

Part 1

Secretary's message

The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) provides essential services to support the work of the Parliament, maintain Parliament House as a symbol of Australian democracy, and ensure that the building, and the important activity that takes place within it, is accessible and engaging for all. The range of services provided includes: the production of Hansard transcripts of all parliamentary proceedings; broadcasts of the proceedings for radio, television and online; information technology services to parliamentarians and the parliamentary departments; security services at Parliament House; building and landscape maintenance; public tours; and library services. A more detailed description of the role of the department is provided in Part 2 of this report.

The year 2011–12 was a period of significant transition in how DPS delivers these essential services. The key changes outlined below mark some of the most important developments for the department since its establishment in 2004, when the former Joint House Department, Department of the Parliamentary Library and Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff were amalgamated to form a single department.

Changes in senior leadership

The year under review included changes in the senior leadership of the department. On 24 November 2011, one of the two Presiding Officers of the Parliament to which DPS reports, Mr Harry Jenkins MP, resigned as Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Hon Peter Slipper MP was subsequently elected as the 27th Speaker of the House of Representatives. The Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate are jointly responsible for the administration and operation of Parliament House, including 'Ministerial' responsibility for DPS.

On 4 January 2012, the Secretary of the department, Mr Alan Thompson announced his retirement. His final day at work was 26 January. Deputy Secretary, Mr David Kenny acted as interim Secretary from 27 January to 8 March. Mr Russell D. Grove PSM FIPAA, former longstanding Clerk of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, was appointed as acting Secretary from 9 March to 27 May, pending the appointment of the new Secretary. On 27 April, the Presiding Officers, announced my appointment as Secretary commencing on 28 May 2012.

Also, on 21 December 2011, the then Secretary announced the resignation of the Parliamentary Librarian, Ms Roxanne Missingham, effective 13 February 2012. The Assistant Secretary, Research Branch, Dr Dianne Heriot acted as Parliamentary Librarian during the subsequent recruitment process. Following that process, Dr Heriot was formally appointed to the statutory position by the Presiding Officers on 10 May 2012.

Main highlights of 2011–12

The year 2011–12 saw further development and extension of the role of DPS in meeting the information and communications technology (ICT) requirements of the Parliament. In foreseeing and adapting to the changing needs of parliamentarians, DPS extended its ICT services to support the portable electronic devices of parliamentarians and their staff. This service currently focuses on connecting iPads and iPhones to the parliamentary computing network (PCN) but will expand to other mobile devices and services. The formal transfer of electorate office information technology (EOIT) from the Department of Finance and Deregulation to DPS was completed in early November 2011. The transfer was a major step towards the provision of an integrated service delivery model for parliamentarians and their staff and will enable DPS to lead the development of improved services in this fast-changing area.

To further progress the development of strategic policy in this area, in late November 2011 the Presiding Officers agreed to a whole-of-Parliament review into the provision of ICT services to the Parliament. The purpose of the review, undertaken by former senior public servant, Mr Michael Roche, is to consider how to plan for and manage the delivery of ICT services to the Parliament in a way that best meets the priorities of key stakeholders. A formal response to the review will be implemented in 2012–13.

In 2011–12, the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee continued its inquiry into the performance of DPS. The purpose of the inquiry was to further examine the process for the sale of Parliament House billiard tables and heritage and asset management policies of the department and other matters, including ICT performance, it deemed relevant. The Committee held a public

hearing with the original architects of Parliament House on 16 November 2011, and with DPS and other witnesses on 2 May 2012. On 27 June 2012, the Committee tabled its Interim Report on part of its terms of reference.

DPS is working constructively with the Committee in responding to its findings and addressing areas of concern. I have personally looked into many of the issues raised by the Committee during my short time as Secretary of the department and reviewed the actions undertaken in advance of the completion of the inquiry. For example, in September 2011 Mr Robert Tonkin conducted a review of DPS disposal policies and procedures. DPS has accepted all of the recommendations of the review, the majority of which have now been implemented. There has been a range of actions to improve the department's heritage management systems including the development of a Parliament House Heritage Management Framework and the establishment in May 2012 of a Heritage Management Board. This work will be accelerated in 2012–13.

Other highlights for the year include the launch of the new APH website in February 2012, the completion of a number of projects to enhance the physical security of Parliament House, and the successful hosting of high profile international visitors such as Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh on 21 October 2011 and the President of the United States of America, the Honorable Barack Obama, on 16–17 November 2011. These and other highlights are detailed further in Part 3 of this report.

Budget

DPS continues to operate in a very tight funding environment. As part of the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2011–12, in November 2011, the Government increased its efficiency dividend funding reductions by a further 2.5 per cent of the departmental operational appropriation for 2012–13. This reduction was in addition to the existing 1.5% efficiency dividend applied to departments. For DPS, this equated to a \$2.6m reduction in 2012–13 operating funds. A 20% reduction in the departmental capital budget was also announced in November 2011, equating to \$2.4 million. The department has been examining a number of areas for reprioritisation, and identifying efficiency gains to meet these budget targets.

On Budget night 2012, the Government announced that DPS would receive an additional \$2.5 million over four years to implement a range of projects to improve access to Parliament House for people with disabilities. The package of works includes improved arrangements for access to the building from the main public car park, upgrades to hearing loops in a number of committee rooms and refurbishments of toilets for the disabled. The works are scheduled to commence in the 2012–13 financial year and are to be completed in 2015–16.

Looking ahead into 2012–13

It is clear that the very tight financial situation will continue for DPS in 2012–13 and beyond. Over coming months, I will carefully review discretionary spending and the internal allocation of the operational appropriation to determine how best to work within the financial parameters over the long term.

On 2 July 2012, I announced to staff my key priority directions to strengthen DPS as a department with a reputation for customer-focused service delivery. My program of change includes a functional realignment to better focus DPS management structures, a new corporate planning process to ensure that diverse lines of business work in harmony to achieve shared goals, and measures to strengthen DPS as a fair and ethical workplace through a new Fostering Inclusion and Respect framework. I will report on the implementation of these changes in the 2012–13 Annual Report.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the other parliamentary departments and Mr Bernard Wright, Clerk of the House of Representatives and Dr Rosemary Laing, Clerk of the Senate, for their partnership and support. I look forward to working with the Clerks, and Mr Phil Bowen PSM FCPA, the recently appointed Parliamentary Budget Officer, on further strengthening our support to Parliament.

I would also like to recognise the contribution of the former Secretary, Mr Thompson and former Librarian, Ms Missingham, who had served the Parliament for some three and six years respectively. I would like to express my gratitude to Mr Harry Jenkins MP, the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Senator the Hon John Hogg, the President of the Senate, and the Hon Peter Slipper MP, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, for their support and guidance over 2011–12.

Finally, I thank all DPS staff for their continued hard work and commitment demonstrated over this year of significant transition. On 2 February 2012, DPS held its eighth anniversary morning tea, and presentation of Australia Day Awards and long service pins. This was an important opportunity for staff to come together and reflect on the achievements of the department. I look forward to celebrating our next anniversary, which coincides with the centenary of Canberra celebrations and the 25th anniversary of Parliament House.

The year 2012–13 presents great challenges and opportunities in progressing my priority directions for change and further improving the quality of services provided to the Parliament and the broader Australian community. As a year of transition, this 2011–12 Annual Report will serve as a benchmark against which future progress will be measured.