Departmental overview

Role

The department's role is to serve the Senate and its committees, and its functions are almost entirely determined by their activities. In supporting the operations of the Senate and its committees, the department provides services in four main categories: Senate support, committee support, senators' services, and public education and awareness.

The department is responsible to the Senate and all senators, and maintains complete impartiality in serving senators from all political parties and independent senators.

Aim and objectives

In 2007–08, the Senate worked towards achieving its overall aim of 'providing effective services to support the functioning of the Senate as a House of the Commonwealth Parliament'.

During the year the department:

- continued to develop its expertise in the constitutional and procedural bases of the Senate and its committees
- maintained and improved services to the Senate, its committees, senators and other users of departmental resources, using efficient and up-to-date technology
- ensured the highest standard of accurate and prompt procedural advice
- published a range of practical, procedural resources on the work of the Senate and the parliament and maximised awareness of and access to those resources
- produced and delivered effective education and information programs
- implemented effective workforce planning, recruitment and staff development practices to ensure that it has a highly skilled, knowledgeable and motivated workforce.

Reports on the Senate's performance against performance indicators and targets in Portfolio Budget Statements are in the sections on performance within each output group section.

Organisational structure

The department is responsible to the Senate through the President of the Senate. During 2006–07 the President was Senator the Honourable Paul Calvert. After five years in the position, Senator Calvert resigned as President on 14 August 2007. Senator the Honourable Alan Ferguson was elected in his place.

The Secretary of the department is the Clerk of the Senate, Mr Harry Evans.

The department is organised into five offices:

- **Clerk's Office**—provides procedural and constitutional advice in relation to the proceedings of the Senate and its committees, strategic direction for the department and secretariat support for the Procedure Committee, the Committee of Privileges and the Committee of Senators' Interests, and maintains the Register of Senators' Interests

- **Table Office**—provides procedural advice and programming services; processes legislation and documents, and archives records of the Senate; produces formal and informal records of Senate business; provides an inquiries service; and provides secretariat support to a collection of domestic committees
- **Procedure Office**—provides advisory and drafting services to non-government senators, secretariat support for the legislative scrutiny committees and policy support for inter-parliamentary relations; conducts parliamentary research; and promotes community awareness and knowledge of the Senate and the parliament
- **Committee Office**—provides secretariat support for most Senate and certain joint committees and strives to increase the public's awareness of the work of committees
- **Black Rod's Office**—provides office, chamber and committee room support, information technology and ceremonial support services, and human resource, financial and records management services, for senators and departmental staff; and provides security advice.

Figure 1 identifies the elements that make up each of the offices. Contact details are listed in Appendix 1.

Figure 1   **Organisational structure, 30 June 2008**

President of the Senate (Senator the Honourable Alan Ferguson)			
Clerk's Office Clerk of the Senate *(Harry Evans)* Deputy Clerk *(Rosemary Laing)*			
Table Office Clerk Assistant *(Richard Pye)* Executive and programming	**Procedure Office** Clerk Assistant *(Cleaver Elliott)* Executive and legislative drafting	**Committee Office** Clerk Assistant *(Maureen Weeks)* Executive	**Black Rod's Office** Usher of the Black Rod *(Andrea Griffiths)* Executive
Journals and Notice Paper Section	Legislative Scrutiny Committees	Legislative and General Purpose Standing Committees	Senators' Services Section
Legislation and Documents Section	Research Section	Select Committees	Information Technology Section
	Biographical Dictionary Unit	Certain Joint Committees	Human Resource Management Section
	Parliamentary Education Office[a]		Financial Management Section
	Parliamentary Relations Office[b]		Security advice
			President's Office[c]

a   *Jointly funded by the department and the Department of the House of Representatives.*

b   *Jointly funded by the department and the Department of the House of Representatives and administered by the Department of the House of Representatives.*

c   *Included in this program for budgetary purposes only.*

Outcome and outputs

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the department's organisational and output structures, and summarises the outputs delivered by each output group. A detailed statement of each set of outputs is provided at the beginning of each output group's report on performance.

Figure 2   **Output structure, 30 June 2008**

OUTCOME

Effective provision of services to support the functioning of the Senate as a House of the Commonwealth Parliament

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

Effective support for the Senate chamber	Public awareness of the Senate and its work	Effective support for Senate and certain joint committees	Effective office and information technology support services for senators in their Parliament House offices

OUTPUT GROUPS

Output Group 1 Clerk's Office	Output Group 2 Table Office	Output Group 3 Procedure Office	Output Group 4 Committee Office	Output Group 5 Black Rod's Office

OUTPUTS

• Advice on powers, privileges and proceedings • Strategic direction • Support for Procedure, Privileges and Senators' Interests committees • Procedural information	• Procedural advice and programming services • Processing of legislation and documents • Records of business and proceedings • Dissemination of information on the work of the Senate • Document distribution and inquiries services • Support for Appropriations and Staffing; Selection of Bills; and Publications committees	• Legislative drafting and procedural support for non-government senators • Support for legislative scrutiny committees • Parliamentary information for the community • Production of a biographical dictionary of the Australian Senate • Parliamentary education for schools • Policy support and funding for interparliamentary relations	• Support for legislative and general purpose standing committees • Support for select committees and certain joint committees	• Office, chamber and committee room support; information technology and ceremonial services; and security advice • Financial management • Human resource management