



Budget Estimates 2025 – 2026

Opening Statement – Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services

Good morning Chair, Deputy Chair and Members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee and provide an opening statement relating to ongoing matters at the Department of the Parliamentary Services.

I will provide copy of this statement for tabling and for the reference of the Committee.

My colleagues and I welcome the opportunity to answer your questions today. Before taking questions, I would like to provide the Committee with the following information.

On 12 March 2025, I received from Dr Fiona Roughley SC, her report arising from the fact-finding investigation into the actions of the Department of Parliamentary Services into the Incentive to Retire payment made to Ms Catherine Saunders.

The report is an extensive examination of the department's actions and engagement, with Dr Roughley's findings and recommendations supported by evidence. The report contains seven recommendations that directly go to DPS internal processes and decision making when making ITR decisions and payments, including the management of conflicts of interests and record keeping.

I can confirm that I have accepted, and the department is in the process of adopting, each of the recommendations.

I will need to consider how, at an appropriate point or points of time, to make further material about the Dr Roughley's report available to the Committee. This consideration will occur against the background of a related investigation being conducted by the National Anti-Corruption Commission. Any questions about the NACC investigation should be referred to the NACC.

I am conscious that discussing any of the matters identified in Dr Roughley's report may inadvertently identify persons of interest, prematurely damage reputations and /or compromise an individual's right to impartial adjudication.

Finally, I would like to commend the dedicated staff of the Department who continue to demonstrate commitment to our purpose, display the Parliamentary Values in all aspects of our work and work diligently to maintain Australian Parliament House as the centre of Australian democracy and as a national cultural icon. From our stewardship of Parliament House through to our widely celebrated work during the 2025 Enlighten Festival, that showcased 12 inspirational Australian women who campaigned for a more inclusive democracy, their commitment and dedication to service shows. I am proud to be the Secretary of the department and proud of our staff.

My colleagues and I are happy to take questions from the Committee.

Jaala Hinchcliffe

Secretary

27 March 2025