

Procedure Office

Outputs

Provision of advisory and drafting services to non-government senators.

Provision of procedural advice and training to senators, staff, public servants and officials from other parliaments both within Australia and overseas.

Provision of secretariat support to the Regulations and Ordinances Committee and Scrutiny of Bills Committee.

Provision of parliamentary information services to the community.

Provision of parliamentary education services to schools, teachers and students.

Provision of policy advice and secretariat support for the maintenance and development of inter-parliamentary relations including the Inter-Parliamentary Union, overseas conferences and delegations program for senators.

	Performance indicators	Performance results
Quality	<p>The degree of satisfaction of the President, Deputy President, committee members and senators, as expressed through formal and informal feedback mechanisms, with the quality and timeliness of advice and support and the achievement of key tasks.</p> <p>Procedural advice is accurate and covers all foreseeable eventualities.</p> <p>Amendments and bills are accurate and legally sound.</p> <p>Public information and parliamentary research is accurate, comprehensive and targeted for particular needs.</p> <p>Education Centre teaching and other PEO projects accurately reflect the Parliament and its work.</p>	<p>Feedback from ongoing evaluation processes on levels of satisfaction was consistently high, confirming the findings of the 2009 survey of senators.</p> <p>Senators continued to acknowledge the accuracy and value of procedural advice.</p> <p>Legislative amendments and bills were accurate, and were prepared to the satisfaction of senators.</p> <p>Public information resources were updated as required to reflect arrangements and procedural changes in the Senate.</p> <p>The PEO conducted a record number of programs in the Education Centre, which operated at close to full capacity, and expanded the range and improved the accuracy of its website and publications.</p>
Timeliness	<p>Procedural advice is timely.</p> <p>Scrutiny committee meetings held, documentation provided and reports produced within timeframes set by the Senate or the committees, as relevant.</p> <p>During sitting periods, amendments drafted as soon as possible after receipt of instructions.</p>	<p>Procedural advice met all chamber deadlines.</p> <p>All meetings of the scrutiny committees were held as scheduled and documentation was provided within the timeframes set by the committees.</p> <p>Amendments were drafted in accordance with timeframes set by senators and the Senate.</p>

Timeliness	Seminars and lectures held on time and in accordance with advertised schedule; public information projects delivered according to programmed schedule.	All seminars and lectures were held on time and in accordance with advertised schedules.
	PEO teaching programs held on time and in accordance with booking schedule.	PEO teaching programs were conducted in accordance with the booking schedule.
	PEO projects delivered according to programmed schedule.	PEO projects, including outreach programs, were managed and delivered in accordance with implementation plans.
	Information available on the internet and in publications is up to date and available as soon as practicable.	Information resources were updated as required to reflect changes in personnel and procedures. The PEO website was constantly monitored and timely action was taken to implement required changes.

Overview

The Procedure Office provides a range of advisory, support and information services closely aligned with the role and work of the Senate.

The office directly supports the parliamentary work of senators by providing procedural advice and support; and drafting legislative amendments and private senators’ bills. It also provides secretariats for the Senate’s legislative scrutiny committees, the Regulations and Ordinances Committee and the Scrutiny of Bills Committee, which examine bills and legislative instruments against certain rights and accountability criteria.

The Research Section develops, manages and delivers publications, resources and programs which inform a wide range of audiences about the role and operations of the Senate and the Parliament.

The Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) produces educational programs and resources—including experiential learning programs, publications and a multi-modal website—for school students, teachers and others.

The Procedure Office is led by the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) and has four functional areas, as shown in figure 11.

Figure 11 Elements and responsibilities of the Procedure Office

<p>Executive and Legislative Drafting <i>Richard Pye, Clerk Assistant</i> Procedural advice, support and training Drafting of legislative amendments and private senators' bills</p>		
<p>Public information and parliamentary research <i>David Sullivan, Director, Research Section</i></p>	<p>Parliamentary education <i>Simon Harvey, Director, Parliamentary Education Office</i></p>	<p>Legislative scrutiny <i>James Warmenhoven, Secretary, Regulations and Ordinances Committee</i> <i>Toni Dawes, A/g Secretary, Scrutiny of Bills Committee</i></p>
<p>Publications, seminars, public lectures, exhibitions and research on parliamentary matters Production of <i>The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate</i></p>	<p>Parliamentary education services and resources for schools, teachers and students</p>	<p>Secretariat, advisory and administrative support to the committees</p>

The full-time equivalent staffing level for the Procedure Office in 2009–10 was 33 (34 in 2008–09).

The cost of providing the services of the Procedure Office in 2009–10 was \$5.8 million (\$6.1 million in 2008–09).

Procedural support

In 2009–10, the office assisted non-government senators and their staff by providing procedural advice relating to the role and work of the Senate and its committees. There was strong demand for such advice, particularly during sitting periods. Topics for advice generally revolved around the requirements of Senate procedure, but also ranged more broadly to include, for instance, the elements of the ‘deadlock’ provisions in section 57 of the Constitution; precedents for calling witnesses before Senate committees; and the options for the revival of regulations disallowed by the Senate.

Staff of the office ensured the accuracy of advice by consulting other departmental officers—principally the Clerk and Deputy Clerk—and researching appropriate precedents. In keeping with parliamentary service values, advice was non-partisan, consistent and provided to senators and their staff in a timely fashion.

In 2009–10, the office prepared an average of eight procedural scripts per sitting day for senators’ use in the chamber and elsewhere. This was higher than the 2008–09 average of seven scripts per day, but consistent with the average in 2007–08. The scripts typically related to procedural matters, such as disallowance motions; orders for the production of documents; and proposals to refer matters to committees.

The office also routinely responded to requests, from senators and their staff, to check material for procedural accuracy. Advice on these requests was accurate and provided in time to enable senators to use the material in the Senate and elsewhere.

Legislative drafting

In 2009–10, the office provided legislative support to senators’ work by drafting amendments to bills and drafting private senators’ bills, in response to instructions from senators and their staff.

This work was undertaken primarily for non-government senators, but a small number of backbench government senators also used these services. Occasionally, the office drew up amendments to inform committee processes and demonstrate the means of implementing committee recommendations.

The office drafted and circulated 139 sets of ‘committee of the whole’ amendments, containing 476 individual amendments—these are amendments proposed to the text of bills dealt with by the Senate. Although the number of circulated amendments is low compared with 2008–09 (see table 2), the office also drafted more than 630 amendments that were *not* circulated, because they related to bills not dealt with by the Senate in 2009–10 or because they were drafted for use outside the chamber—to inform negotiations between parties, for instance. The amendments produced for government senators fell into this category.

Where amendments were framed as requests to the House of Representatives, in accordance with section 53 of the Constitution, the office also produced statements explaining the applicability of section 53 and the precedents of the Senate. This ensured senators were able to meet procedural requirements and demonstrate that their amendments were constitutionally sound.

The office also prepared and circulated 29 ‘second reading’ amendments—these are proposed resolutions which comment on or affect

the passage of bills, but do not propose specific changes to the text of bills.

Despite the unpredictable levels of demand created by the concentration of legislative work within a small number of sitting weeks, the office met all timeframes for the production of amendments.

Private senators' bills continued to be used as vehicles for non-government parties and individual senators to put down policy footprints and advance debate across areas of interest. In 2009–10, the office drafted:

- 31 private senators' bills that were finalised and processed for introduction in the chamber
- a further nine private senators' bills that were published online by senators as exposure drafts, but not introduced.

A number of other bills were drafted to different stages of development, for introduction at a later date or for use by senators outside the chamber.

Table 2 summarises senators' use of the office's legislative drafting and procedural services over the past four reporting periods.

Table 2 Legislative drafting and procedural advice services provided to non-government senators, 2006–07 to 2009–10

Service	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10
Committee of the whole amendments	1,524	423	859	476
Second reading amendments	111	56	25	29
Private senators' bills introduced	20	19	23	31
Procedural scripts prepared	353	304	394	441

Together these services form a substantial part of the support provided by the department to the legislative work of senators and the Senate. The biennial senators' survey has consistently found that senators report high to very high levels of satisfaction with these services. Informal feedback confirmed that this was the case in 2009–10.

Support for legislative scrutiny committees

During the year, the office provided secretariat, research and administrative support to the Regulations and Ordinances Committee and the Scrutiny of Bills Committee, assisting them to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with the Standing Orders.

The committees examine all bills and disallowable instruments within their terms of reference. In 2009–10:

- the Regulations and Ordinances Committee secretariat processed 2,468 instruments (3,404 in 2008–09)
- the Scrutiny of Bills Committee secretariat processed 258 bills (210 in 2008–09) and the committee commented on 160 bills (111 in 2008–09).

The reduction in the number of instruments processed by the Regulations and Ordinances Committee secretariat reflects changes to the civil aviation legislative framework that resulted in a significant reduction in the number of airworthiness directives made.

The secretariats, assisted by the committees' legal advisers, completed the necessary administrative tasks to enable the committees to undertake their work. The legal adviser position for the Scrutiny of Bills Committee was vacant from January 2010 until mid-April 2010, during which time the secretariat undertook the adviser's workload.

The secretariats also prepared material arising out of the work of the committees, for use in the Senate chamber and for publication elsewhere. This included preparation and verification of disallowance notices, and publication of:

- the required reports and alert digests and the *Delegated Legislation Monitor* (each Senate sitting week)
- the *Disallowance Alert*, the *Scrutiny of Disallowable Instruments* and the *Senate Disallowable Instruments List* (updated online as required)
- biannual volumes of committee correspondence.

In anticipation of its 30th anniversary in 2011, the Scrutiny of Bills Committee commenced an inquiry into its future role and direction. Information about the inquiry is available on the committee's website.

Staff from both secretariats briefed several international delegations about the role and operations of the Senate legislative scrutiny committees, and conducted a training seminar for public servants. In May 2010, staff from the Regulations and Ordinances Committee secretariat introduced a new training seminar for public servants on delegated legislation and the Senate.

The legislative scrutiny committees hosted the biennial Australia–New Zealand Scrutiny of Legislation Conference on 6–8 July 2009. The conference, opened by the Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia,

the Hon. Robert French, explored the theme of ‘Scrutiny and Accountability in the 21st Century’. Staff from the secretariats organised the event and supported the 76 delegates representing legislative scrutiny committees in Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Public information and parliamentary research

In 2009–10, the Research Section:

- coordinated and delivered seminars and professional training programs for senators and their staff, parliamentary staff, Australian public servants and others
- produced publications and exhibitions, and arranged lectures, each with a focus on the work and role of the Senate and the operations of the Parliament
- managed an internship program and a formal research partnership with the Parliamentary Studies Centre at the Australian National University.

The aim of these programs is to ensure that senators and their staff are supported in their legislative work, and that other audiences are able to develop appropriate levels of knowledge and awareness of the Senate and its work.

The office also responded in a timely manner to requests for information and research support from a range of sources, including senators; the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Clerks Assistant; and members of parliamentary associations, the academic community and the general public.

Seminars and training programs

During 2009–10, training and information programs were offered to senators’ staff in the form of one-on-one sessions and group seminars, delivered by senior officers, explaining the operations and procedures of the Senate and its committees.

The department’s seminar series continued to provide members of the public service and others with comprehensive training in the operations of the Senate and its committees, and the accountability to parliament of the executive and government departments and agencies. During 2009–10, a total of 1,260 people attended 35 seminars.

The seminar series remained an integral part of graduate training programs in the public service. A large number of graduates enrolled in the full-day ‘Introduction to the Senate’ seminar, and the range of half-

day seminars was also well received. Senior officers of the department also conducted half-day sessions for Senior Executive Service officers.

The section organised seminars tailored to the needs of individual government departments and other interested groups, including the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; the Department of Finance and Deregulation; the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts; AusAID; the Law Council of Australia; the Defence and Industry Study Course; the Rural Leadership Program; and a group of Indigenous graduates.

Occasional lectures

During 2009–10, the section arranged eight lunchtime lectures as part of the popular occasional lecture series. Topics ranged from the rise of new forms of media and the erosion of democracy, to the political life of former Prime Minister the Rt Hon. Andrew Fisher. The series also featured a reflection by the then Clerk of the Senate, Harry Evans, on changes in the parliamentary institution during his long association with the Senate.

The department published lecture transcripts in its free journal *Papers on Parliament* and made audio recordings available on its website. Lectures were filmed and broadcast on television and the internet by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Australian Public Affairs Channel, increasing the audience for, and accessibility of, the lectures.

Publications

The Research Section edited and published three editions of *Papers on Parliament* during 2009–10:

- editions 51 and 53 largely comprise papers in the occasional lecture series
- edition 52 commemorates the career of the former Clerk of the Senate, Harry Evans: it contains a selection of his writings and a comprehensive bibliography of his articles from the 1980s to 2009.

In December 2009, the section published an illustrated booklet, *The President of the Senate*, which provides an overview of the role and function of the President, including how the President is elected, and some information on past presidents.

The editing, proofreading and indexing of volume 3 of *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate* was completed in early May 2010. This volume, covering senators and clerks who left the Senate between 1962 and 1983, is expected to be published in August 2010. Work has commenced on volume 4, covering senators whose terms ended between 1983 and 2002. Authors have been found for all 109 entries proposed for volume 4, and 38 entries have been received. The section also began preparing for the online publication of the dictionary.

The section also launched a new Senate essay prize named in honour of the first President of the Senate, the Hon. Sir Richard Baker. The prize, which was advertised widely in the print media, is open to secondary school students enrolled in years 10 to 12. It is to be awarded annually to the best student essay in each state and territory on a topic that promotes knowledge of the Senate and its work. A panel of senators selected five winning essays in 2009–10. The authors each received \$500 and a certificate.

The section continued to issue a range of free publications aimed at raising awareness of the Senate and parliamentary processes. Details of the publications available in 2009–10 are provided in appendix 4.

Exhibitions

The first part of a new exhibition in the first floor public exhibition area of Parliament House, ‘Acting Wisely: The Work of the Australian Parliament’, was completed in February 2009.

In August 2009, as the culmination of a coordinated effort between the section and the Department of Parliamentary Services, the Parliament’s copy of Magna Carta was incorporated into the ‘Acting Wisely’ exhibition. The copy was moved from its former location in the Members’ Hall to a purpose-built case within the exhibition, with improved lighting, security and interpretive text. The exhibition, which has been enthusiastically received, was officially opened by the President of the Senate in September 2009.

The section also published a booklet entitled *Australia’s Magna Carta*, to complement the exhibition. The booklet chronicles the story of how the manuscript came into the Parliament’s possession, and includes an account of the preservation work carried out on the manuscript by scientists from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

Elements of the first stage of ‘Acting Wisely’, which deals with the Parliament’s legislative function, were made available to a wider audience as the ‘Making Laws’ online exhibition. This followed the publication in July 2009 of an online version of the earlier ‘For Peace, Order and Good Government’ exhibition.

Work has commenced on the next stages of the ‘Acting Wisely’ exhibition, on representation and accountability, which will also be produced in both physical and online versions.

In December 2009, the section arranged the installation of an interactive ‘Meet Your Senator’ touch screen near the senators’ portraits in the first floor public area. Together with a similar device in place for the House of Representatives, the screen provides visitors with an engaging and user-friendly introduction to all current senators and members of parliament.

Partnerships with the Australian National University

The department runs the Australian National Internships Program in partnership with the Australian National University. During 2009–10, 39 students completed parliamentary internships and 34 students were placed in other departments and agencies. Interns continued to see Parliament House as an outstanding placement. The office coordinated an induction seminar for each group of interns, and organised some of the functions associated with the program.

The department also continued to play an active role in the Strengthening Parliamentary Institutions research program, which is funded by the Australian Research Council and run by the Parliamentary Studies Centre at the Australian National University. Senate officers participated in workshops which provided feedback to authors who had submitted papers for publication.

In November 2009, the department co-hosted a conference on ethics and integrity in parliament, as part of the research program. The conference investigated the system of self-regulation used in Australia and the integrity systems used in other countries.

Parliamentary education services

During 2009–10, the PEO delivered an extensive range of high-quality educational services to schools, teachers and students.

Through its Education Centre, the PEO delivers an experiential learning program involving simulations of chamber and committee proceedings of

the House of Representatives and the Senate, for students visiting Parliament House.

Through its outreach program, the PEO provides other opportunities for students and teachers to learn about the Parliament. By analysing a range of data, the PEO is able to target students and organisations less able to undertake Parliament House-based programs. To support this strategy, the PEO produces materials and resources on its website, on CD and in print.

The PEO also undertakes joint ventures, builds professional networks and invests in a range of training and development activities for teachers and trainee teachers. In addition, the PEO monitors curriculum developments in the area of civics education.

During 2009–10, the PEO continued to work with and report progress to the PEO Advisory Committee and worked closely with relevant stakeholders in the other parliamentary departments, government departments and educational institutions.

Education Centre activities

Experiential role-playing programs are conducted at the Education Centre at Parliament House during the school term. Role-play programs were delivered to 91,648 students in 2,622 groups during 2009–10.

Current programs focus on four key functions of the Parliament. Evaluation of Education Centre activities has revealed an evolving demand among teacher and student groups to explore the work of the Parliament in greater depth. In 2009–10, the PEO began revising its programs to meet that demand.

The Impressive Teachers Scheme was also introduced during the year, to identify highly motivated teachers who are interested in further exploring the work of the Parliament, and to invite them to develop a professional relationship with the PEO. By affirming achievement and interest, the PEO hopes to gain partners to foster the work of parliamentary education and to encourage others to be similarly committed. The program is expected to provide opportunities for resource trialling, surveying, outreach visits and professional assistance.

Figures 12 and 13 demonstrate that Education Centre attendances continued to grow in 2009–10. However, there is only limited scope for future growth, as the education facilities at Parliament House are operating at or near capacity. Some success has been achieved in

encouraging schools to visit earlier in the school year when the demand for PEO education programs is lower.

Figure 12 Students who visited the PEO Education Centre, 2005–06 to 2009–10

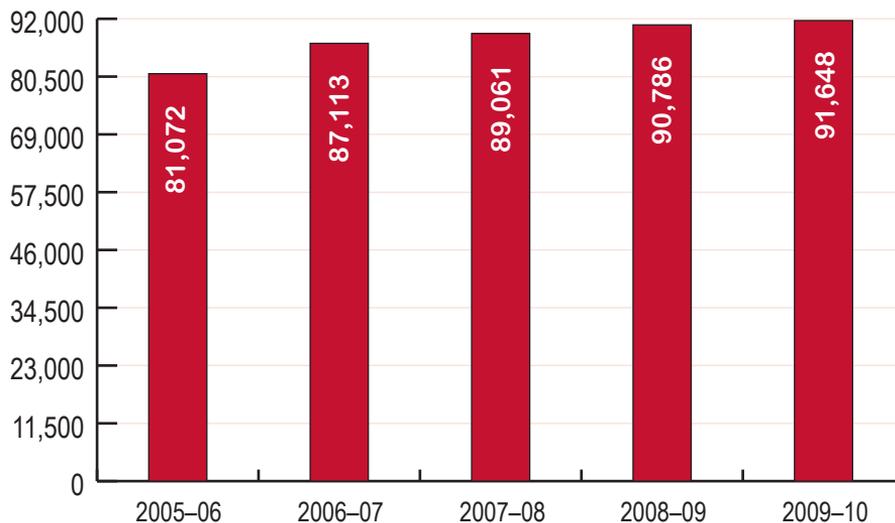
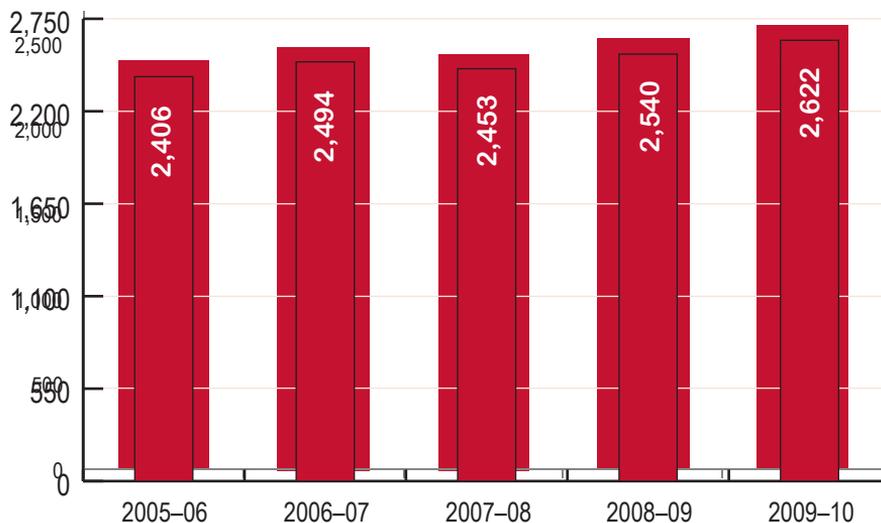


Figure 13 School groups that visited the PEO Education Centre, 2005–06 to 2009–10



Outreach

Only a small percentage of Australian students are able to make the trip to Parliament House to participate in Education Centre programs. As a result, an important part of the PEO's mission is to provide educational resources for those students and teachers who cannot make the trip to Canberra.

One popular program involves conducting outreach activities across the country, taking the parliamentary role-play and other educational activities 'on the road'. Senators and members often welcome the opportunity to participate when this program is delivered to schools in their electorates.

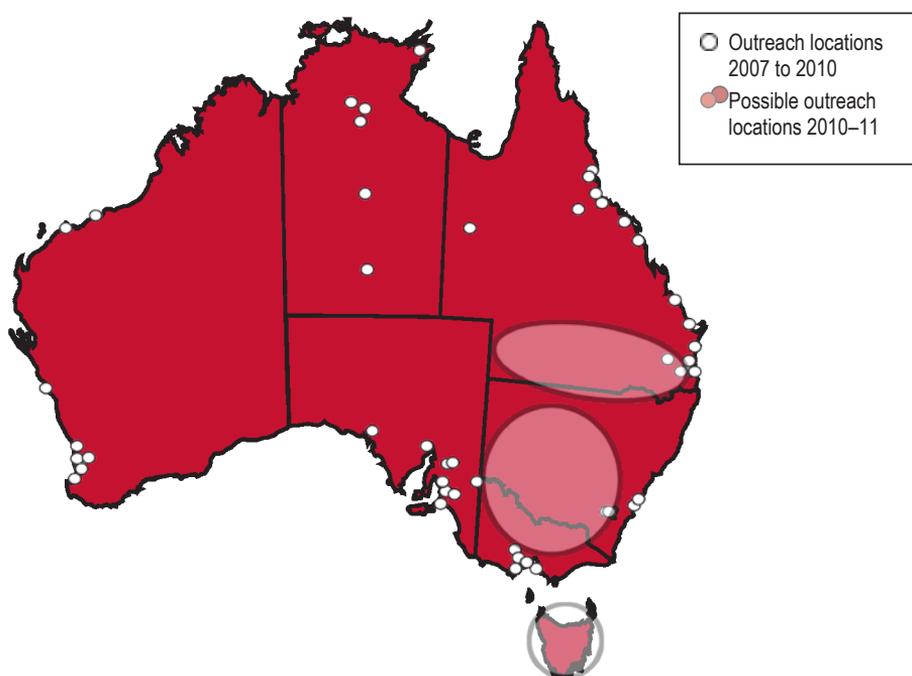
A wide geographical spread of outreach activities has been achieved in recent years. In 2009–10, the PEO conducted outreach activities in the locations shown in table 3.

Table 3 **Locations of PEO outreach activities in 2009–10**

Victoria	Queensland	Western Australia	South Australia	Northern Territory
Melbourne (suburbs)	Atherton	Armadale	Adelaide (suburbs)	Katherine
	Ayr	Geraldton	Adelaide Hills	Mataranka
	Brisbane (suburbs)	Joondalup	Ceduna	Nhulunbuy
	Cairns	Karratha	Gladstone	Tennant Creek
	Charters Towers	Northampton	Murray Bridge	Barunga
	Ingham	Perth (suburbs)	Orroroo	
	Innisfail	Pinjara	Peterborough	
	Mackay	South Hedland	Port Elliott	
	Mount Isa		Whyalla	
	Proserpine		Yankalilla	
	Townsville			

Plans to deliver outreach activities in regional New South Wales and Victoria and in Tasmania during September and October 2010 have been confirmed, and preliminary planning for visits to several other regions during 2010–11 has commenced. Figure 14 shows the geographical spread of outreach activities in the five calendar years from 2007 to 2011, including possible outreach locations in 2010–11.

Figure 14 Locations of PEO outreach activities, 2007 to 2011



Website and other resources

To better address the parliamentary education needs of all students and teachers, particularly those who are unable to travel to Canberra, the PEO devotes considerable resources to expanding the range and quality of its online and multimedia services and resources, as well as its capacity to produce quality educational resources in multiple formats.

During the year, the PEO commenced:

- a formal review of the interactive website tool *Assignment Assistant* (launched in May 2009), which assists students completing projects or homework on parliament and offers one-on-one contact with parliamentary educators
- the ongoing enhancement of the in-house video production unit and development of material for the online video series *About Parliament*
- the enhancement of the PEO website, including a review of all web content and the introduction of a content management system
- a review of the research and development of web 2.0 technologies that will enhance the PEO's ability to engage secondary students

- the investigation of new communication technologies, including video conferencing, for the delivery of PEO programs.

The PEO also continued to produce and update the educational materials detailed in appendix 4.

A key achievement in 2009–10 was the release of a magazine-style resource, *Get Parliament*, for upper primary and lower secondary students. *Get Parliament* introduces the Parliament and the way it functions, with reference to material on federation, the Australian Constitution and the Parliament at work.

The PEO is committed to providing senators and members and their staff with direct access to parliamentary education information, resources and services. During 2009–10, this included regular email and face-to-face promotions to maintain parliamentarians' awareness of new and existing resources and services, including *Get Parliament*. The department's intranet site provided members and senators and their staff with up-to-date information about school groups visiting Parliament House and details of PEO programs and resources, including customised parliamentary education resource kits.

In 2009–10, there was a significant increase in demand for PEO publications and resources and in visits to the PEO website. The website recorded more than 525,000 sessions and more than 4.32 million page views, an increase of 22 per cent and 18 per cent respectively since 2008–09. This indicates that significantly more people are accessing the PEO website and viewing increased amounts of material, a key aim of the PEO's outreach strategy.

The examples of feedback from the PEO's target audiences shown in figure 15 confirm that the education services and resources were very well received in 2009–10.

Figure 15 **Comments on PEO services and resources, 2009–10**

From senators and members

We really liked [*Get Parliament*] ... Layout is good and clear ... The information is well written and communicates complex issues clearly and effectively. The graphics are fun—and overall it should be an effective teaching resource.

Thank you for all the wonderful assistance you have given our office and I know how appreciative the schools that receive these kits are as they write and tell us ... we have had two schools actually plan trips to Canberra after receiving a kit. Keep up the great work you all do.

I would like to pass on my gratitude and that of the schools in my electorate to ... the PEO, who came to my electorate ... and ran *Parliament Alive* ... the feedback from those teachers and schools was overwhelming. [The program] truly benefits young people in understanding how decisions we make here in Parliament House can affect them, their homes and their families.

From teachers

On behalf of Year 7 teachers at our college, I congratulate you on your website. We regularly use the lesson plans—they are well thought out and relevant.

Part of my study as a pre-service teacher involved designing class programs for both primary and secondary aged students. Your website and resources provided myself and our study group with some excellent material for inclusion in our presentation kit.

The program put together by the Parliamentary Education Office was intellectually stimulating and provided the students with an overview of the Australian political system.

From students

Hi. I am an 11 year old kid from Victoria and I just wanted to tell you that your website is great.

Thank you for filling our minds with knowledge and the interesting ways and rules of parliament.

On behalf of the grade six and seven students we would like to thank you for making the very long trip to our school to run a mock parliament and demonstrate to us how parliament is run.

Joint ventures

As in past years, the PEO contributed significantly to the National Youth Science Forum sponsored by the Australian National University. The forum provides a summer study program for outstanding senior secondary school science students from all states and territories. As part of their experience, the students undertake a specially designed learning program at Parliament House. In 2009–10, 288 students took part, examining legislative work and Senate committee processes through role-play.

The PEO worked with Rotary International to run the Rotary Adventures in Citizenship program in September 2009. The five-day program gave the selected Year 11 students from across Australia an opportunity to experience the work of the Parliament, meet members of parliament and participate in an intensive learning program.

In 2009–10, the PEO also:

- coordinated student attendance at the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics hearings examining the Governor of the Reserve Bank
- provided assistance, including tailored role-play programs, for the Oxfam Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Summit and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s *Heywire* program.

Professional associations

The PEO maintained good relationships with parliamentary educator colleagues, both within Australia and internationally, throughout 2009–10. In addition to hosting visits by staff from the United Kingdom Parliament’s Education Service and Outreach Office, the PEO attended and made presentations to the Australasian Parliamentary Educators Conference hosted by the Parliament of Victoria in September 2009.

The PEO also:

- built on its relationships with the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House and the Australian Electoral Commission’s National Electoral Education Centre, which share common subject matter and target audiences with the PEO
- liaised with the Australian Secondary Principals’ Association and helped to coordinate meetings of the association at Parliament House.

Staff training and development

The PEO invested heavily in training and development for its staff. During 2009–10, this included staff attendance at parliamentary training programs and professional and technical development courses.

Most PEO staff members engage in face-to-face education activity which requires a high level of professional skill and commitment. All new educators undertake a comprehensive training program that ensures they are well equipped to cater for a wide range of student aptitudes, interests and special needs. Several new educators were recruited and trained in 2009–10.

The PEO’s publishing capability was expanded in 2009–10 with the recruitment of a publishing manager, who is supported by a dedicated web developer and a publishing officer. Publishing staff focused also on training and development, particularly the use of new web technologies, improved interface and application design, usability and accessibility.

International activities

During 2009–10, the department engaged in a range of activities with other parliaments and assisted in the development of parliaments in the region.

The department supported the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) by funding the attendance of a delegation at the 119th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, in October 2009. The Director, Journals and Notice Paper, served as secretary to the delegation, providing administrative support and guidance to delegation members on the procedures and practices of the IPU prior to and during the assembly.

The Usher of the Black Rod served as secretary to a delegation to European parliaments and institutions in April 2010.

The Deputy President of the Senate and the then Deputy Clerk attended the 40th Conference of Presiding Officers and Clerks, held in Kiribati in July 2009.

Seminars and training programs were provided for parliamentary officers visiting from overseas parliaments. In particular, comprehensive programs were provided for delegations from India, Indonesia and Vietnam, continuing a long-term engagement with those countries' parliaments. The Inter-Parliamentary Study Program, conducted jointly with the Department of the House of Representatives in March 2010, provided training for officers from overseas parliaments in countries such as Bhutan, China, Finland, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mongolia, New Zealand, Samoa, Thailand and Tonga.

The department signed a memorandum of understanding with the Indonesian Upper House, the Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD), in September 2009. This partnership agreement provides for the sharing of skills and experiences through training activities, and is designed to improve the support provided to senators of the DPD.

The department also provided joint funding to the Parliamentary Relations Office (PRO), which is administered by the Department of the House of Representatives. The PRO provides parliamentary relations support to both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Many of the programs administered by the PRO involve significant contributions from officers of the Department of the Senate. The performance of the PRO is detailed in the annual report for the Department of the House of Representatives.

Factors, events and trends influencing performance

The demand for procedural and legislative services is substantially driven by the requirements of senators and the Senate chamber. Factors influencing demand include the frequency of sittings, the number of bills dealt with by the Senate and the legislative priorities of the Government and others. The composition of the Senate is also a factor: a situation in which no one group controls Senate outcomes typically leads to a strong demand for these services. The work of the secretariats of the legislative scrutiny committees is similarly driven by the requirements of those committees.

The PEO's education programs at Parliament House continue to operate at near capacity, with schools often making bookings for the program many months in advance. Some success has been achieved in encouraging schools to visit earlier in the school year when the demand for PEO education programs is lower.

To better address the parliamentary education needs of all students and teachers, particularly those that are less able to travel to Canberra, the PEO continues to devote considerable resources to expanding the range and quality of its online and multimedia services and resources. In 2009–10, there was a significant increase in visits to the PEO website and in the demand for PEO publications and resources.

Evaluation

The main vehicle for evaluating the services provided by the office is the survey of senators, which is undertaken every two years. As recorded in last year's report, high levels of satisfaction were recorded across the full range of services provided by the office in the 2009 survey.

The Procedure Office also monitors levels of satisfaction with its performance through formal and informal channels such as letters, emails, phone calls, seminar evaluation forms and direct advice from senators and their staff and members of the public. This continual performance appraisal assists the office to make timely and responsive adjustments to the way it delivers its services. High levels of positive feedback were received in 2009–10.

The PEO in particular monitors feedback on its activities and resources from senators and members, as well as its target audiences of students and teachers. Figure 15 provides a few examples.

Performance outlook

In 2010–11, the Procedure Office will continue to provide its procedural and legislative services to meet the requirements of the Senate and senators and to support the work of the legislative scrutiny committees. Training and seminar programs will continue, with a focus on preparing and delivering orientation programs for new senators following the election. Each area within the office will also implement any changes which arise from the department's structural review.

The Research Section will further develop its information resources. A highlight will be the publication of volume 3 of *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate*, and a program to commence publishing extracts of that work online. Another key task will be restructuring the office's other publications for the new parliamentary website that is due to come online in 2010–11.

Work will continue on additional segments of the 'Acting Wisely' exhibition exploring the themes of representation and accountability.

The Research Section will coordinate a major conference to mark the 40th anniversary of the Senate's system of legislative and general purpose standing committees. The section will also coordinate the next Parliament House Open Day, scheduled for September 2010, as well as a range of activities to implement the ongoing Strengthening Parliamentary Institutions project.

In 2010–11, the PEO will seek to complete and consolidate a range of projects and programs. In the Education Centre, the implementation of the recommendations of a review of the role-play program will be completed: the most significant feature will be the introduction of concept-based role-plays, in contrast to the 'chamber-based' programs currently delivered.

In addition to facilitating role-play classes at Parliament House for more than 91,500 young Australians, the PEO will restructure and comprehensively review the material on its website to improve its accessibility and relevance. Increased emphasis will be placed on interactivity and an expanded range of materials will be developed, including new material for secondary students. Several publications will be updated and republished, and a number of outreach programs involving senators and members are planned.