

**OFFICIAL**



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

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Ms Sarah Redden  
Acting Committee Secretary  
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms Redden

**INQUIRY INTO THE OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES**

On behalf of the Department of Parliamentary Services, I welcome the opportunity to provide a submission to assist the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee with its inquiry.

The terms of reference are broad and it is anticipated that particular areas of interest to the committee will arise during the hearing process.

On that basis, the department's submission endeavours to briefly address the terms of reference where it may be of relevance to the Committee's deliberations.

Your sincerely

Rob Stefanic  
Secretary

21 October 2020

## **Role and functions of the Department** (terms of reference e. & k.)

1. The purpose of DPS is to support the work of the Australian Parliament by providing effective, high quality and sustainable services to parliamentarians and building occupants. As custodians of Australian Parliament House (APH), DPS is responsible for delivering services and experiences that enable engagement with the parliamentary process. DPS provides a broad range of services and products to support the functions of the Australian Parliament and the work of parliamentarians. DPS consists of approximately 1,040 staff in four divisions, 12 branches, 48 sections and countless disciplines that support the work of the Parliament.
2. Services DPS provides or facilitates include:
  - library and research services
  - information and communications technology products and services to the Parliament
  - protective security
  - building and grounds management
  - audio-visual services and Hansard
  - art collection and exhibition services
  - furniture and asset management services
  - visitor services and the Parliament Shop
  - catering and event management
  - licenced retail, health, banking and childcare services, and
  - corporate, administrative and strategic services for DPS.
3. The DPS Corporate Plan is aligned to annual Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS). The DPS PBS has one outcome and two programs which are supported by the four DPS Strategic Themes in the corporate plan. The strategic themes are:
  - Respond to the changing needs of the Parliament
  - Enhance the Parliament's engagement with the community
  - Effective stewardship of Australian Parliament House
  - Effective delivery of the Parliament House works program.

## **Overview of progress since the Committee's inquiry into the Department in 2014-2015** (terms of reference e. & k.)

4. Following a tumultuous period, Rob Stefanic, Secretary of DPS was appointed in December 2015, charged with the responsibility of making the department fit for purpose to achieve better services for the Parliament, for parliamentarians in fulfilling their representative and legislative duties and to ensure appropriate stewardship of APH. DPS has travelled a path of transformation over the last five years that has occurred in three identifiable stages.
5. The first stage of the DPS organisational reform process commenced shortly prior Mr Stefanic's appointment and, among other things, involved the development and implementation of core policies, processes and governance to ensure that the department could operate with more effective accountability and coherence. This work was necessary to respond to various committee and audit recommendations and to lay the foundations for future service reforms. Initiatives included:

- establishment of an in-house finance team
  - development of various business continuity, fraud control, risk management frameworks
  - implementation of effective records management, performance management and learning and development systems
  - commissioning a Building Condition Assessment Report and successful bid for capital appropriation, and
  - launch of the first building occupant survey.
6. Importantly a constructive and collegiate relationship with the heads of the parliamentary departments was forged with the development of the first *Strategic Plan for parliamentary administration*. This document is now in its second iteration as the *Strategic Framework – the Parliamentary Service*. This added a formal dimension to the collaborative engagement which now characterises the collective and more coherent work of the parliamentary service.
7. The second stage of organisational reforms included many ‘service to parliament’ reforms. Underpinning this stage has been a significant effort to strengthen the capability across DPS to perform its work effectively in serving the Parliament. Initiatives included:
- strategic recruitment for capability, leadership training for new managers and vigilant performance management, and
  - strengthening a culture of accountability, and initiation of a values and behaviours program.
8. A selection of service to parliament reforms that correspond to the DPS Strategic Themes are outlined below:
- I. Response to the changing needs of the Parliament
    - Successful establishment and operation of a substantial (approx. \$10 million per annum turnover) catering and events business that has delivered against objectives to improve quality and value while showcasing the produce of the Canberra region
    - development of a strong cyber security capability which enables an effective response to a sophisticated and significant cyber-attack. This has included development of a strong collaborative relationship with the Australian Cyber Security Centre
    - development and implementation of business continuity plans
    - implementation of an ICT disaster recovery centre to assist with resumption of services in the event of a catastrophic service outage
    - development of a Digital Strategy to guide the future investment in ICT services
    - improved delivery of ICT capital works to replace ageing infrastructure and equipment
    - improved ICT client responsiveness and flexibility of service delivery including advancement towards an ‘anywhere anytime’ computing platform
    - development and implementation of a system for electronic tellering of votes
    - commencement of large-scale digitisation projects across the Library, Art Collections and Design Integrity and Special Collections to preserve these valuable assets and make them easily accessible to parliamentarians.

II. Enhance the Parliament's engagement with the community

- Collaboration with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (representing 10 council's in South-East NSW) to support Australia's fire-affected communities by sourcing our produce from these regions
- the curation of several exhibitions each year for the Presiding Officers' Exhibition Area. For example, collaboration with the Australian War Memorial in 2018 to commemorate Remembrance Day and the Centenary of Anzac with two art exhibitions and forecourt poppy display
- delivery of a year-long calendar of events celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of APH including an Open Day on 6 October 2018 attended by more than 8,000 people
- annual participation in the Canberra Enlighten Festival
- ongoing development strategies to enhance the Parliament's online presence through the APH website and increasing public access to the art collection
- development of an innovative and immersive civics engagement program to help primary school age children better understand the work that supports the Parliament
- annual delivery of programs of events, exhibitions and public programs at APH attended by more than 140,000 people
- collaboration with the Department of the Senate to launch StatsNet web service consisting of a series of graphically rich pages and infographics on the APH website, which allow users to interactively view and search for statistics relating to the business of the Senate.

III. Effective stewardship of Parliament House

- Improvement in the responsiveness of building maintenance services and the presentation of the building
- implementation of a new cleaning contract to achieve value for money and a higher cleaning standard while navigating complex industrial concerns
- formation of a Design Integrity & Special Collections Unit to coordinate consultation on architectural change, to reconstitute the archive of designs, finishes and material and oversee the completion of the Central Reference Document
- implementation of the first design integrity framework to guide informed change to APH as one of Australia's iconic built structures - a building of internationally recognised architectural merit and construction achievement
- assumption of responsibility for all Senate and House of Representatives 'Status A' commissioned and 'Status B' global furniture and commencement of a comprehensive restoration program.

IV. Effective delivery of the Parliament House Works program

- Initiation and delivery of an ambitious program of capital works for large scale infrastructure renewal. Projects include skylight and roof glazing replacements, fire safety upgrades, refurbishment of six kitchens and two dining spaces, refurbishment of 42 lifts, and extensive electrical, heating, cooling and ventilation infrastructure upgrades

- commencement, design and delivery of the highly complex and disruptive security capital works projects including entrance hardening, fencing and complete replacement of the electronic security management system infrastructure across the precincts
  - auxiliary power upgrade project to ensure the building can continue to meet increased electricity load demands not accounted for in the original construction and support the building's fire and life safety services.
9. These and many other achievements are clearly documented in the successive DPS annual reports from 2015-16 through to 2019-20, which are a permanent record of the department's efforts and service outcomes. A body of work remains to further advance our service reforms and address ongoing capability gaps while managing our budgetary challenges.
10. The third stage of the DPS transformation – one designed to move the organisation to a more agile and high-performance operational model, commenced on 2 January 2020. The realignment was intended to progress the DPS strategic priorities of innovation, quality service delivery and improving our corporate culture.
11. The early success of the third stage of transformation was evident in the department's ability to respond to the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The department demonstrated its capability and capacity to pivot quickly from its business-as-usual operations to new ways of service delivery (see *Business Continuity* heading below). This means DPS is well placed to manage unforeseen challenges while sustainably delivering its traditional core services to effectively support the Parliament and parliamentarians.

### **Recruitment** (terms of reference a.)

12. Recruitment at DPS is undertaken in accordance with the employment principles set out in the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* as well as the relevant sections of the *Parliamentary Service Determination 2013*.
13. The DPS Recruitment and Merit Selection Policy provides the principles underpinning ongoing and non-ongoing recruitment activities in DPS as prescribed in the relevant legislation and Department of Parliamentary Service Enterprise Agreement currently in force. This policy applies to all DPS employees who are involved in recruitment related decision making.
14. During 2019–20 DPS engaged in a strategic workforce planning process to determine the department's future workforce and capability requirements which will inform recruitment activity. Context for the planning included:
- the service needs of parliamentarians, building occupants and visitors, and how these are likely to change
  - the internal departmental operating environment which includes an analysis of organisational and workforce risks, workforce supply and demand projections, and future capability requirements
  - external labour force analysis, given the broad range of trades and professions required to support a functioning Parliament and the operations of APH
  - continued focus on organisational transformation driven by a commitment to service excellence and innovation.

15. The senior leadership teams from each division and branch participated in the process to achieve a whole-of-organisation view and to identify the specific future workforce needs associated with the diversity of the department’s specialist functions and operations.
16. The diverse range of occupations within the department means that entry-level programs need to extend beyond traditional corporate roles and must include specialised trades and vocational professions. In January 2018 the department launched its first apprentice program, originally employing eight apprentices across a range of trade qualifications. The program is now in its second year and six candidates are currently completing their apprenticeships.

**Workplace culture** (terms of reference b.)

17. DPS commenced operations on 1 February 2004. It incorporated the operations of three very different organisations – the Joint House Department (JHD), Department of the Parliamentary Library and Department of Parliamentary Reporting Staff, into a large and very diverse agency. The functions of the Parliamentary Security Service had been amalgamated into the JHD less than a year earlier in June 2003. The four organisations differed in the nature of their work, their management structures and approaches, the skills bases of their staff, and their work cultures. Until the last 18 months, there does not appear to have been a sustained body of work undertaken that attempts to unify an organisational identity based on expected values and behaviours.
18. Culture change is a large organisational undertaking and can take time before tangible change can be measured. Workplace culture, along with innovation and service excellence, is an identified priority in the 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 DPS corporate plans.
19. A broad range of culture change activities have been designed, developed and implemented over the last two years with more planned for 2020 and beyond. DPS has adopted an approach that features a set of incremental and integrated changes aimed at not only changing the culture but also building organisational capability and strengthening organisational performance.
20. For some years, DPS has conducted employee opinion surveys on an annual basis to obtain information on a series of measures to inform programs and planning, and for monitoring trends. DPS staff engagement scores have tracked the broader public sector engagement index over the last three years:

Survey Year	DPS Engagement Index	APS Engagement Index
2017	79%	74%
2018	71%	70%
2019	71%	72%

21. Employee engagement is more than simply job satisfaction or commitment to an organisation. It is the extent to which employees are motivated, inspired and enabled to improve an organisation’s outcomes. It is a two-way relationship that exists between an employee and their organisation. The public sector model addresses four attributes associated with employee

engagement (job, team, supervisor and organisation) and measures the emotional connection and commitment employees have working for their organisation.

22. Successive employee surveys demonstrate that DPS staff have high levels of commitment to DPS, they are suggesting ideas for improvement more regularly and going above and beyond if required. The survey results below reflect a highly engaged workforce and are the hallmarks of the use of discretionary effort and a positive overall workplace culture.

Survey Year	Strong beliefs in purpose and objectives of DPS	Suggests ideas for improvement	Work beyond what is required to achieve objectives	Willing to 'go the extra mile'
2017	75% +	85%+	81%+	92%+
2018	75%+	84%+	79%+	93%+
2019	80%+	87%+	82%+	92%+

23. The DPS innovation index has held steady at 60 per cent in survey results for 2018 and 2019, which places the department into the high-performance quadrant using the Australian Public Service Commission's index.
24. The key issues identified for further focus from each successive survey remains consistent. These are: change management, communication, leadership, and career opportunities. DPS is undertaking several activities that incorporate responses to the issues raised in survey results through strategic planning initiatives, employee induction and culture-based training.
25. Strategic workforce planning was undertaken to understand our current and future workforce requirements and to identify and implement strategies to mitigate identified workforce risks. The strategic workforce planning process is also a key lever to help drive cultural change. For the department, the planning scenarios used throughout the process were specifically designed to focus on continuous innovation and service excellence. The department developed a core capability framework that describes the attitudes, behaviours and capabilities that are critical to a culture of service excellence and continual innovation.
26. The planning work has guided development of a DPS *People Plan* which is nearing finalisation and will form the basis of department wide focus on values and leadership development activities and articulate the meaning of our values in plain language. The plan will focus on our culture through strengthening values, leadership, shared responsibility and advancing the Parliamentary Service.
27. Formal staff induction activities were initiated in 2018-19 and expanded during 2019-20. All new departmental staff now attend a one-day workshop that is focused on:
- outlining and discussing values, culture, behaviour and conduct expectations
  - introducing design integrity concepts and learning about the construction and history of APH
  - explaining the departmental structure, functions and approaches to governance
  - completing mandatory training topics on workplace health and safety, and physical and information technology security, and

- meeting with members of the senior leadership team including the Secretary and Deputy Secretary.
28. A series of team leader training programs focussed on culture were designed and delivered for the first time to the Parliamentary Security Service during 2019. The two-day programs were for new team leaders and covered self-awareness, emotional intelligence, active listening skills, managing difficult conversations, building teams and performance management.
  29. The department launched an online training package—*Being Professional in the Parliamentary Service*—which is mandatory for all new staff. This online package describes the behaviours required for all staff to work consistently in accordance with the Australian Parliamentary Service Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct. It also illustrates how these guide day-to-day decision making and behaviour, both inside and outside of Parliament House.
  30. A new organisational culture training program was also piloted and implemented in 2019. The *Creating a Positive Culture Workshop* is a face-to-face initiative that provides motivational information and practical techniques to create a more positive personal and professional culture in the workplace. Participants are equipped to contribute to cultural transformation by developing the mindset required to create, lead and maintain a positive, solutions focused culture.
  31. The department is participating in the Future Women Leaders Program. On completion of this professional development program, participants will become mentors to other women in the department, particularly those women in areas with less female representation
  32. DPS is fostering an innovation culture and engagement from staff is evident through a staff-initiated Innovation Council which commenced in 2019 comprising a group of 20 staff across the department. Since inception, the Council has progressed various initiatives including the running of an Ideas Challenge. This initiative resulted in 30 submissions being received from across DPS with four ideas shortlisted for further development and implementation that will improve services to the Parliament, enhance parliamentary engagement and improve efficiency.
  33. The commitment to innovation directly led to the production of *Classified*, a five-part drama series that used story telling methods to promote cyber security awareness. *Classified* won a Judges' Award in the 'culture and capability' category at the 2020 Public Sector Innovation Awards.

### **Building and asset management** (terms of reference c.)

34. The department manages departmental and administered property, land and equipment, and intangible assets, with a value of \$2.75 billion. Administered assets of \$2.66 billion primarily relate to APH, incorporating the building, land and cultural assets. Departmental assets of \$91.2 million primarily relate to information technology, software, furniture and equipment. DPS managed assets are replaced through an annual capital management plan.



35. DPS is responsible for the asset management of the Parliamentary precincts which comprises a vast complex of buildings with a floor area of more than 250,000 square metres and more than 4500 rooms and 23 hectares of landscaped gardens.
36. APH is now more than 32 years old. A *Building Condition Assessment Report* was commissioned by the Presiding Officers in 2014-15, which outlined the need for a 10-year program of works to address deteriorations in the building fabric and preserve it into the future. Additional capital funding for this large program was provided by the Government and commenced in the 2015-16 financial year. The smoke from bushfires from December 2019 followed closely by the COVID-19 pandemic presented various challenges for DPS work teams to maintain capital works and building maintenance performance. Despite these challenges, the overall condition of Parliament House has continued to improve.
37. Approximately \$22.775 million of upgrade work (excluding security, ICT and art-related expenditure) was completed in 2016-17. The work program accelerated in 2017-18 with the expenditure of approximately \$38.160 million on building upgrades. Whilst the 2018-19 financial year spend reduced to \$25.852 million, the 2019-20 year greatly accelerated again to \$58.145 million and the forecast capital spend for 2020-21 is \$47.335 million.
38. Significant capital projects that replace end-of life assets and achieve contemporary building standards that are in progress include:
- *Auxiliary power* – replacement of auxiliary power generators and ancillary systems which are responsible for powering life safety systems in the event of mains power outage
  - *Fire systems and services* - a package of works to be undertaken to enhance and update the building fire detection and suppression systems
  - *Heating and cooling systems* - refurbishment of the vast network of air conditioning and ventilation systems including 50 air-handling units, 2,000 fan controllers, 35 fan coil units and ancillary equipment
  - *Electrical systems* – upgrade of main electrical switch boards; mechanical services switchboards; 837 electrical distribution boards; centralised lighting control system; smart lighting technology
  - *Accessible bathrooms* - upgrade each of the 60 bathrooms including a publicly accessible adult change facility for users with high support needs and their carers
  - *Kitchens infrastructure* – to deliver kitchens and service areas that meet contemporary building compliance, fire and food safety requirements and support high quality food production and service delivery while improving production efficiency.
39. In addition to the capital works program, a regular and extensive ongoing maintenance program continues. This includes preventative maintenance as well as responding to unscheduled requests for services, repairs and breakdowns. During 2019-20 the DPS Maintenance Helpdesk responded to 6,085 calls for assistance and rectification of various building and maintenance services including air conditioning adjustments, plumbing service calls and a range of other activities connected to the building fabric. Some examples of scheduled building maintenance undertaken during 2019-20 are:
- ongoing interior painting program to maintain the paint integrity on walls, doors and trim
  - re-sealing of parquet floors

- replacement of worn carpets in the general circulation areas of the building
  - refurbishment of office suites, and
  - ongoing commissioned furniture maintenance.
40. DPS manages changes to the building in a manner consistent with the original design intent of the Parliament House Construction Authority and Mitchell/Giurgola & Thorp Architects. In April 2019 the DPS Framework for the *Maintenance of Design Integrity of Parliament House* was launched to formalise an integrated consultative approach, ensuring the joint moral right administrators (Ms Pamille Berg AO Hon FRAIA and Mr Harold Guida LFRAIA AIA), who are original APH design team members, are included at appropriate times, as well as giving DPS staff clarity and practical assistance when managing building and design projects.
41. A critical piece of this framework is the completion of the Central Reference Document (CRD) which is a formal record of the Architect's design intent for Parliament House. The CRD, which remained incomplete since 2004, was resumed in 2016 and has been a major undertaking over several years. The moral rights administrators are uniquely qualified to provide ongoing advice to the department and they have collaborated on this important project to create a permanent and enduring record of the Architect's design intent at this critical stage of the building's life.
42. The DPS Landscape Services team is known for its excellence in managing the 23 hectares of gardens within the Parliamentary precincts. In September 2020, DPS successfully tendered for the provision of services for the management and maintenance of the heritage grounds at The Lodge. The similarities in design and function between the parliamentary landscape and the gardens at The Lodge means that the DPS Landscape Services are well placed to leverage their experience, knowledge and cultural understanding to undertake the maintenance to a similarly high standard. This represents a milestone achievement for DPS as it will, for the first time, operate as a service provider beyond the parliamentary setting.

### **Contract and procurement management** (terms of reference d.)

43. The DPS procurement and financial frameworks are managed in accordance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA) Act and PGPA Rule and DPS' Accountable Authority Instructions. DPS' primary procurement objectives are to:
- ensure that value for money is consistently obtained through encouraging competition, promoting the efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of resources, and conducting DPS business in an environment of accountability and transparency
  - support the business requirements of each branch within DPS, through 'better practice' procurement and contracting arrangements
  - encourage the use of Indigenous business and support the Indigenous Procurement Policy, and
  - engage small and medium enterprises and local businesses wherever this is practical and consistent with the achievement of value for money.
44. DPS has a specialist procurement unit to monitor tendering, procurement and contract management activities and deliver training.

45. DPS supports small business participation in the Commonwealth Government procurement market. DPS is focused on achieving the best value for money outcome in each circumstance and supports and encourages engagement with small and medium enterprises wherever practical. DPS recognises the importance of ensuring that small businesses are paid on time.

**Business continuity - responding to the COVID-19 pandemic** (terms of reference f.)

46. DPS had a robust crisis governance framework in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The organisational realignment earlier in 2020 enabled DPS to navigate the rapidly escalating and evolving COVID-19 crisis as it impacted on the Parliament. This included being able to direct resources to address immediate concerns, while identifying emerging issues and planning next steps to ensure the Parliament could continue its essential work serving the Australian people.
47. The DPS Business Continuity Management Policy and Framework was used to activate a Continuity Coordination Group (CCG) as a decision-making body to oversee the implementation of the DPS Pandemic Plan. On 6 March 2020, the DPS CCG was formally activated with observers from the Offices of the Presiding Officers, the Department of the Senate and the House of Representatives. On 20 March 2020, the DPS COVID Taskforce was established to lead and implement a coordinated response on preventative measures across APH; develop guidance and policy; communicate internally and externally and manage the mobility of DPS staff.
48. In reporting to both Presiding Officers, the department is directly and indirectly responsible for the welfare of more than 2,000 permanent building occupants and well over this number on sitting days. The primary consideration for DPS has been to ensure that Parliament – and parliamentarians – could function effectively throughout the crisis. DPS facilitated arrangements by implementing relevant hygiene measures consistent with Commonwealth health advice, communicating pandemic related changes and maintaining high levels of flexibility to adapt to new situations as they arose. Despite a myriad of challenges, the Parliament sat on 23 March, 8 April, 12 to 14 May, 10 to 18 June, 24 August to 3 September and 5 to 8 October to pass key legislation including the 2020-21 Federal Budget.
49. During the height of the pandemic in Australia, the number of users who needed to work remotely had increased exponentially. DPS IT staff worked around the clock to expand the capacity of the existing remote access solution from 200 to several thousand concurrent users (as required) while developing and implementing a secure cloud-hosted remote access virtual desktop. Several new enhancements to cyber security capabilities were also delivered to support remote working arrangements. At this time, a small team of service desk staff handled up to 730 contacts per day at the peak of this transition.
50. When the Presiding Officers recommended the use of masks for the August-September 2020 sitting period, a team around 25 DPS staff worked for several days to prepare face mask kits for distribution to building occupants. During the 24 August to 3 September sitting fortnight alone approximately 5,500 face mask kits, each including three masks, were handed out to parliamentarians, their staff and building occupants on request. That equates to the distribution of around 17,000 face masks during that fortnight.

51. COVID-19 physical distancing requirements and closed borders meant the DPS broadcasting team had to adapt to manage video conferencing technologies in new ways. First used by the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 to connect senators and witnesses from all over Australia for urgent committee hearings, video conferencing also became the new normal in the way DPS televise committee hearings, parliamentary meetings and departmental business. In the period 1 April to 30 September 2020, the DPS broadcasting team managed 362 committee hearings totalling 1,188 hours. Of these hearings, the majority had remote committee members and witnesses using either video conference or teleconference facilities to participate in the important work of committees.
52. DPS, working in support of the Presiding Officers, also rapidly implemented video conferencing technology to enable parliamentarians, unable to travel to Canberra, to remotely participate in parliamentary proceedings. The feedback received through the Presiding Officers indicates that participants are generally satisfied with the video conferencing system's operation and support. Minor challenges were anticipated and resolved within short time frames and further refinement continues to ensure a robust system is available as required.
53. The pandemic disrupted the functions of a number of DPS teams. Staff who work with the public providing tours, catering, security and other services were redeployed in a variety of ways during the crisis, which was instrumental in helping DPS step up its response in other areas. We rapidly worked to identify those who were required on site, those who could work remotely, and those who could not perform their normal roles. Of those DPS staff who could not perform their normal roles, 55 people were redeployed to Services Australia (SA) to support the Government's pandemic response. A satellite processing centre was established within Parliament House, providing additional space for SA and enabling seconded staff to attend their normal place of work. The satellite processing centre helped SA rapidly expand its capability while maintaining physical distancing protocols for the workforce.
54. The restrictions on the DPS catering and events business and intermittent parliamentary sitting days provide an opportunity for the permanent DPS catering team to use the extra time to help vulnerable people in our community. The severe impact of COVID-19 on local business meant that the traditional supply chain from cafes and restaurants normally relied on by the St Vincent de Paul charity organisation had almost instantly vanished. As St Vincent de Paul doesn't directly prepare food, this potentially had an impact on provision of food services to the homeless and most vulnerable people in the Canberra community.
55. In April 2020, DPS commenced preparing and providing nutritious meals for those in need so that St Vincent de Paul could continue its Night Patrol, Blue Door (Ainslie Village), Samaritan House and Oaks Estate programs uninterrupted while St Vincent de Paul searched for new long term support. To date approximately 19,000 meals have been provided to assist the homeless and vulnerable. Assisting with food preparation has kept our permanent catering staff occupied and maintained our own important supply chains during this period.

## **Security arrangements** (terms of reference g.)

56. Security is a rapidly evolving environment, influenced by events both domestically and internationally. The architecture of the Parliamentary precincts compounds the challenge faced by the security function. The vastly differing terrain of the APH comprises more than 4,500 rooms interspersed with 22 kms of corridors. The different levels of the building have completely different geographical features further adding to the security challenge. As both, seat of the government and a venue for events of national importance APH poses a security challenge that must be addressed by effectively balancing access and control.
57. The Security Branch of DPS is responsible for the provision of security services, including daily operational security, policy management, building security, parking services, visitor access, security risk management, departmental security vetting, internal security training, and emergency management. DPS works in partnership with the Australian Federal Police (AFP), under a memorandum of understanding, to ensure the safety and security of Parliament House occupants and visitors.
58. Governance of security arrangements is provided by the Security Management Board (established under Section 65A of the *Parliamentary Service Act*). The Board provides, specialist security advice and support to the Presiding Officers on security policy and the management of security measures for Parliament House. The Board consists of the Secretary DPS (Chair), Serjeant-at-Arms, Usher of the Black Rod and senior executive officer of the AFP.
59. APH was designed and built at a time when the security threat environment was low. In 2015 a major works project began to upgrade the security perimeter and bolster the physical security of Parliament House. This has been the largest and most complex security investment in the building's history, and work was completed in late 2019. The project was not without its challenges, and work was delayed in 2018-19 when the managing contractor advised that one of the subcontractors had performance and financial issues. The department worked closely with the managing contractor to resume progress on this aspect of the works as quickly as possible, and completed this element in August 2019, within the revised timeframe.
60. At all times, the department was committed to understanding the impacts of any delays, developing solutions to address issues, completing projects with minimal disruption, and ensuring work was delivered effectively. In delivering this significant security upgrade all steps were taken to maintain the building's design integrity to the greatest extent possible.
61. The Security Branch has been undergoing a particular period of transformation. It is well documented that morale in this branch had been known to be historically poor. Considerable focus has been applied by the senior executive team to improve morale and team performance over the last two years. In 2019 a new Assistant Security of Security Branch was appointed to the role with experience in a security agency with a background in governance and public administration. A new management structure was subsequently implemented, outstanding recruitment shortages were progressively addressed and action taken towards developing an appropriately skilled workforce.

62. The change process has involved developing opening lines of communication with senior management regarding operational management. For example, a forum was established (chaired by the Deputy Secretary) in March 2019, open to all security officers and union officials, to raise matters relating to rosters. This soon evolved into a forum for more general matters of concern raised by security officers. Matters raised at those meetings and their resolutions have been recorded in an action items list which was followed up, updated and accessible to all security officers and CPSU officials.
63. This forum existed in addition to the more formal Workplace Consultative Committee (WCC) forum comprised of management representatives, staff representatives and union representatives. The WCC is a sub-committee of the DPS Consultative Forum and aims to facilitate discussion and consultation about collective workplace issues.
64. One of the positive outcomes of this communication has been the engagement of staff to advocate for their working conditions. For example, there has been strong representation seeking the introduction of 12-hour shifts. Following period of consultation, the first team that moved to a trial arrangement was the Parliamentary Security Operations Room. Leave data confirms a reduction in unplanned leave rates following the introduction of the new 12 hour shifts and feedback from staff has been positive. The contentment with this arrangement has led other teams to seek the same arrangements.
65. Significant investment has been made in professional development and training for security staff over the last 18 months, including:
- enhanced team leader training (introduced during 2019) to equip them with skills and capabilities in areas such as self-awareness, emotional intelligence, active listening skills, managing difficult conversations, building teams and performance management
  - alignment of our operational safety training with the model used by the Australian Federal Police to enhance interoperability between agencies, and
  - as of June 2020, transition to online delivery of mandatory competency-based training.
66. The overall change process undertaken in security has involved development of a culture aligned to appropriate values and behaviours. Close management of inappropriate behaviours has been an important focus at all levels of the operation.

### **Services to parliamentarians** (terms of reference h.)

67. As identified in the section on *Role and functions of the department*, the core purpose of DPS is to provide services to the Parliament and parliamentarians, independent of the Executive Government. The Secretary DPS is the administrative head and accountable jointly to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives in the provision of those services.
68. DPS tracks service satisfaction through the annual Building Occupant Satisfaction Survey. The survey access is distributed to all parliamentarians and their staff that have a parliamentary computing network account. Survey respondents are asked to rate their satisfaction across a number of service categories that are delivered or managed by DPS. The measured overall satisfaction with DPS services for 2020 was 91.8 per cent against the 80 per cent target. All

services exceeded the 80 per cent target with only one area below 90 per cent satisfaction. (refer to DPS 2019-20 Annual Report for further detail).

### **The Parliamentary Library** (terms of reference i.)

69. The Library's mandate is to provide research and information services to senators and members of the House of Representatives in support of their parliamentary and representational roles. The Library performed strongly throughout the 2019-20 year, exceeding many client service targets including: timeliness; the number of publications released; online usage of our databases and publications; and material added to the catalogue and to databases.
70. The augmented program of orientations, lectures and seminars received strong support with high levels of attendance. Client feedback throughout the 2019-20 reporting period indicated high levels of satisfaction with services. Library staff completed over 11,400 individual client requests in 2019–20, a significant increase upon the previous financial year. Numbers peaked in the first months of the new parliament; but after the traditional Christmas dip, February saw the numbers increase again, driven by sustained requests associated with the bushfires and the pandemic. From March onwards, publication and acquisitions programs were focussed to provide Parliament with information and resources relevant to the pandemic and the evolving legal and policy responses to it. This included establishing a dedicated COVID-19 webpage and a working group to coordinate responses to the many large and complex client requests, ensuring information sharing, consistency and cross-disciplinary advice.
71. Please refer to the Parliamentary Librarian's submission to this Committee for further detail.

### **Implementation of recommendations from past inquiries** (terms of reference j.)

72. DPS has reported to this Committee against recommendations of past inquiries.