



View of the House of Representatives entrance from the garden.

MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Corporate governance
- External scrutiny
- Management of people
- Management of financial resources
- Ecologically sustainable development and environmental reporting
- Outlook

Corporate governance

The Speaker of the House of Representatives can be questioned by members about the work of the department. The Clerk of the House of Representatives, who is responsible for managing the department, reports to the Speaker.

The main elements of the department's corporate governance framework are outlined below.

LEGISLATION

The department's operations are governed by the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* and the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*, and are subject to provisions of the *Fair Work Act 2009* and other legislation. These Acts set out the Clerk's responsibilities for managing the department.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

The Parliamentary Service Values and Code of Conduct set out in the Parliamentary Service Act provide a framework for the department's ethical conduct. The department actively promotes sound ethical behaviour. All staff new to the department are briefed on what it means to work in a values-based environment and how ethical standards apply to their day-to-day work. A workshop was held on 11 April at which a large number of staff worked through hypothetical scenarios designed to illustrate the ethical challenges that can arise in the course of their work.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Senior management of the department consists of the Executive and managers at the Executive Band 2 level. The Executive comprises the Clerk of the House, the Deputy Clerk and three Senior Executive Service Band 1 staff—the Clerk Assistant (Committees), the Clerk Assistant (Table) and the Serjeant-at-Arms—each of whom has management responsibility for either one or two of the department's program components (see Figure 3 on page 8).

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

Executive

The Executive held a half-day planning session on 10 December 2012 and eight formal meetings during the year to discuss and resolve a wide range of departmental management issues. As well as standing items on finance and people strategies, matters addressed included:

- election period projects
- consolidation of ICT services
- a future direction for the Information Systems and Publishing Office
- amendments to the Parliamentary Service Act and subordinate legislation, and proposed new Commonwealth financial management legislation
- freedom of information legislation
- work health and safety legislation
- leadership training for departmental senior management and internal job rotation
- award modernisation and enterprise bargaining
- the Investors in People assessment report
- business continuity planning
- departmental social media guidelines
- length-of-service award pins for departmental staff
- the annual members' and staff surveys.

Staff were informed of the outcomes of each of the meetings through the staff bulletin, *In House*.

Audit Committee

The department's Audit Committee met four times during the year. The committee comprises the Clerk Assistant (Committees), the Clerk Assistant (Table) (chair), the Serjeant-at-Arms and an independent member. During the year, Mr Tom Rogers, the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, replaced Ms Barbara Davis as the independent member and, following a rotation of senior executive responsibilities

in the department, Ms Joanne Towner replaced Ms Claessa Surtees as committee chair. Representatives of the Australian National Audit Office and the department's internal audit team, and the Chief Financial Officer, attended all meetings.

New internal audits during the year covered the following areas:

- travel—domestic and international
- fraud risk assessment and the development of a fraud control plan
- risk management assessment and the development of a risk management plan.

In addition, the committee adopted final reports of the following internal audits and reviews:

- IT general controls
- protective security policy framework
- fundamental accounting controls
- risk assessment in relation to requirements under section 83 of the Constitution.

The department collated the views of sponsors and other staff about the results and conduct of certain internal audits and the feedback was considered by the committee.

During the year, the committee updated the forward year internal audit plan. It reviewed the department's draft financial statements from 2011–12, and recommended that the Clerk sign them. It also reviewed the Chief Financial Officer's report on the certificate of compliance process, and recommended that the Clerk sign the certificate on the basis that the department's compliance processes were satisfactory and that the department was financially sustainable. Following review of the committee charter and the internal audit charter by the committee in 2011–12, the Clerk approved both during 2012–13. The Clerk also approved the department's risk management policy and framework following review by the committee during the year. The committee's 2012 annual report was provided to the Clerk.

The committee undertook a performance self-assessment, using an Australian National Audit Office questionnaire. The results were satisfactory, with an average score of 4.3 (out of 5), as in 2011, the last time an assessment was undertaken.

As in previous years, staff were informed of the outcomes of Audit Committee meetings through meetings of the Consultative Committee and weekly senior management meetings.

Consultative Committee

The Consultative Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Clerk, continued to be an important mechanism for communicating and consulting with staff on workplace issues. The committee has four departmental representatives, two elected staff representatives, and two union-nominated representatives.

The committee met six times during 2012–13, including a special meeting on 12 June 2013 to discuss consolidating parliamentary ICT services. Standing agenda items for the meetings included:

- implementation and monitoring of the enterprise agreement
- proposals for change and other developments affecting staff
- review of implemented changes
- reports on departmental activities.

In addition to parliamentary ICT, matters discussed during the year included mobility and attendance guidelines, social media guidelines, award modernisation and enterprise bargaining, the annual staff survey, the office furniture replacement project, twenty-fifth anniversary activities, departmental committee activities and the status of ICT projects.

PLANNING AND EVALUATION

A large number of staff attended the department's annual planning meeting on 7 May 2013. The Clerk addressed the meeting on challenges and opportunities anticipated in the coming year. The purpose of the planning day was to develop priorities that would form the basis of the new corporate plan for 2013–15.

The attendees worked in syndicate groups on five topics:

- external influences and responses
- lessons from minority government
- staff opportunity and talent

- key relationships
- continuous improvement and use of resources.

Information from the syndicate groups was used by a working group to gather themes for the corporate plan to be considered by the Executive.

Corporate plan

Our priorities during the period of the Corporate Plan 2010–13 are to seek to build on our capacity to serve our clients, develop our people, sustain our capability, and work collaboratively with each other and other key people and organisations.

Business plan

The department's business plan for 2012–13 was issued in 2012. Progress on implementing the plan was monitored regularly during the year through six-monthly and new quarterly reporting meetings. Good progress was made on reaching the targets set out in the plan.

MEMBERS' SURVEY

The department receives periodic and ongoing feedback from members to gauge the effectiveness of its service provision.

In May and June 2013, the 2013 members' survey was conducted. This was the tenth annual survey, and followed the same format as in previous years.

The department surveyed a random sample of 30 members, 19 of whom responded (20 participated last year). All participants were asked whether they were satisfied with the advice, services and support they received from the department. The results confirmed that the department provided a high standard of service. Details of the survey findings are in Appendix 12.

ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS

The department's main formal external accountability mechanisms are the Portfolio Budget Statements and the annual report, which is prepared pursuant to section 65 of the Parliamentary Service Act. The annual report for 2011–12 assessed performance against the targets set in the Portfolio Budget Statements 2011–12 and presented the financial statements of the department.

Copies of the department's annual report and Portfolio Budget Statements were provided to all members and published on the Parliament of Australia website.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND FRAUD CONTROL

During the year, the biennial review of the risk management plan was undertaken and a revised risk management plan adopted.

The department's business continuity plan was approved and business resumption plans finalised for all offices. Staff from the Table and the Serjeant-at-Arms' offices tested business resumption plans with a trial exercise in May 2013. There were a number of lessons learned, which will be implemented next year.

The department's fraud control plan and fraud risk assessment were reviewed and revised documents adopted.

As in previous years, new staff were informed of their financial management responsibilities and the department's fraud risk assessment and fraud control plan in the regular induction programs. There were no losses of public money and no instances of fraud identified during the year.

SERVICE CHARTERS

The department's service charters for members and the community continued to provide the basis for the standards of service that members and the public can expect from the department.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

The department's role is to support the House of Representatives rather than to deliver services directly to the public. Accordingly, contributing towards achieving social justice within the broader community is not a direct responsibility of the department. However, the department works towards achieving social justice indirectly by supporting the work of the House of Representatives itself, its members and its committees.

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION

Meetings of parliamentary departmental heads

Following discussions between the Clerk of the House and the heads of the other parliamentary departments, formal quarterly meetings of the four departmental heads began during the year, with meetings on 27 March and 12 June 2013. The heads agreed that the meetings were valuable, that responsibility for chairing the meetings should rotate between the departments on an annual basis, and that the Clerk, House of Representatives would be the chair for 2013.

Matters discussed included:

- the development of a reconciliation action plan for the parliamentary departments
- freedom of information
- budget processes for the parliamentary departments
- award modernisation
- ICT matters, including consolidation of ICT services
- the role of the Senior Management Coordination Group
- the development of an overall strategic plan for parliamentary administration
- reporting and the protective security policy framework
- preparations for the Forty-fourth Parliament
- the proposed new parliamentary service determination.

Senior Management Coordination Group

The Senior Management Coordination Group has coordinated corporate and related matters across the parliamentary departments for more than 25 years. In 2012, group members were the Serjeant-at-Arms (chair); the Usher of the Black Rod; the Deputy Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services; and an Assistant Parliamentary Budget Officer of the Parliamentary Budget Office. In 2012, the group held three formal meetings, mainly on:

- the development of the Parliamentary Service Amendment Bill 2013, which was introduced into the Senate in November 2012
- a submission to the inquiry into the bill by the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
- a submission to the Commonwealth Financial Accountability Review.

The role of group chair has rotated each calendar year. In 2013, the Department of Parliamentary Services' representative was to chair the group. However, only informal meetings were held in 2013, pending further consideration of the group's role by the departmental heads.

Achievements of these informal meetings in 2013 included:

- the development of the Parliamentary Service Determination 2013
- advice to the departmental heads on award modernisation
- advice to government on the draft public interest disclosure bills.

Purchaser-provider arrangements

In 2012–13, the department continued to provide payroll services to the Department of Parliamentary Services on a fee-for-service basis. We also provided payroll services to the new Parliamentary Budget Office from July 2012.

The department does not have any other purchaser-provider arrangements in place for selling services to or buying services from an Australian government agency.

The department receives certain building, IT and communication services from the Department of Parliamentary Services, and audit services from the Australian National Audit Office. These services are accounted for in the department's financial statements as resources received free of charge.

The department also has agreements in place with the Department of the Senate in relation to the provision of inter-parliamentary services (by this department) and parliamentary education services (by the Department of the Senate). We run parliamentary education seminars on a fee-for-service basis for government departments.

External scrutiny

The department's operations are primarily administrative and, other than the audit of financial statements, are therefore not usually subjected to formal external scrutiny.

JUDICIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS

No judicial decisions or decisions in administrative tribunals during 2012–13 had, or are anticipated to have, a significant effect on the operation of the department.

REPORTS BY THE AUDITOR-GENERAL, A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OR THE COMMONWEALTH OMBUDSMAN

The Australian National Audit Office audited the department's 2011–12 financial statements and provided an unqualified audit report.

The House Standing Committee on Procedure presented a fourth interim report for its inquiry into procedural changes implemented in the Forty-third Parliament. The report considered the impact of the reforms after two years of operation.

A further two reports were tabled, *Maintenance of the standing and sessional orders* and *Electronic voting in the House of Representatives*. The Clerk made a submission to the latter inquiry.

The department continued to support the Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration. The Clerk and other departmental staff provided the committee with information on the department's budget position and attended the committee's meetings to enable the committee to discharge its responsibilities under standing order 222A. The committee presented three reports: *Annual report 2011–12* on 20 September 2012, *Budget estimates 2013–14: Department of the House of Representatives* on 15 May 2013, and *Annual report 2012–13* on 27 June 2013. In its annual report for 2012–13, the committee stated that it had played a positive and responsible role in discharging its responsibilities

under the standing orders, and in bringing the funding requirements of the Department of the House of Representatives to the attention of government.

The department provided a submission to the inquiry by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit into the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Bill 2013. The department also provided a submission, jointly with the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Parliamentary Budget Office, into the inquiry by the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee into the Parliamentary Service Amendment Bill 2013.

No investigations by the Commonwealth Ombudsman in 2012–13 involved the department.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

In last year's annual report, a revised legal interpretation was reported to the effect that, due to the passage of legislation to establish a separate parliamentary service, the explicit exclusion of the parliamentary departments from the application of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) no longer applied. As a result of this interpretation, the Parliamentary Budget Office, which was established as a parliamentary department in 2011–12, was exempted expressly from the application of the FOI Act.

It was also reported that the Australian Information Commissioner, on 9 May 2012, had amended guidelines issued under section 93A of the FOI Act to state that the departments of the House of Representatives, the Senate and Parliamentary Services were subject to the FOI Act. Before this, the guidelines had stated that the FOI Act did *not* apply to the departments of the parliament. With the revision of the guidelines, the department received a number of FOI requests that we dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the FOI Act.

In 2012–13, the department received a further 18 FOI requests which, with one exception, were dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the FOI Act. The exception was an FOI request—received before the legislative change that restored the exclusion of the parliamentary departments from the application of the FOI Act (see below)—that was not due for response until after the legislative change took effect. The requested information was, however, provided by administrative action.

During the year, the department complied with FOI requirements. We established a disclosure log on the Parliament of Australia website and published details of documents provided to information requesters. We published information about our operations as required, and provided the necessary statistical information to the Information Commissioner:

At year end, the Parliamentary Service Act was amended to confirm the intention of the parliament that all parliamentary departments are excluded from the application of the FOI Act. The effect of the amending legislation is that, as of 28 June 2013, the FOI Act is taken not to apply and not to have ever applied to the parliamentary departments and persons who hold or perform duties of an office established under the Parliamentary Service Act.

The departments of the House of Representatives, the Senate and Parliamentary Services are excluded from the application of the FOI Act, under section 68A of the Parliamentary Service Act. The Parliamentary Budget Office continues to be exempt from the application of the FOI Act, under Schedule 2, Part 1, Division 1 of the FOI Act.

PRIVACY

While the department is not an agency to which the *Privacy Act 1988* applies, we abide by the principles of the legislation in our dealings with employees, including handling employees' records.

DISABILITY REPORTING MECHANISMS

The National Disability Strategy 2012–2020 sets out a 10-year national policy framework to improve the lives of people with disability, promote participation and create a more inclusive society. A high-level two-yearly report will track progress against each of the six outcome areas of the strategy and present a picture of how people with disability are faring. The first of these reports will be released in 2014, and will be available at www.fahcsia.gov.au.

The Social Inclusion Measurement and Reporting Strategy, agreed by the government in December 2009, will include some reporting on disability matters in its regular *How Australia is faring* report and, if appropriate, in strategic change indicators in agency annual reports. More information about the strategy can be found at www.socialinclusion.gov.au.

Management of people

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

The department has held accreditation against the Investors in People standard since 2002. The standard is an international quality framework with 10 indicators that set a level of good practice and a basis for continuous improvement of a department's or agency's performance through its people.

The department was reassessed against the Investors in People standard in June 2012. We met the core evidence requirements of the standard, and also met higher-level evidence requirements for bronze-level accreditation. During 2012–13 we continued work on the areas for improvement that were identified in the assessment report finalised in July 2012.

SHARED SERVICES

As mentioned, the department continued to provide the payroll function for the Department of Parliamentary Services during the year. To improve effectiveness and efficiency, the People Strategies Office finalised the amalgamation of previously separate departmental pay teams. Staff worked on gaining knowledge of the different payroll conditions for staff in this department and the Department of Parliamentary Services.

In July 2012 the payroll service for the Parliamentary Budget Office was implemented. The implementation enabled newly commencing Parliamentary Budget Office staff to be placed on the Chris²¹ system from the start of their employment.

Staff in the People Strategies Office now undertake payroll functions for more than 1,200 payees.



2013 graduate placement participants. Left to right: Frances Meese, Alexander Coward, Alexandra Doudy. Photo: Auspic.

STAFF SURVEY

In June 2013, the department conducted its ninth annual staff survey, the 2013 Survey Feedback Action. The survey, derived from a benchmarking exercise conducted in July 2004, incorporated the features of previous separate surveys, particularly the previous staff survey and leadership questionnaire, conducted in 2003.

As in previous years, most staff participated in the survey. The survey measures the quality of the department's leadership, the level of staff satisfaction with pay and conditions of service, and the strengths of the department. The results are taken into account in the department's ongoing development of its strategy for attracting and retaining staff.

The department has established a number of internal benchmarks based on the results of the survey. These benchmarks, or index scores, correspond to the total percentages of staff selecting 'strongly agreed' and 'agreed' in response to specific sets of questions.

- The 'core elements' satisfaction index measures the extent to which the department provides the core elements needed to attract, focus and keep the most talented staff (86 per cent in 2013, 82 per cent in 2012 and 2011, and an average of 83 per cent over the last five years).
- The 'leadership' satisfaction index measures the level of satisfaction of staff with their managers, as measured against the department's leadership statement (87 per cent in 2013, 85 per cent in 2012 and 2011, and an average of 85 per cent over the last five years).
- The 'benefits' satisfaction index measures the level of staff satisfaction with pay and working conditions (87 per cent in 2013, 85 per cent in 2012 and 2011, and an average of 86 per cent over the last five years).

PEOPLE STRATEGIES: PLANNING AND DELIVERY

Workforce planning

During 2012–13, some work was carried out on workforce planning to enable continuous provision of high-level service.

Organisational reviews

The department conducts organisational reviews as required to ensure that workload in all areas is matched with the number of staff required to perform the work, and that the classification levels or work value requirements of individual jobs are appropriate to the work being conducted.

Recruitment of staff

The department advertised to fill two ongoing vacancies during 2012–13 (four in 2011–12), of which one was filled by an internal applicant.

Retention of staff

A total of 13 ongoing and 16 non-ongoing staff left the department in 2012–13—a turnover rate of 9.6 per cent of ongoing staff. The turnover rate in 2011–12 was 10.7 per cent. Appendix 11 includes details of separations.

Exit interviews with staff leaving the department continued to be conducted by Senior Executive Service managers. Four interviews were conducted during the year.

Graduate placement program

In 2013 the tenth parliamentary graduate placement program was conducted by the department. The program involves three-month placements of staff from the graduate recruitment programs of Australian government agencies. An objective of the program is to promote the work of the parliament to agencies and the staff of those agencies.

The program continued to draw a high level of interest from individual graduates and from a range of agencies. We had seven graduates on three-month placements in the department in 2012–13.

Feedback from graduates has confirmed that the program is highly successful and that the objectives of the placements have been met.

Alumni

The department formed an alumni association of former staff in 2008. On 30 June 2013 there were 199 members. The association issued two newsletters during the year.

On 16 November 2012, the annual general meeting of the association was held, followed by a reception, and was attended by

35 association members and staff members. At the meeting, two co-chairs were elected and the membership of the alumni board was increased by self-nomination of attendees.

The board met once in 2012-13.

Training and development

Table 11 shows the department's training and development expenditure as a percentage of expenditure on salaries in 2011-12 and 2012-13. It also shows the average number of person-days spent on training, and the average staffing level in both years. The average number of training days for staff decreased from 5.6 to 4.1 days of off-the-job training per person per year. The decrease was due to improved methods of delivering training to staff and to reduced availability of staff to attend training due to increased workloads in the third year in the parliamentary cycle.

Table 12 compares the average attendance of staff at training courses in 2011-12 and 2012-13. It also shows the average staffing level and total number of training days attended in 2012-13 for each classification.

Leadership development

The department has invested in leadership development with a range of external providers for over a decade and has trend data from staff surveys on leadership for this period. As mentioned in the annual staff survey section, the leadership index increased from 85 per cent in 2012 to 87 per cent in 2013.

Following a review of leadership programs in 2012, the department worked with an external provider to redevelop the leadership program for staff at the Parliamentary Service Level 6 and Executive Band 1 levels. This included working with supervisors to ensure that learning occurred in the workplace. Leadership programs have also been developed for the Executive and staff at the Executive Band 2 level.

Knowledge management

The Knowledge Management Steering Committee met six times during 2012-13. The committee comprised staff from all areas of the department and was chaired by the Clerk Assistant (Committees). In January the

Table 11 Expenditure on training and development programs, 2011-12 and 2012-13

	2011-12	2012-13
Expenditure as percentage of annual payroll	1.0%	1.0%
Average training days per person	5.6	4.1
Average staffing level	156	161

Table 12 Average staff attendance at training courses, 2011-12 and 2012-13

Classification	Average staffing level	Total number of training days attended	Average number of training days attended	
	2012-13	2012-13	2011-12	2012-13
Senior Executive Service	5.6	32.2	5.4	5.8
Executive Band 2	18.7	76.4	3.7	4.1
Executive Band 1	45.0	143.7	5.3	3.2
Parliamentary Service Level 6	24.3	82.9	5.5	3.4
Parliamentary Service Level 5	8.3	33.6	5.5	4.0
Parliamentary Service Level 4	30.2	109.5	6.4	3.6
Parliamentary Service Level 3	10.6	25	2.4	2.4
Parliamentary Service Level 2	18.3	29.3	2.6	1.5
Not specified		110.7		
Totals	161.1	643.4	5.6	4.0

committee adopted revised terms of reference, which expanded its role to include maintaining an awareness of emerging technologies which may affect or support knowledge management.

The committee continued to monitor the records management program, including the project to implement e-Trim across the committee office, which was finalised at the end of the reporting period. The committee also monitored the progress of the Parliament of Australia website enhancements project and web governance board, and the Table Offices Production System. It kept a watching brief on emerging technologies including considering the merits of introducing a 'tacit knowledge transfer initiative' to capture vital staff corporate knowledge.

Studybank

A total of 10 staff participated in the department's Studybank program during the year (compared with 19 staff in 2011–12). Collectively, they received financial assistance of \$15,753 (compared with \$30,792 in 2012), along with 75.2 days study leave on full pay.

Security awareness training

As part of their induction program, all new staff are required to undertake an online training program on security awareness provided by the Protective Security Coordination Branch of the Attorney-General's Department.

Performance assessment

All eligible staff participated in the annual work performance assessment cycle, completed on 31 October 2012. The cycle consists of

setting individual work objectives, conducting performance assessments, preparing individual development plans and providing feedback to supervisors. The individual development plans are compiled and the development requirements of staff are reviewed. These then form the basis for the training program for the next calendar year.

Enterprise agreement

The Department of the House of Representatives Enterprise Agreement 2012–15 covers all staff except Senior Executive Service staff. The Senior Executive Service is covered by a determination made under section 24(1) of the Parliamentary Service Act.

The enterprise agreement was negotiated between the Clerk and departmental staff in 2012. The agreement was lodged with and approved by Fair Work Australia in December 2012. The agreement came into operation on 11 December 2012 and the first pay rise was payable from that date.

Staff salary scales under the agreement are summarised in Table 13.

Salaries expenditure

In 2012–13, departmental salaries and allowances totalled \$18.180 million (\$18.0 million in 2011–12).

Workplace diversity

The department's workplace diversity program aligns our workplace diversity strategies and actions with the Parliamentary Service Values. The program builds on the department's existing commitment to embed

Table 13 Salary scales of staff covered by the 2012–15 enterprise agreement, at 11 December 2012

Classification	Salary scale (\$)
Executive Band 2	124,996–132,444
Executive Band 1	96,576–107,723
Parliamentary Service Level 6	77,830–88,330
Parliamentary Service Level 5	71,939–76,122
Parliamentary Service Level 4	63,600–68,810
Parliamentary Service Level 3	57,540–61,811
Parliamentary Service Level 2	51,135–55,834
Parliamentary Service Level 1	45,203–49,461

the Parliamentary Service Values into our business. The workplace diversity program will be reviewed in 2013-14.

Refresher training in the prevention of discrimination, bullying and harassment was provided to all staff during the year. New staff continued to receive this training as soon as practicable after their commencement. The harassment contact officers received further specific training and this training was also attended by union and staff representatives.

Work health and safety

The department's aim under the health and safety management arrangements is to create and maintain a safe and healthy working environment.

Workstation assessments are conducted for staff on request. Included in the workstation assessment is education on the correct set-up of workstations. This information is also included in orientation sessions for new staff.

In March 2013, influenza vaccinations were offered to staff, and 80 staff were vaccinated.

The department's Comcare premium rate for 2012-13 was 0.89 per cent of payroll, an increase from the 2011-12 rate of 0.71 per cent. This reflects the claims performance and cost structure applying in the wider public service, and not the department's performance.

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* came into effect on 1 January 2012. The main object of the Act is to ensure a balanced and nationally consistent framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces. During the year, no dangerous occurrences required notification under section 37 of the Act. No investigations were carried out and no directions or notices were received by the department under section 191 of the Act.

Table 14 summarises compensation claims received from staff for the past four financial years.

Table 14 Compensation claims incidence, by injury group, 2009-10 to 2012-13

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Fracture excluding back	–	–	–	–
Strain excluding back	2	1	–	–
External effects	–	–	–	–
Multiple injuries	–	–	1	–
Occupational overuse syndrome	–	–	1	–
Psychological injuries	1	–	–	–
Total	3	1	2	0

Management of financial resources

ASSETS MANAGEMENT

The department's asset management strategy focuses on efficient asset utilisation and allows the department to identify underperforming assets. The department operates within a controlled environment at Parliament House and for the majority of assets the risk of loss is minimal.

A stocktake of computing equipment, office machines and portable and attractive assets was completed during 2012–13. A revaluation of property, plant and equipment was undertaken during June 2013. A revaluation increment of \$0.450 million is reported in the financial statements. Impairment testing was undertaken during stocktake and revaluation. No material impairment adjustments were required.

The furniture replacement project commenced in 2012–13. Three departmental offices were completed by 30 June 2013 at a total cost of \$0.201 million. This project is scheduled to be completed during 2014. Adherence to this timeframe is dependent on the sitting calendar of the Forty-fourth Parliament and 'business as usual' work of the department. Other minor assets were purchased during the period in accordance with life-cycle management planning at a total cost of \$0.030 million.

The department has two software development projects which will be completed during 2013–14. The projects have been undertaken in conjunction with the Department of the Senate. Both projects have engaged external providers as well as using in-house resources to develop the Table Offices Production System and a venue management system as a replacement for a number of aged separate booking systems.

PURCHASING

The department's purchasing policy encompasses all aspects of procuring goods and services and was updated during 2012–13 to reflect changes to the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.

During the reporting period, the department entered into a whole-of-government contract with Staples for the purchasing of stationery and office supplies. Travel management services continued to be provided by FCm under the whole-of-government contract. The department complied with the new procurement requirements for accommodation and hire car purchases.

The department encourages the use of corporate credit cards for minor purchases by approved staff.

CONSULTANTS

The department engages consultants where we lack specialist expertise or when independent research, review or assessment is required. Consultants are typically engaged to investigate or diagnose a defined issue or problem; carry out defined reviews or evaluations; or provide independent advice, information or creative solutions to assist in the department's decision-making.

Before engaging consultants, the department takes into account the skills and resources required for the task, the skills available internally, and the cost-effectiveness of engaging external expertise. The decision to engage a consultant is made in accordance with the Financial Management and Accountability Act and related regulations, the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and relevant internal policies.

During 2012–13, the department entered into 19 new consultancy contracts involving total actual expenditure of \$0.282 million. In addition, three ongoing consultancy contracts were active during 2012–13, involving total actual expenditure of \$0.063 million.

Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on contracts for consultancies. Information on the value of contracts and consultancies is available on the AusTender website (www.tenders.gov.au).

AUDITOR-GENERAL ACCESS AND EXEMPT CONTRACTS

There were no instances during 2012-13 where contracts were let that did not provide for the Auditor-General to have access to the contractor's premises, or where the chief executive exempted a contract from being published on AusTender.

ADVERTISING AND MARKET RESEARCH

Section 311A of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* requires the department to detail amounts paid to advertising agencies, market research organisations, polling organisations, direct mail organisations and media advertising organisations during the financial year.

The department's total advertising expenditure for 2012-13 was \$50,092, a decrease from the previous year's total (\$131,507). Most of this decrease is attributed to the department's targeted savings measures identified for 2012-13, which included a reduction in the number and size of advertisements for publicising the work of the House and committees.

The expenditure was as follows:

- \$32,300 for publicising the work of the House and committees (\$111,134 in 2011-12)
- \$9,747 for advertising in relation to inquiries being undertaken by parliamentary committees (\$11,689 in 2011-12)
- nil for publicising recruitment advertising (\$2,374 in 2011-12)
- \$7,265 to the Attorney-General's Department for Chamber-related gazettals (\$5,780 in 2011-12).

Most of the advertising for 2012-13 was placed with Adcorp Australia.

DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

The department did not administer any grant programs in 2012-13. Training, equipment and project support were provided for some Pacific Island parliaments.

Ecologically sustainable development and environmental reporting

The department is not subject to the provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*; however, we have adopted policies and practices in energy and water use and recycling that contribute to sound environmental performance.

Most aspects of the parliament's environmental management are coordinated by the Department of Parliamentary Services, which is responsible for managing the Parliament House building and precincts. The department participates in meetings of the parliament-wide Environmental Management Committee. The committee provides a useful forum for progressing environmental initiatives and improving environmental performance at Parliament House.

The Department of Parliamentary Services prepares an annual report on behalf of all parliamentary departments in accordance with section 516A of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. The report is structured using core performance indicators of the Global Reporting Initiative and is included in the Department of Parliamentary Services' annual report, which is available from the Parliament of Australia website.

Outlook

In 2013–14, the department will continue to support the House and members. The department must continue to be capable of delivering advice and support of a high standard, and of anticipating and responding quickly to developments and changing requirements. Our budget will continue to be constrained, however, and we will continue to seek efficiencies and savings.

We will implement two major IT projects aimed at achieving efficiencies and improving service quality. We will finalise a service level agreement and asset and funding transfers associated with the consolidation of ICT in the Department of Parliamentary Services. To ensure resilience, we will test business continuity and resumption plans, and will work in collaboration with the other parliamentary departments to ensure capability at a whole-of-parliament level.

The new financial management legislation for the public sector will have implications for the department and we will actively monitor and respond to developments.

We will also continue to give priority to supporting and enhancing whole-of-parliament governance arrangements, including the Security Management Board, the Heritage Advisory Board and the Joint Management Committee. The Serjeant-at-Arms represents the department on these bodies. These processes are important in ensuring that strategic priorities are addressed effectively.

The department will work with the other parliamentary departments to support environmental sustainability initiatives.