Procedure Office

Outputs
Provision of advisory services and procedural support to non–government senators.
Provision of drafting services to non–government senators.
Provision of secretariat support to the legislative scrutiny committees – the Regulations and Ordinances Committee, Scrutiny of Bills Committee, and Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights.*
Provision of research services and delivery of parliamentary information to the community.
Provision of training to senators, staff, public servants and officials from other parliaments; and support for inter–parliamentary relations.
Provision of parliamentary education services to schools, teachers and students.

Performance information	Performance results
Procedural advice is accurate and timely, and support is provided to the satisfaction of senators	Senators and their staff continued to acknowledge the accuracy and value of procedural advice.
Amendments and bills are drafted promptly, are legally sound, and are provided to senators in time for their use in the Senate chamber or elsewhere.	Legislative amendments and bills were accurate, and were prepared within required timeframes and to the satisfaction of senators.
Advice, documentation and publications are accurate, of a high standard and produced to meet the timeframes set by the Senate and the committees.	Advice and documentation provided to, and publications prepared for, the scrutiny committees were accurate, of a high standard and provided within the timeframes set by the committees.
Parliamentary research is accurate, timely and comprehensive.	Accurate and comprehensive parliamentary research was provided within required timeframes.
Seminars, lectures and public information projects are provided to the satisfaction of target audiences, increasing their awareness of the work and role of the Senate and its committees.	All seminars and lectures were held on time and in accordance with the programmed schedule. Public information projects were delivered in accordance with the required timeframes.
Training is provided to the satisfaction of target audiences, increasing their awareness of the work and role of the Senate and its committees.	Training was provided to the satisfaction of target audiences, demonstrated by consistently favourable feedback from evaluation processes.
Inter–parliamentary functions are supported to the satisfaction of stakeholders.	Inter–parliamentary functions were carried out to the satisfaction of stakeholders, demonstrated by consistently favourable feedback.

Performance information	Performance results
Education Centre teaching and other Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) projects accurately reflect the Parliament and its work.	PEO website and publications were promptly updated to ensure accuracy and to accommodate electoral and other events.
PEO teaching programs held on time and in accordance with booking schedule.	Teaching programs were consistently conducted in accordance with the booking schedule.
PEO projects delivered according to programmed schedule.	PEO programs were managed and delivered in accordance with current implementation plans.

* Output adjusted from PBS to acknowledge program responsibility for the new Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights.

Overview

The Procedure Office is led by the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) and has four functional areas, as shown in figure 8.

Figure 8 Elements and responsibilities of the Procedure Office

Executive and legislative drafting		
Bronwyn Notzon, Clerk Assistant		
Procedural advice, support and training Drafting of legislative amendments and private senators' bills		
Public information and parliamentary research	**Parliamentary education**	**Legislative scrutiny**
David Sullivan, Director, Research Section	Simon Harvey, Director, Parliamentary Education Office	Toni Dawes, Secretary, Scrutiny of Bills Committee
Publications, seminars, public lectures, exhibitions and research on parliamentary matters	Parliamentary education services and resources for schools, teachers and students	Ivan Powell, Secretary, Regulations and Ordinances Committee
Production of *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate*		Jeanette Radcliffe, Secretary, Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights
		Secretariat, advisory and administrative support to the committees

The office provides a range of advisory, research and public information services closely aligned with the role and work of the Senate, including legislative drafting services and support for the Parliament's legislative scrutiny committees. The Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) produces educational programs and resources for schools, students, teachers and others.

The demand for procedural and legislative services is substantially driven by the requirements of senators and the Senate chamber. The work of the secretariats of the legislative scrutiny committees is similarly driven by the requirements of those committees.

The Procedure Office 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, educators, students, and members of the public. This continuous performance appraisal assists the office to make timely and responsive adjustments to the ways in which it delivers its services.

The full-time equivalent staffing level for the Procedure Office in 2012–13 was 30 (34 in 2011–12). The cost of providing the services of the Procedure Office in 2012–13 was $5.6 million ($6.1 million in 2011–12).

Procedural support

In 2012–13, the office assisted non-government senators and their staff by providing advice, both written and oral, relating to the role and work of the Senate and its committees, and the Parliament more generally. There was strong demand for such advice, particularly during sitting periods.

Advice was sought on many issues of Senate procedure, but also more broadly to include, for example, the provisions in section 53 of the Constitution, the legislative process and the disallowance process for delegated legislation.

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

In 2012–13, the office prepared an average of nine procedural scripts per

sitting day for senators' use in the chamber, typically related to matters such as orders for the production of documents, the referral of matters to committees, and unanswered questions on notice.

The office also checked material for procedural accuracy on request from senators and their staff. The advice provided was accurate and provided in time to enable senators to use the material in the Senate and elsewhere.

Legislative drafting

In 2012–13, the office provided legislative support to senators by drafting amendments to bills and drafting private senators' bills, primarily for non–government senators. Notwithstanding the unpredictable levels of demand, the complexity of some proposals and finite resourcing, the office met all timeframes for the drafting of amendments and private senators' bills.

The office drafted and circulated 132 sets of committee of the whole amendments, containing 651 individual amendments, as well as more than 66 sets of amendments that were not circulated, because, for example, they related to bills not dealt with by the Senate over the year or they were drafted for use outside the chamber to inform negotiations between parties.

Where amendments were framed as requests to the House of Representatives, in accordance with section 53 of the Constitution, the office also produced statements required under Senate procedure explaining the applicability of section 53 and the precedents of the Senate.

The office also prepared and circulated 21 second reading amendments.

Private senators' bills continued to be used as vehicles for individual senators and non–government parties to advance debate across areas of interest. In 2012–13, the office drafted 65 private senators' bills, of which 37 were finalised for introduction, and three of which were passed by the Senate. A number of other bills were drafted to different stages of development.

These services form a substantial part of the support provided by the department to the legislative work of senators. Consistent feedback from senators and their staff confirmed the value and quality of the advice provided by the office.

Table 2 summarises senators' use of the office's legislative drafting and procedural services in recent years.

Table 2 Legislative drafting and procedural advice services provided to senators, 2009–10 to 2012–13

Service	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13
Committee of the whole amendments circulated	476	587	505	651
Second reading amendments circulated	29	19	26	21
Private senators' bills introduced	31	54	26	37
Procedural scripts prepared	441	497	559	529

Support for legislative scrutiny committees

During the year, the Legislative Scrutiny Unit provided secretariat, research and administrative support to the Regulations and Ordinances Committee, Scrutiny of Bills Committee and Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights.

The committees examine all bills and instruments according to their terms of reference. In 2012–13:

- the Regulations and Ordinances Committee secretariat processed 2,084 legislative instruments (1,753 in 2011–12) and provided draft comments on 283 legislative instruments (90 in 2011–12)

- the Scrutiny of Bills Committee secretariat processed 280 bills (284 in 2011–12) and provided draft comments on 121 bills (134 in 2011–12)

- the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights secretariat processed 289 bills and Acts, providing draft comments on 137 bills and Acts; and processed 1,924 legislative instruments, providing draft comments on 85 legislative instruments.

The secretariats also drafted material arising from the work of the committees for use in the Senate chamber and for publication. This included publication of:

- the Scrutiny of Bills Committee Report and Alert Digest each Senate sitting week. The committee also introduced the Scrutiny

News email, which is sent to all senators each sitting week to highlight recent committee comments

• the Regulations and Ordinances Committee Delegated Legislation Monitor (each sitting week)

• the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Report (each sitting week in the Senate and House of Representatives).

The secretariats made progress in key IT projects by implementing a new legislative instruments database and adapting the existing bills database to support the work of the committees.

Public information and parliamentary research

The Research Section helps raise awareness of the role and work of the Senate by coordinating a range of public information activities and producing publications and exhibitions.

Seminars, training programs and lectures

The section coordinated and delivered seminars and professional training programs for senators and their staff, parliamentary staff, public service officers and others, and a series of lectures for the general public.

During 2012–13, the department's seminar series provided training to a wide range of groups. A total of 509 people attended 18 seminars. There was a drop in demand from external agencies for the seminar program, possibly reflecting a reduction in spending on training due to financial constraints. Six additional seminars were offered to senators' staff, to provide specialised training about the operations and procedures of the Senate and its committees. Staff from across the department contributed to the delivery of the seminar series.

The section arranged eight public lectures during 2012–13 as part of the department's occasional lecture series, attended by more than a thousand people. Transcripts and audio and video recordings of the lectures were made available on the Senate website. Some lectures were also broadcast on television and the internet by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Australia's Public Affairs Channel.

The department also runs the Australian National Internships Program in partnership with the Australian National University, which involved 71 students in 2012–13.

Publications, exhibitions and conferences

The section produced publications and exhibitions with a focus on the work and role of the Senate and its committees and the operations of the Parliament.

Two editions of the department's free journal *Papers on Parliament* were edited and published by the Research Section during 2012–13. Work continued on volume 4 of *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate*, which will contain biographies of senators who left the Senate between 1983 and 2002.

A list of Senate publications, documents and resources can be found on the department's website at www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Research_and_Education/Alphabetical_guide.

The 'Women in Federal Parliament' website and touch screen was launched by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on 19 March 2013. The exhibition was one of several displays and events planned by the Department of the Senate to celebrate anniversaries of the first elections in which Australian women voted, stood as candidates and were elected to the federal parliament.

The section also assisted with the planning of an Open Day to coincide with the 25th anniversary of Parliament House (to be held in August 2013) and a conference to celebrate the legacy of Andrew Inglis Clark (to be held in November 2013).

Parliamentary Education Office

The PEO delivered an extensive range of high quality educational services to schools, teachers and students and worked closely with members and senators to identify and address their requirements.

Highlights of PEO activities in 2012–13 included:

- training programs for student teachers from universities
- briefings and seminars for visiting staff from several Australian and international parliaments, including the United Kingdom, Samoa and India
- programs for other visiting groups, including several visiting indigenous and teacher groups.

The PEO works with and reports to the PEO Advisory Committee, jointly chaired by the Deputy President of the Senate and the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, and works closely with stakeholders in other parliaments, parliamentary and government departments and educational institutions.

In November 2012, the PEO contributed to the Australasian Parliamentary Educators' Conference, hosted by the Parliament of Western Australia. The PEO will host the 2013 conference, together with the ACT Legislative Assembly and the Museum of Australian Democracy. The PEO also continues to support the work of the National Capital Civics Education Group, a forum which brings together education and outreach managers from civic and citizenship institutions in the Parliamentary Triangle. The Group met on four occasions during the year with the PEO acting as convenor. The PEO also contributes to the development of the national curriculum in civics and citizenship.

Education Centre activities

The PEO Education Centre provides parliamentary education programs for school students and teachers from around Australia visiting Parliament House. Through its facilitated role–play program, the PEO Education Centre offers teachers and students with an opportunity to explore four key functions of the Parliament: legislation, representation, formation of government and scrutiny.

In 2012–13 education programs were delivered to 94,015 students in 3,223 groups at Parliament House, which, consistent with recent years, is close to capacity given available resources. Program demand, while highest in the months of May through to November, continued to grow during times that traditionally are less attractive to schools. Overall, the total number of students attending the role–play program reveals a noticeable increase (4.7 per cent) over the previous year, while the average group size has reduced to 29 students, down from 34 in the previous reporting period.

Outreach and educational resources

The PEO outreach program 'Parliament Alive' provides an opportunity to deliver parliamentary role–play programs to schools around Australia. Two week–long programs were conducted involving 1,983 students from 27 schools. The first outreach visited regional South Australia and Victoria (the electorates of Barker and Mallee) with Senator Anne Ruston and Mr John Forrest MP participating. A second outreach to central Queensland (electorates of Dawson and Capricornia) was conducted with the participation of Ms Kirsten Livermore MP and Mr George Christensen MP.

The PEO produced and maintained a wide range of high quality online and multimedia services and other resources. To further enhance accessibility of PEO resources (particularly for rural and remote schools), the PEO continues to develop new ways of providing its resources. It maintains a strong web presence, and is investigating the use of video conferencing to deliver programs to students unable to visit Parliament House. The quality of the PEO's videos was recognised by the Deafness Forum of Australia conferring their 2012 Caption for Kids Award.

In 2012–13 demand for PEO publications and resources remained strong and visitors to the PEO website increased. The website recorded 590,827 visitor sessions and more than 5.9 million pages of web content were viewed, an increase of 14 per cent and 21 per cent respectively since 2011–12.

Joint ventures and other programs

In 2012–13 the PEO assisted the National Youth Science Forum, sponsored by the Australian National University, to provide a summer study program for outstanding senior secondary school science students from around Australia. In 2012–13, 288 students took part, examining legislative work and Senate committee processes through role–play.

The PEO also collaborated closely with Rotary International to conduct the Rotary 'Adventure in Citizenship' program in Budget Week, providing Year 11 students from across Australia a unique opportunity to experience the work of the Parliament, meet members of parliament and participate in an intensive parliamentary learning program.

International activities

The department supported the work of the Inter–Parliamentary Union (IPU) by funding the attendance of a delegation at the 127th IPU Assembly in Quebec City, Canada in October 2012 and at the 128th IPU Assembly in Quito, Ecuador in March 2013. The secretary to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights 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.

Performance outlook

In 2013–14, 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 the focus on providing tailored programs to senators and their advisers.

The Research Section will continue to develop its information resources, with work continuing on volume 4 of *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate*, and the online publication of volumes 1 to 3, expected late in 2013. The section will continue to work with the other parliamentary departments on the design and development of the 'Acting Wisely' exhibition on the work of the Parliament.

The section will also organise a public conference to celebrate Andrew Inglis Clark's contribution to the building of an Australian nation, and assist with the organisation of an Open Day to coincide with the 25th anniversary of Parliament House.

The scrutiny committee secretariats will progressively prepare and release detailed guides on the work of the committees.

Demand for the PEO's education programs is expected to increase, as demonstrated by forward bookings for 2014. The PEO will further explore options for accessibility and delivery of parliamentary education programs to schools and students unable to participate in PEO programs at Parliament House.