new exercise developed each year. During 2019–20, the department's scenario-based exercise involved the Procedure Office. The exercise was facilitated and reviewed by the department's internal auditors, who concluded the Procedure Office demonstrated an ability to effectively respond to a range of sudden disruptions, and made several recommendations that were accepted by the department.

In 2020, the business continuity network met to discuss responses to the bushfire season and COVID-19 pandemic. The department established an opt-in SMS alert service to quickly advise staff in the event of a business continuity disruption. The service is intended to complement existing communication plans for each office and enable staff to be notified of any changes.

In response to COVID-19, the department established a secure, external website to enable staff working from home without access to the parliamentary computing network to stay informed of developments.

### ***Internal audit***

Internal audit services are provided to the department by BellchambersBarrett. A strategic internal audit plan is prepared for the department every three years, and an annual audit plan prepared in consultation with senior management. The strategic internal audit plan 2018–21 addresses strategic, fraud and security risks identified in the department's various risk management plans, as well as emerging strategic and operational priorities identified by management.

During the reporting period, BellchambersBarrett conducted the following reviews:

- » ICT security arrangements
- » recruitment and onboarding processes
- » procurement and contract management
- » arrangements of international delegations and capacity-building activities.

## Preventing fraud

The department is committed to compliance with the provisions of section 10 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule) relating to preventing, detecting and dealing with fraud.

The department's *Fraud Control Plan 2019–21* outlines strategies and processes for preventing and detecting fraud, and for investigating and reporting instances of fraud should they occur. All new staff are required to complete online training on financial management responsibilities and fraud control. The department's monitoring and reporting framework requires regular reporting to the Executive and the Audit Committee. No significant instances of fraud were identified or reported to the Speaker during the year.

The internal auditors prepared the department's *Fraud risk assessment 2019–21*. It provides details of the approach and methodology used in assessing fraud risks within the department. It also details a range of processes and activities in terms of their potential fraud risks, and the controls in place that prevent, detect or deter the risks. This assessment was updated during the previous reporting period, through a process of consultation with the departmental Executive and senior management, in which fraud risks were identified and assessed.

## Ethical standards and behaviour

The Parliamentary Service Values and Code of Conduct, which are set out in the Parliamentary Service Act, provide staff with a framework for ethical conduct. The department promotes sound ethical behaviour.

During induction, all new staff are advised about what it means to work in a values-based environment, and how ethical standards apply to their day-to-day work.

## Statement of significant non-compliance with the finance law

The department did not identify any instances of significant non-compliance with the finance law during 2019–20. The finance law incorporates the PGPA Act, any rules and instruments created under the PGPA Act, and appropriation and supply Acts.

## Public interest disclosure

The Clerk, as the principal officer of the department for the purposes of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013*, has established procedures and appointed authorised officers for facilitating and dealing with public interest disclosures relating to the department, in accordance with that Act.

During 2019–20, the department continued to ensure that information on public interest disclosure procedures was available to all staff. During the year, four authorised officers were approved to handle public interest disclosures.

### Privacy

Although not an entity to which the *Privacy Act 1988* applies, the department abides by the principles of the legislation in its dealings with employees and the handling of their records. It has adopted a departmental privacy policy that is consistent with the Act.

### Ecologically sustainable development and environmental reporting

DPS is responsible for managing Parliament House and the parliamentary precincts. That department reports in accordance with section 516A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* in its annual report, which is available from the Parliament of Australia website and Commonwealth Transparency Portal.

# External scrutiny

The department's operations are primarily administrative and are therefore not usually subject to formal external scrutiny.

## Judicial and administrative decisions

During 2019–20, no judicial decisions or decisions of administrative tribunals or the Australian Information Commissioner had, or are anticipated to have, a significant effect on the operations of the department.

## Reports on the operations of the department

In 2019–20, the Auditor-General did not table any reports directly relating to the administration of the department or its operations. The Australian National Audit Office provided an unqualified audit report on the department's 2019–20 financial statements.

In 2019–20, the Commonwealth Ombudsman did not issue any reports on the operations of the department. There were no capability reviews of the department released during the period.

The department continued to support the Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration's consideration of the department's funding requirements and budget position. During 2019–20, the committee met five times and tabled one report: *Report No. 18: Annual report 2018–19*.

The committee focused on a number of areas over the year, including physical security, ICT security and building upgrade works at Parliament House. Due to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the budget cycle, the committee did not table a report on the department's budget estimates during the period.

## Disability reporting mechanisms

Disability reporting now sits within the framework of the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020, which sets out a 10-year national policy to improve the lives of people with disability, promote participation and create a more inclusive society. A high-level two-yearly report will track progress against each of the six outcome areas of the strategy, and present a picture of how people with disability are faring. Progress reports, as well as an independent review report, can be found at [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au).

## Freedom of information

The department is excluded from the application of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, under section 68A of the Parliamentary Service Act.

# Management of people

## Workforce profile

At 30 June 2020, the department had 178 employees—130 ongoing, 15 non-ongoing and 33 casual.

The department's workforce is 61.2 per cent female, 38.2 per cent are aged over 50 years and 0.6 per cent identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

## Employee statistics

Tables 9 to 13 show the department's employee statistics for 2019–20, including whether staff are in ongoing, non-ongoing or casual positions. The tables provide information on the substantive classification of staff, as well as their gender and geographical location.

**Table 9: Employment type by classification and gender, at 30 June 2020**

Classification	Ongoing		Non-ongoing		Casual		Total		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
SES 2	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
SES 1	4	–	–	–	–	–	4	–	4
EB 2	8	12	–	–	–	–	8	12	20
EB 1	17	23	1	3	–	–	18	26	44
PSL 6	6	22	–	3	–	–	6	25	31
PSL 5	1	4	–	1	–	–	1	5	6
PSL 4	6	20	2	4	1	–	9	24	33
PSL 3	3	2	–	–	–	2	3	4	7
PSL 2	1	–	–	1	19	11	20	12	32
PSL 1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>178</b>

The department had no staff recorded in the human resource management information system as indeterminate, intersex or unspecified. Figures for this table exclude the Clerk of the House.

Table 10: Employment type by classification and gender, at 30 June 2019

Classification	Ongoing		Non-ongoing		Casual		Total		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
SES 2	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
SES 1	3	1	–	–	–	–	3	1	4
EB 2	9	11	–	–	–	–	9	11	20
EB 1	16	24	–	1	–	–	16	25	41
PSL 6	7	18	–	3	–	–	7	21	28
PSL 5	1	4	–	–	–	–	1	4	5
PSL 4	1	21	1	3	1	–	3	24	27
PSL 3	3	2	–	–	–	1	3	3	6
PSL 2	1	–	–	–	19	11	20	11	31
PSL 1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>163</b>

The department had no staff recorded in the human resource management information system as indeterminate, intersex or unspecified. Figures for this table exclude the Clerk of the House.

Table 11: Employment type by employment status, at 30 June 2019 and 30 June 2020

Employment type	Full-time		Part-time		Casual		Total	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Ongoing	109	113	15	17	–	–	124	130
Non-ongoing	7	14	1	1	–	–	8	15
Casual	–	–	–	–	32	33	32	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>178</b>



Table 12: Employment type by office and location, at 30 June 2019 and 30 June 2020

	Ongoing		Non-ongoing		Casual		Total	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
<b>Office</b>								
Executive	9	9	1	–	–	–	10	9
Executive support / project staff	2	2	–	–	–	–	2	2
Table Office	9	12	1	–	1	1	11	13
Procedure Office	7	10	1	–	–	–	8	10
Committee Office	60	62	–	6	–	–	60	68
International and Parliamentary Relations Office	7	8	–	2	–	–	7	10
Parliamentary and Business Information Services Office	10	10	4	3	1	1	15	14
Finance Office	6	5	1	1	–	–	7	6
People Strategies Office	7	6	–	3	–	–	7	9
Serjeant-at-Arms' Office	7	7	–	–	30	31	37	38
<b>State or territory</b>								
Australian Capital Territory	124	131	8	15	32	33	164	179
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>179</b>

Table 13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, at 30 June 2019 and 30 June 2020

Employment type	Staff numbers	
	2019	2020
Ongoing	–	1
Non-ongoing	2	–
Casual	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

## Employee engagement

### *Investors in People standard*

Investors in People is an international quality framework that benchmarks the effectiveness of leadership and management practices. The standard defines what is required to lead, support and manage people well with sustainable results. The department has held accreditation against the Investors in People standard since 2002, and was awarded 'Investors in People Silver' in 2018 against Investors in People's improved framework.

The achievement of the standard recognises the strong commitment of departmental employees to ensure the highest possible standards of service. One of the requirements for retaining accreditation is to be reassessed against the standard every three years by an independent assessor. As recommended in the accreditation report, the department has established a working group to identify and carry forward areas of future improvement.

### *Staff survey*

In May 2020, the department conducted its annual staff survey to measure employee sentiment, views about leadership and observations about the broader working environment.

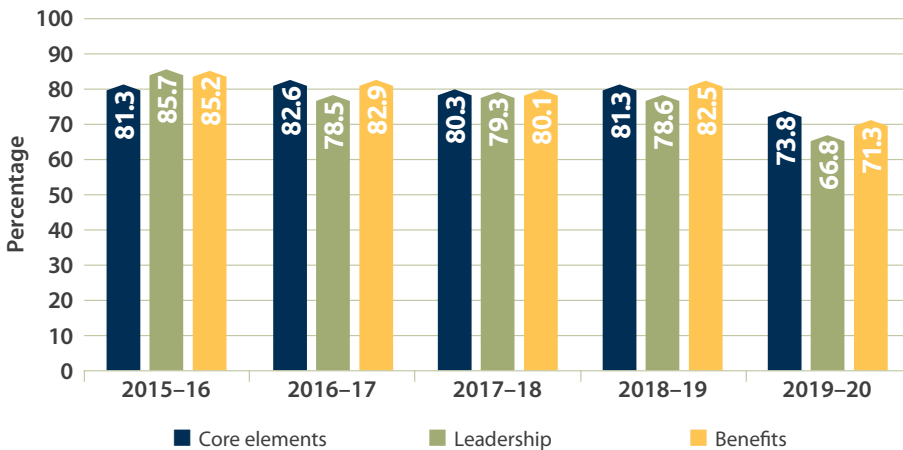
The results of the survey are used to inform improvement initiatives and to further develop the culture of the department. Ideas and feedback from employees are an essential element when seeking to deliver sustainable change across the department and to sustain a high-performance culture.

The department has established three internal benchmarks based on the results of the survey. These benchmarks, or index scores, correspond to the total percentage of staff selecting 'strongly agree' and 'agree' in response to specific sets of questions. The three benchmarks are as follows:

- » The 'core elements' satisfaction index measures the extent to which the department provided the core elements needed to attract, focus and keep the most talented staff (satisfaction rate of 73.8 per cent in 2020 and an average of 80.9 per cent over the past five years).
- » The 'leadership' satisfaction index measures the level of satisfaction of staff with their managers against the department's leadership statement (satisfaction rate of 66.8 per cent in 2020 and an average of 80.6 per cent over the past five years).
- » The 'benefits' satisfaction index measures the level of staff satisfaction with pay and working conditions (satisfaction rate of 71.3 per cent in 2020 and an average of 82 per cent over the past five years).

Figure 6 shows the performance of the satisfaction elements over the past five years.

Figure 6: Staff survey satisfaction elements, 2015–16 to 2019–20



## People strategies: planning and delivery

### Recruitment

The department advertised to fill 14 ongoing vacancies during 2019–20 (compared with 21 in 2018–19), of which nine were filled by external applicants.

### Retention

Sixteen ongoing and eight non-ongoing staff left the department in 2019–20. The turnover rate was 9 per cent for ongoing staff (compared with 13 per cent in 2018–19).

Exit interviews with staff leaving the department continued to be conducted by SES managers. Four such interviews were conducted during the year.

### Alumni

The department formed an alumni association of former staff in 2008. On 30 June 2020, it had 257 members. The association issued one newsletter during the year, and its board met once. On 10 December 2019, the association held its annual general meeting and a reception for alumni members was held on 21 February 2020.

### Social Club

Throughout the financial year, the Department of the House of Representatives Social Club coordinated a number of activities for Father's Day, Melbourne Cup and Christmas to bring staff together. Unfortunately, the annual Easter egg hunt was unable to proceed due to COVID-19. The club also conducted two activities to support charities including a bake sale to raise money for the Salvation Army Bushfire Appeal, and participation in the St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal where the department donated a number of food baskets for those in need in the local community.

## Graduate placement program

Together with the Department of the Senate and the Parliamentary Budget Office the department participates in, and administers, the Parliament of Australia Graduate Program. The purpose of the program is to expose graduates working in Australian Public Service departments and agencies to how their home department or agency interacts with the parliamentary departments in their support of the parliament.

The program involves three-month placements of people from the graduate programs of Australian Government agencies and the staff of those agencies. Graduates develop the necessary knowledge and skills to make a significant contribution to the department and broader parliamentary service. The program continued to draw a high level of interest from graduates from a range of agencies. Five graduates undertook placements in the department in 2019–20.

Feedback from graduates confirmed that the program is highly successful and that the objectives of the placements were met.

## Learning and development

In 2019–20 the department delivered 48 face-to-face training and development sessions to employees, based around the core themes of critical thinking, writing skills, management capability and fostering high performance. The department shifted its focus to online learning during the latter half of the year and 91 LinkedIn learning courses were completed in full. Priority skills training focused on leadership development and supporting staff working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 14 compares the average attendance of staff at training courses in 2018–19 and 2019–20. It also shows the staffing level and total number of training days attended in 2019–20 for each classification.

**Table 14: Staff attendance at training courses**

Classification	Headcount	Training days attended	Average training days attended per person	
			2018–19	2019–20
Senior Executive Service	6	14.3	4.7	2.9
Executive Band 2	20	54.9	5.2	2.7
Executive Band 1	41	101.9	5.3	2.3
Parliamentary Service Level 6	28	60.0	6.5	1.9
Parliamentary Service Level 5	5	7.0	5.2	1.2
Parliamentary Service Level 4	27	46.9	5.7	1.4
Parliamentary Service Level 3	6	8.2	3.2	1.2
Parliamentary Service Level 2	31	51.6	0.9	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>344.7</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>1.9</b>

The Clerk of the House is included with the Senior Executive Service for the purposes of this table.

### Studies assistance

The department's study assistance scheme allows employees to complete relevant tertiary study to improve their professional skills and knowledge. Six employees accessed studies assistance during the year (the same number as in 2018–19). Collectively, financial assistance of \$6,097 was administered (compared with \$7,874 in 2018–19), along with a total of 44 days of study leave on full pay.

### Performance assessment

All eligible staff participated in the annual work performance assessment cycle, which was completed on 31 October 2019. The cycle consists of setting individual work objectives, conducting performance assessments, preparing individual development plans and providing feedback to supervisors. Information from the individual development plans is used to formulate the training program for the next calendar year.

### Diversity and inclusion

The department's workplace diversity program aligns the department's workplace diversity strategies and actions with the Parliamentary Service Values. It outlines the department's commitment to increasing workforce participation rates in different diversity groups.

Training continued to be provided to new staff in the prevention of discrimination, bullying and harassment and all staff were required to attend a training update in relation to these important aspects of workplace behaviour. The department is committed to actively building a diverse and inclusive workplace that promotes gender equality and harnesses the skills and experiences of people from all backgrounds. The department's diversity and inclusion program has a significant focus on increasing workforce participation rates across all diversity groups.

The department's Reconciliation Action Plan Champion Stuart Woodley contributed to the development of the *Australian Parliamentary Service Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–2022*.



Committee Office researcher Mr Ben Ve'a Ve'a (centre), with Mr Rob Stefanic, secretary of DPS (left) and Ms Cara Kirkwood, DPS Indigenous Engagement and Strategy Manager (right) at the launch of the Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–2022 on 11 March 2020.  
Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.



Parliamentary service Reconciliation Action Plan champions Mr Stuart Woodley, Mr David Tellis, Mr Rob Brigden and Mr John Begley.  
Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.

During 2019–20, the department continued to build its commitment to diversity and inclusion through a number of initiatives and developments. Most significantly, the department developed and implemented its Indigenous Engagement Strategy 2020–2022. The department also continued to be involved with the Indigenous Australian Government Development Program, which offers graduates an opportunity to participate in the department's Indigenous Secondment Program, consisting of three-month placements. This is the fourth year of the Indigenous Secondment Program and it is a significant part of the department's commitment to provide opportunities for the career progression and professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. At the completion of the program, participants return to their home departments with valuable experiences of parliamentary operations.

In 2019–20, there were two graduates placed with the department through the Indigenous Secondment Program.

The department piloted the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) Inclusion Program, a suite of online training courses developed by Australia's multicultural and multilingual broadcaster. These online courses covered a number of topics, including gender, LGBTIQ+, core inclusion, disability and culture.

## Employment arrangements

The *Department of the House of Representatives Enterprise Agreement 2017–2020* came into effect on 6 December 2017 with a nominal expiry date of 29 November 2020. The agreement provides non-SES staff with competitive remuneration and employment

conditions. There is no provision in the agreement to remunerate staff based on performance. The Clerk did not make a determination under section 24(1) of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* in 2019–20 to pay staff a monetary bonus.

Employment conditions for SES staff are set out in individual determinations made under subsection 24(1) of the *Parliamentary Service Act*. Many of these conditions are aligned with the department's enterprise agreement. Table 15 provides a breakdown of staff under the department's employment instruments.

**Table 15: Employment arrangements for SES and non-SES staff, at 30 June 2020**

Employment arrangement	SES	Non-SES	Total
Enterprise agreement	–	178	178
Individual flexibility arrangement	–	–	–
Common law contract	–	–	–
Determination under subsection 24(1) of the <i>Parliamentary Service Act 1999</i>	5	–	5

## Remuneration

Salary ranges under the 2017–20 enterprise agreement, as at the end of the reporting period, are summarised in Table 16.

**Table 16: Salary ranges of staff covered by the 2017–20 enterprise agreement, as at 30 June 2020**

Classification	Salary range	
	Minimum (\$)	Maximum (\$)
Executive Band 2	140,711	149,094
Executive Band 1	108,718	121,266
Parliamentary Service Level 6	87,615	99,434
Parliamentary Service Level 5	80,984	85,693
Parliamentary Service Level 4	71,597	77,462
Parliamentary Service Level 3	64,773	69,583
Parliamentary Service Level 2	57,565	62,854
Parliamentary Service Level 1	50,886	55,679

In 2019–20, departmental salaries and allowances totalled \$20.633 million (compared with \$19.326 million in 2018–19).



## Non-salary benefits

The department offers staff a number of additional non-remuneration benefits including:

- » annual influenza vaccination
- » mental health and wellbeing support
- » mentoring and coaching programs
- » in-house capability development programs
- » access to a serious illness leave bank
- » study assistance to eligible employees
- » access to flexible working arrangements
- » contributions to relevant professional memberships.

## Executive remuneration

The PGPA Rule requires the reporting of executive remuneration information for specified officials of Commonwealth entities on an accrual basis. Table 18 summarises the remuneration of key management personnel and senior executives. There are no other highly paid staff for whom remuneration details are required to be provided. During short absences of SES staff, parliamentary officers may be provided with an opportunity to act in the position of the absent SES staff member. These short acting opportunities are not included in Tables 17 or 18.

**Table 17: Key management personnel, 2019–20**

Name	Position	Term as key management personnel
David Elder	Clerk	Part year—ceased 9 August 2019
Claressa Surtees	Deputy Clerk/ Clerk	Full year—appointed Clerk on 12 August 2019
Catherine Cornish	Clerk Assistant (Procedure)/ Deputy Clerk	Full year—appointed Deputy Clerk on 18 September 2019
Peter Banson	Clerk Assistant (Table)	Full year
Jerome Brown	Clerk Assistant (Procedure)	Part year—appointed on 2 December 2019
Stuart Woodley	Clerk Assistant (Committees)	Full year
James Catchpole	Serjeant-at-Arms	Full year

In accordance with the PGPA Rule, information about the remuneration and benefits of key management personnel is set out in Table 18.

Table 18: Remuneration and benefits of key management personnel, 2019–20

Name	Position title	Short-term benefits			Post-employment benefits	Other long-term benefits		Termination benefits	Total remuneration
		Base salary (\$)	Bonuses (\$)	Other benefits and allowances (\$)	Superannuation contributions (\$)	Long-service leave (\$)	Other long-term benefits (\$)	(\$)	(\$)
David Elder	Clerk	48,673.01	–	7,961.51	5,963.94	18,567.53	–	–	81,165.99
Claressa Surtees	Deputy Clerk/ Clerk	400,401.21	–	16,012.15	46,290.25	143,922.00	–	–	606,625.61
Catherine Cornish	Clerk Assistant (Procedure)/ Deputy Clerk	256,720.19	–	26,839.54	36,669.81	39,160.00	–	–	359,389.54
Peter Banson	Clerk Assistant (Table)	198,423.26	–	26,839.54	36,642.34	5,470.00	–	–	267,375.15
Jerome Brown	Clerk Assistant (Procedure)	118,420.43	–	15,571.03	19,585.55	2,403.00	–	–	155,980.02
Stuart Woodley	Clerk Assistant (Committees)	190,345.26	–	26,839.54	35,336.17	7,787.45	–	–	260,308.43
James Catchpole	Serjeant-at-Arms	186,990.03	–	26,839.54	35,127.23	8,130.00	–	–	257,086.81
Total		1,399,973.39	–	146,902.87	215,615.30	225,439.98	–	–	1,987,931.54

### Other senior executives

During the reporting period ended 30 June 2020, the department did not have any senior executives who did not meet the definition of key management personnel. All key management personnel are included in Tables 17 and 18.

### Other highly paid staff

During the reporting period ended 30 June 2020, the department did not have any highly paid staff who did not meet the definitions of key management personnel or senior executives; therefore, Tables 17 and 18 do not report on other highly paid staff.

## Work health and safety

The department is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act), the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011* and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*. During the reporting period, all reasonably practicable measures were taken to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees while at work, in line with the department's work health and safety policies.

The department aims to achieve high standards of work health and safety in its operations and to fulfil its duty of care by providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. There are a number of shared work health and safety risks across Parliament House that are the responsibility of all parliamentary departments. In 2019–20, to continue to meet its obligations under the WHS Act, the department:

- » continued strengthening the work health and safety management system, by implementing activities identified in the 2018–19 work health and safety audit corrective action plan
- » provided work health and safety training and information to all staff, with a continued focus on mental health awareness training through the self-care workshop delivered by Lifeline for all staff
- » continued to promote flexibility by default working arrangements, including part-time, working from home, and flexible start and end times
- » developed and activated work health and safety plans specific to the effect of bushfire smoke on staff working at Parliament House and delegates attending APPF28, including regular monitoring of air quality
- » composed a COVID-19 taskforce to address and advise the Executive and staff on government health advice during the pandemic
- » developed a suite of resources for managers and staff in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to support staff's transition to working from home
- » conducted hazard inspections and implemented a corrective action plan to ensure compliance with pandemic-related restrictions and measures imposed on workplaces, including office layouts and safe social distancing
- » enhanced positive early intervention outcomes that have supported injured or ill workers to achieve an early, safe and sustainable return to work
- » conducted workstation assessments with a strengthened approach to reasonable adjustment
- » provided a confidential counselling service through the employee assistance program
- » continued to promote a healthy lifestyle including influenza vaccinations and healthy living reimbursements.

No workers' compensation claims were lodged during the reporting period.

During the year, there were no dangerous occurrences requiring notification under section 37 of the WHS Act, no investigations were carried out, and no directions or notices were received by the department under section 191 of the Act.

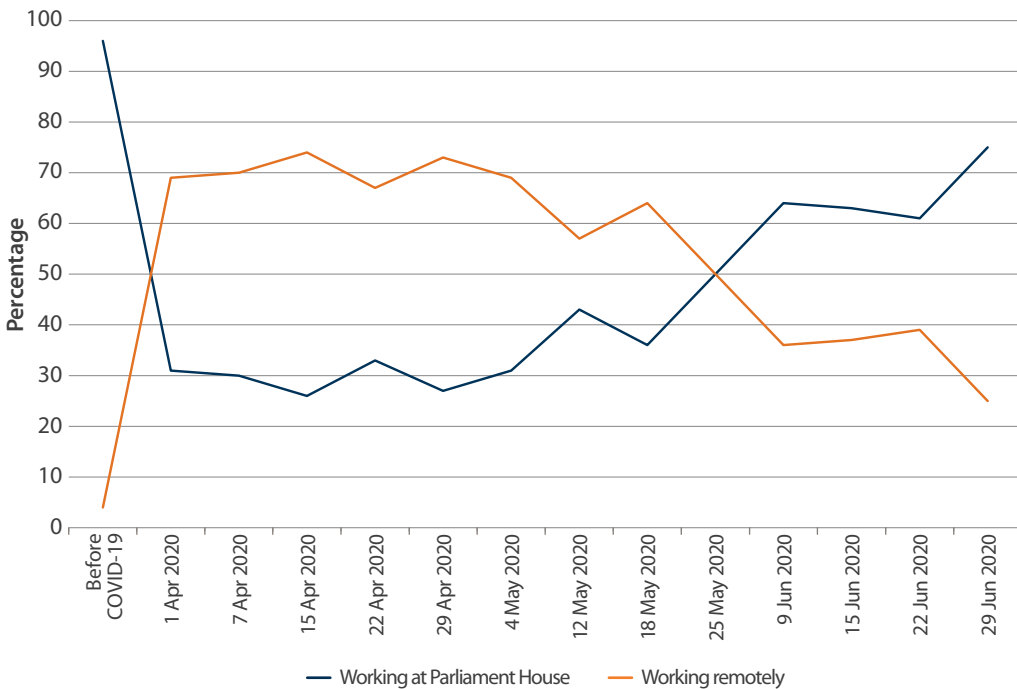
### Response to COVID-19

The department moved quickly to ensure the wellbeing of staff following the outbreak of COVID-19. Updates, based on advice from various government agencies and decisions of the Presiding Officers and the Clerk, were regularly communicated to staff. The Business Continuity Network quickly met to review continuity arrangements, and a standalone external website was created to ensure staff without remote access to the parliamentary computing network could access the latest updates while away from Parliament House.

In March 2020, all staff were advised by the Clerk to work from home if they were not required to be in the building to directly support sittings of the House of Representatives. Following the introduction of a new remote access solution by DPS, all staff in the department could log on to the network from home. The Clerk also advised the department in April that a range of flexible work arrangements were available to address work and personal commitments, including caring for children and home schooling.

Figure 7 shows the percentage of staff working at Parliament House and working remotely from April to June 2020.

**Figure 7: Percentage of staff working at Parliament House and working remotely, April to June 2020**



Following the unique sittings of the House of Representatives on 23 March and 8 April 2020, the Clerk wrote to the department in May to advise that for safety, staff should continue to work from home where practicable, and only come to Parliament House if strictly necessary. This advice applied to the May and June sittings of the House of Representatives. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the department followed the National COVID-19 safe workplace principles as well as Safe Work Australia and the Australian Public Service Commission's practical guidance.

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office conducted an audit of office spaces in the House of Representatives wing to ensure appropriate space was available between desks, and appropriate hygiene products, signage and tip-sheets were available to all staff working in the building. The department worked closely with the other parliamentary departments and the Department of Health to continually review COVID-19 arrangements and ensure all necessary measures were in place for the safety of all those working at Parliament House.



*Mr Lupco Jonceski placing hand sanitiser in the House of Representatives Chamber, March 2020.  
Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.*

# Management of financial resources

## Asset management

The department's asset management strategy focuses on efficient asset utilisation and allows the department to identify underperforming assets. The department operates within a controlled environment at Parliament House and the risk of loss for the majority of assets is minimal.

The department adopts a 'break-fix' replacement policy for office machines and equipment. During the year asset purchases included TVs, fridges, tables, trolleys, and printing and binding equipment.

A review of the intangible assets category was conducted to verify assets in use. All software items were found to be in use. There was no indication that any departmental assets were impaired to any extent approaching materiality.

## Purchasing

The department has in place policies and procedures it considers appropriate to assist staff to comply with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules. The department encourages use of established panels and continues to access whole-of-Australian-Government contracts for the provision of travel and related services. Purchases of stationery and office supplies were made through the whole-of-Australian-Government contract with Winc.

During the reporting period the department entered into 35 contracts above the reporting threshold, 32 of which were reported on AusTender within the prescribed period. No other identified instances of non-compliance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules have been identified.

## Consultants

Consultants are engaged where the department lacks specialist expertise or when independent research, review or assessment is required. Consultants are typically engaged to investigate or diagnose a defined issue or problem; carry out defined reviews or evaluations; or provide independent advice, information or specialist solutions to assist in the department's decision-making.

Before engaging consultants, the department takes into account the skills and resources required for the task, the skills available internally, and the cost-effectiveness of engaging external expertise. The decision to engage a consultant is made in accordance with the PGPA Act and PGPA Rules, including the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and relevant internal policies.

During 2019–20, five new consultancy contracts were entered into involving total expenditure of \$0.054 million. In addition, two ongoing consultancy contracts were active in 2019–20, involving total expenditure of \$0.125 million.

Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on contracts for consultancies. Information on the value of contracts and consultancies is available on the AusTender website at [www.tenders.gov.au](http://www.tenders.gov.au).

## Competitive tendering and contracting

There were no instances during 2019–20 where contracts were let that did not provide for the Auditor-General to have access to the contractor's premises, or where the accountable authority exempted a contract from being published on the AusTender website.

## Procurement initiatives to support small business

The department supports small business participation in the Commonwealth Government procurement market. Small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) and small enterprise participation statistics are available on the Department of Finance's website at [www.finance.gov.au/procurement/statistics-on-commonwealth-purchasing-contracts](http://www.finance.gov.au/procurement/statistics-on-commonwealth-purchasing-contracts).

Consistent with paragraph 5.4 of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, the department's procurement practices support SMEs by utilising the following practices:

- » the Commonwealth Contracting Suite for low-risk procurements valued under \$200,000
- » on-time payments made to SMEs by electronic funds transfer or by the use of payment cards.

## Advertising and market research

During 2019–20, the department did not conduct any advertising campaigns.

## Legal services expenditure

Schedule 1, Part 1, paragraph 11.1(ba) of the Legal Services Directions 2017 requires the department to publicly disclose its legal services expenditure. During 2019–20, external legal expenditure was \$17,947 (\$182,872 in 2018–19). The department did not incur any internal legal expenses during 2019–20 (also nil in 2018–19).



