

Part 3—Parliamentary Library

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Parliamentary Librarian's review

Introduction

97 The Australian Parliamentary Library's services are established under the statutory office of the Parliamentary Librarian with the following functions⁴:

- (a) to provide high quality information, analysis and advice to Senators and Members of the House of Representatives in support of their parliamentary and representational roles; and
- (b) to undertake such other responsibilities within the joint Department, consistent with the function set out in paragraph (a), as are conferred in writing on the Parliamentary Librarian by the Secretary of the joint Department with the approval of the Presiding Officers.

98 The Library's primary clients include Senators and Members and their staff, and committee staff. These clients receive the full range of the Library's services. Other client groups include staff of the parliamentary departments and the Governor-General. Service entitlements for all clients are outlined in the *Statement of Client Services*.

99 The Parliamentary Library is composed of the Parliamentary Librarian and the employees of the Department of Parliamentary Services (**DPS**) assisting the Parliamentary Librarian.

100 The Parliamentary Library Executive comprising Ms Roxanne Missingham, Parliamentary Librarian, Dr Jane Romeyn, Assistant Secretary, Research Branch (**RB**), and Ms Nola Adcock, Assistant Secretary, Information Access Branch (**IAB**), was in place for the full year.

101 The reporting year saw the election of the new Rudd Government on 28 November 2007, with 42 new Members of the House of Representatives and 15 new Senators being elected. The

⁴ Parliamentary Service Act 1999 section 38B (1).

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Library has developed a contact officer program which provides each new Senator or Member with a Library staff member who undertakes initial training, support and acts as a first point of contact.

102 In addition, the Library provided an information session to new Senators and Members as a part of the training organised by each of the chamber departments. Assisting new Senators and Members to understand the range of the Library's services and to use them effectively has been a major area of activity this year.

103 In election years there are different patterns of use for Library services. Election years are generally characterised by a reduction in the number of sitting days and in the number of Bills tabled in Parliament. Different work patterns also prevail as Senators and Members finalise their policy positions and turn their focus to campaigning in their electorates.

104 The major changes this year were a significant increase in use of the Library's publications online (14%, 600,000 extra uses) and online collections (1.5% increase) combined with a significant decrease (25%) in the total number of individual client requests. The publications produced reflected the interests of the new parliament with a Briefing Book covering key policy issues and the Review of the Rudd Government's first Budget, offsetting a decline in Bills Digests and other publications.

105 During the year the Library placed a particular focus on its clients. The assessment of client needs undertaken in mid 2007 was used to begin changes to services and products to better meet the need of all clients.

106 Major work occurred on the replacement of ParlInfo—the system used to deliver access to Library and parliamentary information—including migration of data to a new repository system. The new system will be launched in early 2008-09 and will include improvements in searching, alerts to enable clients to receive updates about new content, and improved reliability.

107 A major feature of Library operations was increased collaboration with other libraries. The Library is a member of Electronic Resources Australia, a national consortia approach of libraries in all sectors, which has achieved cost effective purchasing for news, general information, health and general reference products. The Library also participates in a purchasing consortium with government libraries.

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Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library

108 An important governance arrangement for the Parliamentary Library is the Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library (the **Library Committee**).

109 The Library Committee membership at 30 June 2008 was:

The Hon. Dick Adams MP (Joint Chair)

Senator Russell Trood (Joint Chair)

Senator Lyn Allison

The Hon. John Anderson MP (to 24 November 2007)

Senator Guy Barnett (from 14 February 2008)

Mr Russell Broadbent MP

Mr Mark Butler MP (from 18 February 2008)

Mr Petro Georgiou MP (to 24 November 2007)

Mr Michael Hatton MP (to 24 November 2007)

The Hon. David Hawker MP (from 11 March 2008)

Senator Steve Hutchins

Ms Sharryn Jackson MP (from 18 February 2008)

Senator Linda Kirk (from 14 February 2008)

Senator Julian McGauran (to 24 November 2007)

Mrs Sophie Mirabella MP (from 11 March 2008)

Senator Fiona Nash (to 24 November 2007)

Mr Brendan O'Connor MP (to 24 November 2007)

Mr Graham Perrett MP (from 18 February 2008)

Mr Barry Wakelin MP (to 24 November 2007)

Senator Ruth Webber

110 The terms of reference of the committee are to:

- (a) consider and report to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on any matters relating to the Parliamentary Library referred to it by the President or the Speaker;

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- (b) provide advice to the President and the Speaker on matters relating to the Parliamentary Library;
- (c) provide advice to the President and the Speaker on an annual resource agreement between the Parliamentary Librarian and the Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Services; and
- (d) receive advice and reports, including an annual report, directly from the Parliamentary Librarian on matters relating to the Parliamentary Library.

111 The Library Committee met on 12 September 2007, 13 March 2008 and 19 June 2008. The Committee discussed collection development, particularly the need to increase the range of regional press directly available to Senators and Members; the Continuous Improvement Review of the Information Access Branch; restructuring and staffing of the Research Branch; policies on *Statement of Clients Services* and *Parliamentary Library Feedback*; and progress on addressing issues identified in the 2007 client-based assessment.

112 The Committee considered the *Resource Agreement 2008-09* and, noting that it was prepared in the context of departmental budget frugality, resolved that the Joint Chairs write to the Presiding Officers recommending the adoption of the agreement.

Resource Agreement

113 The Parliamentary Librarian and the Secretary of Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) developed a *Resource Agreement* (the **Agreement**) as required under the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*.

114 The Agreement identifies the resources provided to the Parliamentary Librarian by DPS to enable the provision of library services to clients. It also details the services provided by DPS to the Librarian. In addition it describes the resources in terms of services provided by the Library to the rest of DPS.

115 The Agreement has been developed in light of the DPS budget, the relationship between the Library and the rest of DPS in delivering services to clients and the Department of Parliamentary Services Certified Agreement (the **DPS CA**).

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116 The major budget pressures are the increasing cost of books, journals and electronic resources, which has resulted in a decrease in purchasing power by the Library, and increasing salary costs.

Assessment of clients' needs and Library performance: addressing the 2007 assessment findings

117 The client survey has been a key document shaping Library business planning for 2007-08. As part of that process, initiatives to address the survey findings have been developed in consultation with all staff at Library, branch and section level. Major areas of activity which address the survey findings are outlined below.

118 Responding to individual requests from clients is the Library's highest priority. To ensure consistent, high quality service the Parliamentary Librarian and the Assistant Secretary, Research Branch, have met with all staff in section meetings to discuss the importance of this finding.

119 Activities designed to improve performance involved training, implementation of clear guidelines and performance management, focusing on three themes:

- (a) tailoring products to the specific needs of the clients;
- (b) improving reference and follow-up communications; and
- (c) improving timeliness of responses.

120 Training in 'research/reference interviews with clients' was provided to all staff by an external consultant in October-November 2007. A successful research/reference interview has been recognised as playing a crucial role in providing effective and efficient client services that meet client needs.

121 A review of Library publications undertaken in 2006-07 resulted in revised Parliamentary Library operating policies and procedures for Bills Digests and other publications.

122 In 2007-08, as a result of revised practices recommended by the review, the timeliness of Bills Digests, which has been raised in every client survey undertaken by the Library, continued to be improved.

123 The 2007 assessment found that not all clients were aware of the range of the Library's services, nor were they aware which services they were entitled to use. While the *Parliamentary Library*

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Statement of Client Services (Operating Policies and Procedures No 1) outlines the services available to clients, the range of services is different to those from other libraries that Senators and Members may have used.

124 A communications and marketing plan was developed for 2007-08 which includes:

- (a) contact officers for new members of Parliament to personally explain the range of services available and to act as the initial point of contact with the Library;
- (b) a new guide to Library services which more clearly advises all clients about the range of services available;
- (c) a new printable list of Library staff and their subject expertise to enable clients to find the right expert quickly—launched in January 2008;
- (d) a revamped Library web page, implemented in mid 2007, which highlights new resources and “hot issues”;
- (e) competency based training for Library staff who are contact officers or work on the Central Enquiry Point; and
- (f) improved online services through increasing information resources available to Electorate Offices and those in Parliament House.

125 The 2007 client assessment identified that many clients wanted significantly more resources available electronically at their desktop, in Parliament House and Electorate Offices. The Library Committee has also urged the Library to better respond to Senators’ and Members’ needs and deliver more electronic resources. There appears to be a significant gap between what members want and what the Library is able to deliver, particularly regional news.

126 Overall, the Parliamentary Library has a very small collection budget compared to national collecting institutions and universities⁵. The major part of the Library’s collection expenditure is on current sources of information: journals, reference materials, and news sources.

⁵ The Parliamentary Library’s expenditure for information resources in 2007-08 was approximately \$2m while the Australian National University’s 2005-06 expenditure was \$7.3m, the University of Melbourne’s \$12.6m and the University of New South Wales’ \$12m.

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127 In recent years, the Library's planning has focused on increasing electronic delivery of information products and services to the desktop but, for the first time, in 2007-08 the Library set itself a target of increasing the number of electronic titles in the collection by 20%. Over the 2007-08 financial year the percentage of titles delivered in this manner across the books and serials collections increased from 17.3% to 22.2%. Within the serials collection alone, the number of titles available in electronic form from in-house and subscription services increased to just over 70%.

128 During the year the ongoing review of collection holdings identified some material that could be cancelled in order to purchase new electronic resources. The Library added several major electronic services to its collection in the year including:

- (a) Library PressDisplay, providing access to over 400 current Australian and international newspapers;
- (b) EBSCO Host Research Databases, providing access to Australian and international newspapers, newswires, journals and reference sources, including a specialised collection of environmental resources;
- (c) Gale Health and Wellness Center, which includes access to medical, statistical, health and wellness information;
- (d) Keesings World News Archive, with articles on world political, economic and social events back to 1931; and
- (e) JSTOR, a major digital journal archive.

129 The Library's Electronic Media Monitoring Service (**EMMS**) provides access to radio and television current affairs and news programs. Work commenced on an enhancement to permit media content from other sources, including older analog content, to be added to the digital repository with the correct date and description attached. This will ensure that in future significant and high demand items from the Library's historic collection of radio and television broadcasts can be replayed on demand through the EMMS interface.

130 The major discovery service for our digital collections, ParlInfo, is being replaced. Both ParlInfo and the Bills systems have reached the end of their lives. A tender process occurred in 2007 to obtain a new technical solution for the systems managing of bills and providing access to parliamentary resources through ParlInfo. A contract was signed with the successful tenderer, SAIC, in October 2007. The cut over to the new system will occur in the first quarter

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of 2008–09. DPS is working closely with the chamber departments, Office of the Parliamentary Council and Attorney-General's Department on these projects.

Continuous Improvement Review of the Information Access Branch

131 The Information Access Branch Continuous Improvement Review (**CIR**) was completed in October 2007. The majority of these improvements are now in place. A small number need to wait until the implementation of ParlInfo, which will occur in the second half of 2008. A specific efficiency in 2007-08 was to cease duplicating processing and storing transcripts and program notes of radio and television current affairs and news programs into ParlInfo as well as EMMS.

132 Other improvements set out in the recommendations include:

- (a) efficiencies in the delivery of self-help services to clients;
- (b) efficiencies in relation to collection access with digitisation of the Library's older information and press clippings files so that the material is available on demand and storage space reduced; and
- (c) development of a digital collection policy which sets out the types of information resources the Library needs to hold in its own repository and what resources can be accessed, on demand, from other trusted external repositories.

Australian Parliamentary Fellowship



Figure 2—Australian Parliamentary Fellows Dr Joel Bateman (2008) and Dr Tim Kendall (2007)

133 The Library has, on behalf of the Parliament, managed the Australian Parliamentary Fellowship since 1970. The Fellowship provides support for 12 months to undertake a research project, prepare a monograph on the project and undertake client work in the Library.

134 Dr Timothy Kendall was the recipient of the 2007 fellowship. His topic was *Australia's China—China through the eyes of Parliament*. His research includes a survey of Senators and Members and in-depth interviews. His monograph was published in August 2008.

135 Dr Joel Bateman is the 2008 Parliamentary Fellow; his topic is *Shadow Cabinet in Australia: its Roles, Processes and Purpose*. The project aims to explore the role of the Shadow Cabinet as a political institution. It will look at how different Shadow Cabinets under different parties or leaders operate, including policy-making processes, structures of organisation and internal processes, and relationships with the Opposition backbench and the media.

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Parliamentary Library feedback

136 The Parliamentary Library is committed to constantly improving its service delivery. Feedback from clients, including compliments, complaints, suggestions and information requests about our services, are vital to enable the Library to:

- (a) improve our services and products;
- (b) prevent problems from occurring in the future;
- (c) ensure consistent service delivery; and
- (d) communicate with clients about Library services.

137 A policy was developed based on what has been Library practice for many years. It was developed with guidance from the Standards Association of Australia, the Commonwealth Ombudsman and Australian National Audit Office audits of complaints systems in Commonwealth agencies.

138 The Continuous Improvement Review provided an opportunity for the Library to consider how clients could be informed of the methods available to provide feedback. To assist them to provide feedback information has been provided through *This Sitting Week*.

139 Staff consultation occurred to ensure that the policy was clear and effective. The policy has been publicised to all staff and is included in induction training.

140 The Library Committee approved the new policy and is now well informed about the Library's commitment to receiving and acting on feedback. Information about the policy and Library Committee's role was published on the Library's web site.

Australian National Audit Office (ANAO)

141 The ANAO released an updated Better Practice Guide: *Agency Management of Parliamentary Workflows*. For the first time the guide includes a section on "Providing information to the Parliamentary Library". The section appears in chapter 4, parliamentary workflow tasks, and is a valuable means of reminding all agencies of the need to provide information to the Library.

Significant improvements in services and systems

142 The major area of work was preparation for the new ParlInfo system. In developing the data dictionary, the database fields were rationalised and processes streamlined. Further work will occur after the implementation of the new system in 2008-09.

143 Indexes for bound volumes of Hansard, which recommenced in 2007, continued this year. The index for the 2006 volumes was distributed in late 2007. Preparation of the 2007 indexes has been completed and they should shortly be printed and distributed.

144 The *Briefing Book: Key Issues for the 42nd Parliament* was distributed within a month of the election to assist Senators and Members prepare for the new Parliament. The book is also available online.

145 The *Monthly Statistical Bulletin* (previously known as the *Monthly Economic and Social Indicators*) was reviewed and enhanced to improve the content, including commentary highlighting key points and a regular feature article.

146 A review of the *Parliamentary Handbook* was undertaken in consultation with the Library Committee, Library staff and staff of other Parliamentary departments. The aim of the review was to ensure that the Handbook for the 42nd Parliament best meets the information needs of Senators and Members, and that the Australian community is easily able to access information about the Parliament. Enhancements to both the hard copy and online versions of the Handbook are planned for this edition, which is due to be published in October 2008.

Assistance to parliamentary libraries in the region

147 The Library is committed to supporting parliamentary libraries in the region, particularly in Pacific countries and, in emerging democracies. This year the Library provided:

- (a) support for visits organised by the Parliamentary Relations Office, including the Inter-Parliamentary Study Program;

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- (b) information and training for visitors including hosting visits from Korean Parliamentary Library staff and the Kiribas Parliamentary Librarian;
- (c) advice to delegations from Tanzanian Parliamentary Departments, Ethiopian Parliament and the Sri Lankan Parliament;
- (d) resources to increase the collections of parliamentary libraries in Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Maldives and, with support from the Parliamentary Relations Office, purchased journals and reference material for Papua New Guinea;
- (e) support for reference/research services by encouraging libraries to pass on any relevant questions to us (during the year the Library answered a small number of enquiries from libraries in the region);
- (f) support for staff in regional parliamentary libraries with skills for specific tasks such as assisting the Cook Island Parliament set up their web site; and
- (g) support for libraries by providing free access to material on the Library's web site and Parliamentary Library publications such as the *Parliamentary Handbook*.

Strategic and Workforce Planning

148 The Senior Management Group of the Library, which comprises all Directors, Assistant Secretaries and the Parliamentary Librarian, met to develop the Library plan for 2008–09. Initiatives identified for particular action in the year include:

- (a) service developments for clients including training for new Senators;
- (b) feedback mechanisms in a non-survey year;
- (c) quality—ideas for ensuring quality in Library services and products; and
- (d) strategic training and other key issues.

149 Workforce planning continued to be a priority, in particular a focus on attracting and recruiting quality staff and developing and retaining existing staff. Workforce analysis conducted in 2007 identified that the Library was vulnerable to a significant loss of

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expertise over the coming years because of its aging workforce. Mature age workers, those 45 years and older, accounted for 71% of the Library's workforce. Retirements and recruitment action since that time, including the introduction of some Research Assistant positions in the Research Branch, have seen a slight reduction in the mature age profile to approximately 69%.

150 During 2007–08 17 ongoing staff left the Library, a separation rate of 11.6%. This rate is slightly lower than the DPS rate of 11.9% for the same period and well below the 17.6% ongoing separation rate for Library staff reached in 2006-07.

151 The main reasons for separation from the Library during 2007-08 were resignation (4 staff, 23.5% of separations), permanent transfer (5 staff, 29.4% of separations), retirement (4 staff, 23.5% of separations), promotion (1 staff, 5.8%) and voluntary retirement (2 staff, 11.7% of separations). One staff member's employment was terminated. Most of the staff who resigned did so to take up positions in other organisations.

Parliamentary Library overview

Office of the Parliamentary Librarian

152 The Office of the Parliamentary Librarian comprises the Parliamentary Librarian, an Executive Assistant and the Director, Client Relations.

153 Relations with clients are managed by the Director, Client Relations, who provides orientation and training services for Senators, Members, their staff and other parliamentary staff. The Vital Issues Seminar series, a program for visitors and oversight of the editorial and promotional processes for Library publications are also managed by this officer.

154 Administrative support to the Parliamentary Librarian, including support for the Library Committee, is also provided from the Office.

Research Branch

155 The Research Branch (**RB**) provides information, research and analytical services to Senators and Members and their staff, parliamentary committees and the parliamentary departments to

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support parliamentary or representational duties (services are not provided to constituents or for commercial purposes).

156 The range of services provided includes individually commissioned information, research and advisory services for clients and research publications.

157 Commissioned information and research services involve responses to individual requests for information, research and/or critical analysis on subjects, issues and policies of interest to parliamentarians.

Information Access Branch

158 The Information Access Branch (**IAB**) develops and manages access to print and electronic resources. These resources include books, serials, information databases, electronic publications developed both within the Department of Parliamentary Services (**DPS**) and acquired externally, off-air recordings, transcripts and related materials.

159 Access to services is also provided through the Parliamentary Library's Central Enquiry Point.

160 IAB staff selects, acquires and provides access to monographs, serials, electronic publications and external databases through the Library's Catalogue. Access to radio and television news and current affairs programs is provided through the EMMS. Material for the Library's information databases, available through ParlInfo, are selected and indexed.

161 IAB is responsible for publishing DPS materials both in print and electronically on the parliamentary web site (<http://www.aph.gov.au/>) and on the parliamentary and DPS intranets. This includes Hansard and Library publications.

Informed Support



Nina has been working for almost a year in the Research Branch of the Parliamentary Library. *"It's been a challenging, but very rewarding and stimulating experience. From the onset of my employment here I was immersed in a range of topics and able to put my qualifications into practice (Master of International Relations/Master of Diplomacy). I feel I have grown intellectually with each new task.*

I have participated in some of the top conferences on foreign policy and security issues facing our region. I am working on developing my European expertise, and I recently presented my first research paper on EU–Australia relations at a national conference.

Working in the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Section of the Library has also provided me with the opportunity to utilise my foreign language skills".

Nina finds the immediacy of dealing with Senators and Members and their staff, and the responsibility for providing accurate information, analysis and advice (often within short time-frames) makes for a unique working environment in which every day is different. She has also made a number of excellent contacts in government and academia through her position in the Parliamentary Library.

"I enjoy the combination of writing, the atmosphere of interesting and varied work, as well as an opportunity to advance professionally—all elements of an ideal job for me! Along with a very supportive environment, I enjoy preparing material on different countries for the parliamentary committees and delegations and briefing Senators and Members about the latest developments overseas".

Looking to the future, Nina aspires to become an expert on international security, with her research enhancing the Parliamentary Library's name domestically and internationally.

Report on performance

Introduction—Output 1 Library Services

162 Output 1 aims to provide an effective knowledge centre for the Parliament through the provision of information, analysis and advice. These services are provided through two sub-outputs:

- (a) Sub-output 1.1—Research services. These services include responding to requests from individual parliamentary clients for information and research, and the production of general distribution briefs and publications; and
- (b) Sub-output 1.2—Information access services. Information services are provided to the Library's clients by acquiring and providing access to information resources in the collection and Library catalogue, through the selection, processing and indexing of material for library and media data bases in ParlInfo, and by publishing print and electronic works.

163 Performance is assessed using indicators that cover quality, quantity and price. Indicators, performance results and relevant comments are shown against each of the sub-outputs.

Sub-output 1.1—Research services

164 Sub-output 1.1—Research services to meet clients' needs. The services contributing to this Sub-output are as follows:

- (a) Commissioned information, research and advisory services—these are tailored responses prepared following requests from individual Senators, Members and their staff, and other parliamentary clients; and
- (b) Research publications (Publications)—these are prepared where strong client demand is anticipated for briefing on specific policy issues. Publications include Bills Digests, Research Briefs, Research Notes, Chronologies, Electronic Briefs, Background Notes and internet Resource Guides. Publications are generally available to clients and to the public, through the internet. A small number of publications are not available through the internet because they contain content which the Library is only licensed to make available to members of parliament.

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165 During the year, Library induction and orientation sessions were held for clients. These continued to be successful in providing, through individual and small group sessions, a timely and detailed introduction to Library services. A particular focus was new Members for January to March, and new Senators from June 2008.

Figure 3—Sub-output 1.1—Research services—quality indicator

Quality indicator	Measure	Performance	
		2006-07	2007-08
Client satisfaction with requests and general briefs and publications (GBPs)	High level of customer satisfaction (target: 90%)	89%	89% ⁶
	Client service delivered to timeliness service standard (target: 90%)	97%	97%
	Number of complaints from clients	5	1

Indicator—Client satisfaction with requests and general briefs and publications (GBPs)

166 Three key quality indicators measure satisfaction with requests for client services:

- (a) an overall measure of client satisfaction with requests, publications and media services derived from the client survey;
- (b) a timeliness measure introduced in 2006-07, which measures the responses to individual client requests completed to the originally agreed or renegotiated deadline; and
- (c) the number of complaints made by clients.

167 The new timeliness target of 90% was exceeded—with 97% of individual requests being provided by the originally agreed or renegotiated deadline. Performance against this target has remained stable since its introduction.

⁶ An assessment is undertaken once each Parliament. This figure is from the 2007 assessment.

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168 There has been a major decline in complaints—only one client registered a complaint during 2007-08 and two others expressed strong views about individual publications. Each of the complaints was investigated and followed through with the complainant. The feedback was very valuable as it enabled us to review and improve some publications.

169 In addition, feedback from individuals and organisations that were not clients was received by email and telephone. All the feedback was about Library publications, which are available to the public through the internet. In three cases minor modifications or corrections were made to publications to address the issues raised.

Figure 4—Sub-output 1.1—Research services—quantity indicators

Quantity indicator	Measure	Performance	
		2006-07	2007-08
Individual client requests	Percentage of primary clients (Senators' and Members' offices, including Ministers' offices) using the service (target: 98%)	100%	100%
	Number of individual client requests (target: 19,000)	19,819	14,907
Self-service requests	Number of online uses of the Parliamentary Library's publications, including the Parliamentary Handbook and General Briefs and Publications, through ParlInfo and the internet (target: 9,000,000)	4,349,240	4,956,922
General briefs and publications	Number of general briefs and publications produced (target: 220)	275	231

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Quantity indicator	Measure	Performance	
		2006-07	2007-08
Client training and seminars	Attendance at training courses and events (eg Vital Issues seminars) (target: 600)	448	723

Indicator—Client requests

170 During 2007-08, consistent with the previous two years, all of the Library's primary clients (Senators' and Members' offices, including Ministers' offices) used the client request service at least once—exceeding the target of 98%.

171 For 2007-08, as noted above, there was a huge increase in online usage of the Parliamentary Library's resources (600,000 extra uses) offset by a significant decrease (25%) in the total number of individual client requests, and the target for this measure (19,000) was not met. For 2007-08 there was also a decrease (17%) in the number of hours spent meeting client requests. This change is similar to that occurring in many other institutions. A number of further factors should be noted:

- (a) Since the mid-1990s, a small decrease in client requests to Parliamentary Libraries has been suggested internationally at discussions of the IFLA Standing Committee of the Section on Research and Library Services to Parliament, together with increased use of self-help resources;
- (b) The decrease in individual client requests at the Australian Parliamentary Library has continued for more than a decade; and
- (c) The number of client requests generally fluctuates, in election years there are usually fewer requests.

172 The 2008 election period and the three months immediately following the election saw significantly reduced client requests.

173 There has been a slight change in the average number of hours spent on client requests in the past three years. In 2005-06 the average was 2.83 hours per client request, falling to 2.50 in 2006-07 and rising to 3.41 in 2007-08. Factors affecting this include the complexity of requests, time constraints from requirements of

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clients and the number of newer staff who are not yet fully skilled in this work. There has not been a consistent pattern of change in this area.

Indicator— General briefs and publications

174 The number of publications produced was 18% lower than the previous year, although the hours spent on publications increased (by around 3000 hours). The decrease in the number of publications in part, reflects the fact that the number of Bills Digests published decreased from 191 last year to 152 in 2007–08, reflecting the effect of an election year on the legislative program.

175 Access to the Parliamentary Library's publications online through ParlInfo and the internet increased significantly (14%).

Bills Digests

176 During 2007–08, 152 Bills Digests were produced—a decrease of 20% on 2006–07. The reduction was primarily due to the calling of the 2007 federal election and the consequent hiatus in the introduction of Bills, for around four months from October 2007.

177 In common with 2006-07, a large number of Bills were first debated a relatively short period after their introduction into Parliament, requiring rapid turnaround time by staff involved in the production of Digests. Bills in this category included those in the Northern Territory 'national emergency response' package, which was introduced on 7 August 2007 and debated in the House of Representatives on the same day. An interim Digest covering the major elements of the package was made available to Members and Senators on the day the Bills were introduced. The final Digests were completed within a few days.

178 Digests were not produced for 8 of the Government Bills introduced in 2007–08 (compared to 13 in 2006–07) because they did not address significant or controversial policy issues, did not require explanatory information to assist in the debate or were part of a suite of bills where the Digests were produced for the main bills. A further 9 Digests (compared to 14 in 2006–07) were not completed in time for parliamentary debate on the Bill concerned. However, where it was not possible to produce Digests in time for debates, clients were provided with draft Digests or other briefing material on request.

179 During the year, staff guidelines were developed to complement the Operating Policy and Procedure—Preparing and

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publishing Bills Digests. The guidelines and associated staff training are part of an ongoing process for improvement of Digests. Further initiatives to enhance quality control are planned for the second half of 2008.

Briefing book

180 Following each election the Library publishes a briefing book with the dual purpose of:

- (a) identifying issues which are expected to demand Senators' and Members' attention during the early months of the new Parliament and
- (b) 'showcasing' Library capabilities and research expertise across a broad topic range, particularly to new parliamentarians and their staffers.

181 The briefing book presents a brief introduction to areas of key public policy concern, outlines the context for those concerns and discusses possible new policy and legislative directions.

182 The briefing book for the 42nd Parliament contained 85 issue briefs across 22 topic headings. It was distributed well in advance of Parliament's first sitting period to assist Senators and Members to prepare for the new Parliament and has been well received.

Budget Review 2008-09

183 The annual Federal Budget (**Budget**) is perhaps the Commonwealth government's most important political, economic and social document. The 2008-09 Budget was a critical document for establishing the policy directions and financial management initiatives of the newly elected Rudd Labor Government. The purpose of the *Budget Review 2008-09* was to assist Senators and Members by providing an overall examination of the Budget from a macroeconomic perspective. It also incorporated social policy, legal and other perspectives.

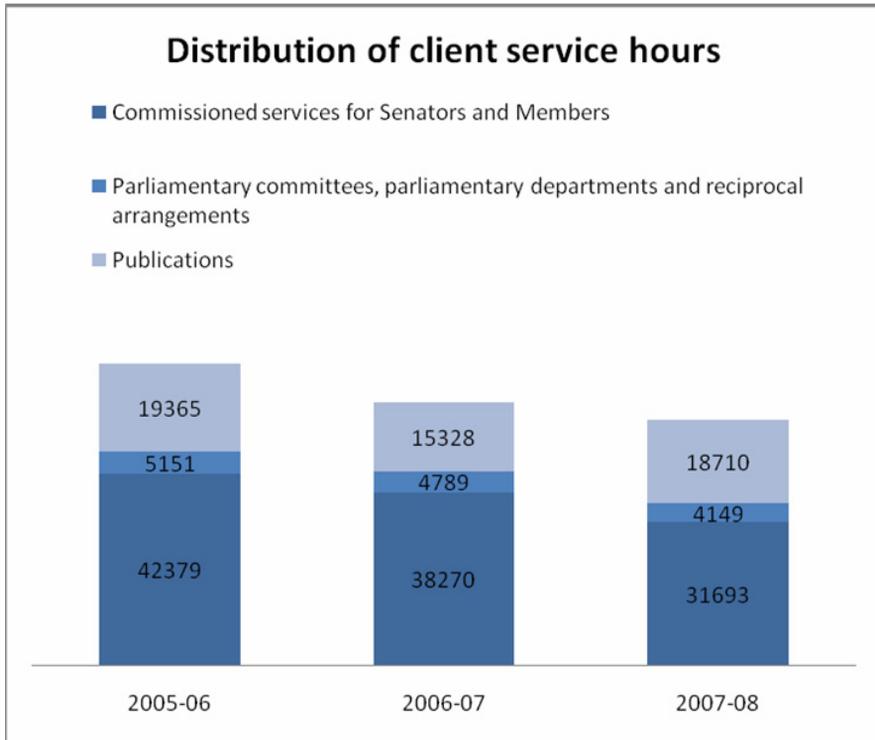
184 Providing information on the Budget and the Budget process was a major success this year. The Library's seminar, *Understanding the Budget*, which was attended by approximately 100 Senators, Members and their staff.

185 In addition to the review, newspaper articles including editorials, opinion pieces, and media releases were selected from the

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Library’s media collection and made available to clients online, with an introduction by a Senior Researcher from the Economics Section.

Figure 5—Distribution of client service hours by service type



186 The time spent on publications showed a small decrease in the total over the three-year period, but with a significant increase from 2007-08 to 2006-07. In 2008-09 consideration will be given to targeting publication resources to areas of strong client demand.

Indicator—Client training and seminars

187 Attendance at Parliamentary Library lectures, Vital Issues seminars and orientation training increased this year by 62%. The following lectures and seminars were held:

- (a) Professor the Hon. Alastair Nicholson AO RFD QC spoke on Citizenship—decisions by the executive as to the suitability or character of individuals;

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- (b) a panel of distinguished visiting specialists addressed the topic Asia-Pacific Regional cooperation 'architecture'—competitive or cooperative?;
- (c) Dr John Hart spoke on The American Presidential Election: Retrospect and Prospect;
- (d) Professor Joshua Gans and Robin Eckermann gave presentations on the issue of Broadband; and
- (e) Professor Ian Goulter, Vice-Chancellor, Charles Sturt University spoke on the topic Growing our communities in inland Australia.

Figure 6—Sub-output 1.1—Research services—price indicator

Price indicator	Measure	Performance	
		2006-07	2007-08
Cost of research services	Average cost per individual client request (staff time only)	\$115	\$148
	Average cost per request (total cost including overheads)	\$296	\$391
	Average direct cost per self-service client request (staff time only)	\$0.19	\$0.20
	Average cost per self-service client request (total cost including overheads)	\$0.48	\$0.48
	Total cost of sub-output 1.1	\$10,764m	\$11,272m

Sub-output 1.2—Information access services

188 The services contributing to this Sub-output are as follows:

- (a) the Library collection—development of the collection to meet users needs and provision of access through the catalogue and ParlInfo;

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- (b) online full-text content—news clippings; journal articles; political party documents; press releases and Library publications available through ParlInfo;
- (c) media services—desktop access to television and radio news and current affairs programs broadcast in Canberra, provided to Senators and Members for their parliamentary duties;
- (d) commercial databases—including online full-text journal and newspaper services available through the Library intranet and the Senators’ and Members’ Services Portal; and
- (e) client services—including the Central Enquiry Point and self-help services.

189 As far as possible, usage rates of all of these services are monitored to ensure that they remain relevant and are of practical assistance to Senators, Members and their staff.

190 To help clients use these services effectively, the Library provides orientation and training courses as well as online assistance.

Indicator—Client satisfaction with information access services

Figure 7—Sub-output 1.2—Information access services—quality indicator

Quality indicator	Measure	Performance	
		2006-07	2007-08
Client satisfaction with information access services	High level of client satisfaction (target: 90%)	89%	89% ⁷
	New resources added to the Library’s collection within timeliness service standard (target: 85%)	70%	90%

⁷ Assessment is undertaken once each Parliament. This figure is from the 2007 assessment.

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Quality indicator	Measure	Performance	
		2006-07	2007-08
	Percentage of titles in Library collection available to clients online in full text (target: 20%)	17.3%	22.2%
	Number of complaints from clients	0	0

191 The timeliness service standard for new resources measures the percentage of titles added to the Library’s collection within defined turnaround times. For non-priority items, the performance standard is within two weeks of receipt. Priority titles performance standards are:

- (a) critically urgent—catalogued within one hour;
- (b) urgent—catalogued within one day;
- (c) reference books—catalogued within two days; and
- (d) requested by clients—catalogued within one week.

192 Performance was measured on the percentage of outstanding titles at the end of each month that were within two weeks of receipt. The result was 90%, which was above the 85% target. All priority titles (approximately 70-80% of new resources) were catalogued within their target turnaround times. In 2008-09, the method will be improved to measure the actual turnaround times of priority titles added to the collection.

193 Increasing the number of electronic resources available to clients through their computers was a priority. The client assessment and discussion at Library Committee meetings identified this as an area which required high priority.

194 The current budget provides some opportunity to increase electronic resources. Collaborative purchasing with other libraries, such as Electronic Resources Australia and the Australian Government Libraries Information Network, and reallocation of resources used for print serials has enabled the collection to increase further in this area in 2007-08. The total number of electronic monographs and serials in the collection increased from 21,312 at 1

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July 2007 to 28,987 at 30 June 2008. The percentage of titles available to clients in electronic full text increased by nearly 5%.

Figure 8—Sub-output 1.2—Information access services—quantity indicator

Quantity indicator	Measure	Performance	
		2006-07	2007-08
Material added to Library databases	Number of items added to databases created by the Library, including television and radio programs and transcripts in the Electronic Media Monitoring Service, and Library contributions to resources in ParlInfo (target: 160,000)	187,926	167,537
Material added to Library collection	Number of new titles (monographs and serials) added to the Library’s collection (target: 4,000) ⁸	4,418	4,630
Use of the Library collection and databases	Use of the collections and databases including loans from the collection, use of electronic journals, Electronic Media Monitoring Service and Library contributions to resources in ParlInfo (target: 2,100,000)	2,281,750	2,544,500

Indicator—Material added to Library databases

195 Clients of the Library require access to accurate and up-to-date information. Because electronic material can be made accessible to clients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, greater emphasis is being placed on collecting material in an electronic

⁸ ‘Monographs’ are non-journal publications complete in one volume or a finite number of volumes.

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format and making it accessible through easy-to-use interfaces such as the Senators' and Members' Services Portal.

196 The number of newspaper clippings added to the database was slightly down—119,228 clips added in 2007-08 compared with 121,672 in 2006-07. One factor that contributed to this was that in the period after the federal election—from November 2007 until the 42nd Parliament commenced in February 2008—there were fewer items in the news relevant to the interests of the Parliament.

197 The Library completed a tender for the purchase of online news services during the year. This resulted in the purchase of subscriptions to Factiva iWorks and Library PressDisplay for direct access by clients. As well, a three-year contract was negotiated for the provision of newsclips to the Library's newspaper clippings database.

Indicator—Material added to Library collection

198 The Library's physical collection of monographs and journals is constantly updated in accordance with the Library's *Collection Development Policy*. The Library aims to keep the collection at around 115,000 monograph titles. It has around 8,000 individual print and electronic journal titles, not including the large aggregated subscription services. New material is acquired; outdated, damaged or redundant material is discarded regularly. Materials on Australian politics, legislation and constitutional matters are retained permanently.

199 Increasingly, the collection emphasis is on acquiring current, up-to-date information through serial and other subscriptions. Fewer monographs are being requested for purchase.

Indicator—Use of the Library's collection and databases

Increased use of Library databases

200 Clients can access the Library's databases through ParlInfo either through a Windows based interface, which is only available to users of the Parliamentary Computing Network, or through the publicly available web interface.

201 The continuing increased use of Library databases in ParlInfo by Senators, Members and their staff indicates that the services are valuable and relevant to their needs. Usage reflects the growing success of the Library's efforts to introduce and promote self-help services at the desktop.

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202 The significant increase in the use of these resources in 2007-08, 12%, is consistent with long-term patterns. Use of the electronic collections is highest when Parliament is sitting. This has been a consistent trend for the last three years, with usage rising in the build up to the commencement of the 42nd Parliament.

Electronic Media Monitoring Service (EMMS)

203 In the lead-up to the introduction of the new ParlInfo, workflows have been reviewed with the aim of removing duplication of records. In particular, transcripts which were duplicated in EMMS and the Library’s database on ParlInfo—two separate systems with two sets of workflows—are being rationalised. This duplication will cease with the new ParlInfo because the software allows for better integration of records which will only need to be captured and described once.

Figure 9—Sub-output 1.2—Information access services—quantity indicators

Price indicator	Measure	Performance	
		2006-07	2007-08
Cost of information access services	Average cost per item added to the Library’s collection	\$362	\$412
	Average cost per item added to the Library’s databases	\$19.98	\$24.33
	Average cost per use of the Library’s databases and collection	\$3.36	\$3.54
	Total cost of sub-output 1.2	\$10,027m	\$10,246m

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	2006-07	2007-08
	\$	\$
Income		
Appropriations	14,751,936	15,767,035
Depreciation	1,784,617	1,183,378
Expenditure		
Total Salaries	12,220,319	12,323,494
Research Branch	7,498,398	7,709,011
Information Access Branch	4,303,104	4,217,910
Office of the Parliamentary Librarian	418,817	396,573
Other employee expenses	141,201	161,878
Staff training, travel and related expenses	162,593	239,737
Collection (information resources)	1,499,346	1,486,154
Collection (depreciation of monographs and reference collection) ⁹	536,368	580,649
Other expenses	329,809	347,864
Asset maintenance (software licences/maintenance)	263,314	239,094
Total expenditure (including expenditure from depreciation funds)	15,152,950	15,699,816
Total expenditure (excluding expenditure from depreciation funds)	14,616,582	15,119,167
Staffing		
	2006-07	2007-08
Research Branch	75.25 ¹⁰	78.12
Information Access Branch	57.39	57.95
Office of the Parliamentary Librarian	3.0	3.09
Total	135.64	139.16

⁹ Not included in the operational budget, represents funding from depreciation of the collection.

¹⁰ During 2006-07 a number of positions in the Research Branch were held vacant following the draft report of the Continuous Improvement Review of the Branch structure, pending finalisation of the report and implementation plan.

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Figure 10—Parliamentary Library Organisation Chart

