

# Procedure Office

## Outputs

Advisory services and procedural support to non-government senators.

Drafting services to non-government senators.

Secretariat support to the Regulations and Ordinances Committee, Scrutiny of Bills Committee, and Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights.

Research and parliamentary information for senators, staff, public servants, officials from other parliaments, and the community; and support for inter-parliamentary relations.

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, publications and draft reports are accurate, of a high standard and produced to meet the required timeframes.	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.
Research and parliamentary information is accurate, timely and comprehensive. Seminars, lectures and other parliamentary information projects are provided to the satisfaction of target audiences, increasing their awareness of the work and role of the Parliament, in particular the Senate and its committees. Inter-parliamentary functions are supported to the satisfaction of stakeholders.	Accurate and comprehensive parliamentary research was provided within required timeframes. All seminars and lectures were held on time and in accordance with the programmed schedule, and public information projects were delivered in accordance with the required timeframes. Training was provided to the satisfaction of target audiences, demonstrated by consistently favourable feedback from evaluation processes. Inter-parliamentary functions were carried out to the satisfaction of stakeholders, demonstrated by consistently favourable feedback.
Education Centre teaching and other Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) projects accurately reflect the Parliament and its work. PEO teaching programs held on time and in accordance with booking schedule. PEO projects delivered according to programmed schedule.	PEO website and publications were promptly updated to ensure accuracy and to accommodate electoral and other events. Teaching programs were consistently conducted in accordance with the booking schedule. PEO programs were managed and delivered in accordance with current implementation plans.

## 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**

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

\* to 27 April 2014

\*\* from 27 April 2014

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 PEO produces educational programs and resources for schools, students, teachers and others. The office also supports the Parliament's international programs.

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 volume of legislation coming before the Senate and the requirements of senators.

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 2013–14 was 29 (30 in 2012–13). The cost of providing the services of the Procedure Office in 2013–14 was \$5.6 million (\$5.6 million in 2012–13).

## Procedural support

In 2013–14, 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 and provided 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 researching appropriate precedents and consulting other departmental officers—principally the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk. Advice was non-partisan, consistent, and provided to senators and their staff in a timely fashion.

In 2013–14, the office prepared an average of 13 procedural scripts per sitting day for senators' use in the Senate, typically related to matters such as orders for the production of documents, the suspension of standing orders or other procedural devices, 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 2013–14, the office provided legislative support to senators by drafting amendments to bills and drafting private senators' bills, primarily for non-government senators.

The office drafted and circulated 35 sets of committee of the whole amendments, containing 222 individual amendments, as well as 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. The marked decline in the number of committee of the whole amendments, notwithstanding the election, in part can be attributed to the focus on two major legislative packages that did not proceed past the second reading.

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 24 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 2013–14, the office drafted 52 private senators' bills, of which 32 were finalised for introduction. A number of other bills were drafted to different stages of development.

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 bills. 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**

Service	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14
Committee of the whole amendments circulated	587	505	651	222
Second reading amendments circulated	19	26	21	24
Private senators' bills introduced	54	26	37	32
Procedural scripts prepared	497	559	529	484

## 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 2013–14:

- the Regulations and Ordinances Committee secretariat examined 1,840 legislative instruments (2,084 in 2012–13) and provided draft comments on 117 legislative instruments (283 in 2012–13)
- the Scrutiny of Bills Committee secretariat examined 192 bills (280 in 2012–13) and provided draft comments on 64 bills (121 in 2012–13)
- the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights secretariat examined 191 bills (289 in 2012–13), providing draft comments on 71 bills and Acts (137 in 2012–13); and examined 1,954 legislative instruments (1,924 in 2012–13), providing draft comments on 37 legislative instruments (85 in 2012–13).

While these figures are lower than for the previous financial year, they are consistent with figures from other years in which a federal election was held.

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

- the Scrutiny of Bills Committee Report and Alert Digest, tabled each Senate sitting week. The secretariat also prepares a 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 Senate sitting week)
- the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Report (each sitting week of both the Senate and House of Representatives).

The secretariats made progress in key IT projects by continuing to streamline the legislative instruments and bills databases and by harmonising key workflows and processes 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

During 2013–14, 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.

The section coordinated and delivered orientation programs for new senators and senators-elect in November 2013 and prepared an orientation program for new senators whose terms commenced on 1 July 2014.

Seven seminars were offered to senators' staff to provide specialised training about the operations and procedures of the Senate and its committees, including two tailored to suit the requirements of new staff following the change of government after the 2013 election.

Eight seminars on aspects of Senate practice were provided for approximately 190 public service officers. There was a further drop in demand from external agencies for the seminar program, possibly reflecting a reduction in spending on training due to financial constraints. A further four were provided to community groups. Staff from across the department contributed to the delivery of the seminar series.

A new website to assist new senators and their staff to navigate the work of the Senate was developed in collaboration with SPIO. Designed to complement face-to-face training by senior staff, the site was ready for the 1 July 2014 start of the new Senate and will continue to be developed with informative content and departmental contacts.

The section arranged 10 public lectures during 2013–14 as part of the department's occasional lecture series, attended by approximately 1,200 people. One of the 2013 lectures, a panel discussion on women in federal parliament, was an official event to celebrate anniversaries of the first elections in which Australian women voted, stood as

candidates and were elected to the federal parliament. Transcripts and recordings of the lectures were made available on the Senate website. Some lectures were also broadcast on television and online by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Australia's Public Affairs Channel. Live streaming of lectures, and their availability 'on demand' on ParView commenced in September 2013.

The Research Section also runs the Australian National Internships Program in partnership with the Australian National University, which involved 33 students in 2013–14.

### **Publications, exhibitions and conferences**

The section continued to produce 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 during 2013–14. An online edition of *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate* was completed, containing biographies of senators whose terms concluded by 1983. Work continued on volume 4 of the dictionary (1983–2002).

The section initiated a collaborative project with the House of Representatives to develop 360 degree virtual tours of the parliamentary chambers, a Senate committee room and the Federation Chamber. These tours will give people who are unable to visit Parliament House views of and information about how the work of Parliament is done.

The section also coordinated the Senate's contribution to Open Day, held on 24 August 2013, which coincided with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Parliament House. Activities included tours of the chamber and President's suite and courtyards. Postcards were available for visitors which celebrated 70 years of women's representation in the Parliament. The Senate also contributed banners about significant events in the work of the Parliament for a 'parliamentary milestones' display in the Great Hall.

A public one-day conference to explore the contribution of Andrew Inglis Clark to the development of Australia's constitutional system was held, in conjunction with the Centenary of Canberra, in November 2013 and attended by approximately 80 participants. The proceedings of the conference were live streamed, published in *Papers on Parliament* number 61 and made available on the Parliament of Australia website.

## **Parliamentary Education Office**

The PEO delivered an extensive range of 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 2013–14 included:

- the redesign and an expansion of resources available on the PEO website
- the publication in a major newspaper of a parliamentary education supplement
- tailored training programs for student teachers from universities

- displays and educational activities for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Open Day at Parliament House
- briefings and seminars for visiting staff from several Australian and international legislatures and associated agencies, including Kenya, New Zealand and the Northern Territory
- the development and delivery of tailored educational programs and briefings for other visiting groups, including 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 December 2013, the PEO co-hosted the Australasian Parliamentary Educators' Conference with the Museum of Australian Democracy and the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly. More than 50 delegates attended the conference, including representatives from all mainland parliaments and delegates from Samoa, Tonga, Papua and New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

The PEO continues to support the work of the National Capital Civics Education Group, which brings together education and outreach managers from civic and citizenship institutions in the Parliamentary Triangle. The Group met on five occasions during the year with the PEO providing the convenor. Through this forum and independently the PEO monitored the development of the national curriculum in civics and citizenship. The PEO also developed resources to assist teachers to satisfy curriculum teaching outcomes while educating students about the parliament.

### **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 Education Centre offers the opportunity to explore four key functions of the Parliament: legislation, representation, formation of government and scrutiny.

In 2013–14 role-play programs were delivered to 87,657 students visiting Parliament House, a reduction compared to the 94,015 students taught in the previous year. The reduction is likely to be due to a combination of factors, including the election period and the forthcoming World War I centenary. Nonetheless, the PEO role-play program remained very popular and operated at or close to capacity for much of the school year. Program demand remained highest in the months of May through to November.

### **Outreach and educational resources**

The PEO outreach program 'Parliament Alive' provides an opportunity to deliver parliamentary role-play programs to schools around Australia. Four week-long programs were conducted involving 3,959 students from 68 schools, in regional South Australia and Victoria; in northern Tasmania; in central-west Queensland; and in metropolitan Perth, Western Australia. In selecting locations, an equitable balance is sought between states

and territories over the course of the program. Regard is had to previous destinations and to an analysis of areas which are statistically under-represented in visits to PEO programs at Parliament House.

The PEO produced and maintained a wide range of high quality online and multimedia services and other resources. During the year publications and resources were constantly updated to maintain their currency and reflect significant parliamentary developments, including the 2013 Federal election.

To enhance accessibility of PEO resources (particularly for rural and remote schools), the PEO maintains a strong web presence through an extensive website which, in 2013–14 was expanded with new video material, an interactive parliamentary timeline and additional information and statistics on the current work of the Parliament. The new look website has a more contemporary feel designed to broaden its audience appeal – it recorded 719,124 visitor sessions, an increase of over 21 per cent on the previous year.

### **Joint ventures and other programs**

In 2013–14 the PEO assisted the National Youth Science Forum, sponsored by the Australian National University, to provide a summer study program for 288 outstanding senior secondary school science students from around Australia. The students examined legislative work and Senate committee processes through role-play, and a related program of professional development for science teachers was also conducted.

The PEO also again collaborated closely with Rotary International to conduct the Rotary ‘Adventure in Citizenship’ program in Budget week 2014 for Year 11 students from across Australia. The program, which has been conducted for over 20 years, offers participating students a unique opportunity to experience the work of the Parliament, meet members of parliament and participate in an intensive parliamentary learning program.

### **Inter-parliamentary relations**

The Australian Parliament’s international program focuses on parliamentary engagement, cooperation and strengthening, with an emphasis on parliamentary relations with countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

Activities and projects in 2013–14 were coordinated primarily through the International and Community Relations Office (ICRO), with input from all four parliamentary departments. ICRO is funded jointly by the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives.

### **Parliamentary engagement**

During 2013–14, ICRO coordinated 13 official visits overseas, which included bilateral visits to seven countries; attendance at five conferences, workshops and seminars; and five other visits. There were seven official visits to Australia by parliamentary delegations from other countries as guests of the Australian Parliament and 12 other visits. The regional focus of the visits program was maintained. Six of the seven official visits to Australia were from parliaments in the Asia-Pacific region.

For the 2014 outgoing delegations program, committee visits overseas were modified.



A visit to one other Pacific region country was added to the longstanding New Zealand committee exchange to enhance the opportunities for regional engagement. In addition to visiting New Zealand, the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee also visited Vanuatu as part of the exchange in May 2014. The annual Asia-Pacific committee visit was modified to become a parliamentary committee visit to Asia, which was undertaken by the joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.

### **Parliamentary cooperation**

The Australian Parliament maintained its commitment to regional and international parliamentary cooperation. In 2013–14, delegations attended the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) assemblies, the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers Conference, and the Australian and Pacific Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference.

The Senate department also supported the work of the IPU by funding the attendance of delegations at both the 129<sup>th</sup> and 130<sup>th</sup> IPU Assemblies in Geneva, Switzerland in October 2013 and March 2014, respectively. 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. ICRO's newly developed digital app for briefing papers was successfully introduced for the IPU delegation.

The restructure of parliamentary groups, agreed at the end of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament, was implemented from the commencement of the 44<sup>th</sup> Parliament, resulting in the establishment of 11 new parliamentary networks based on regional groupings.

As part of continuing efforts to engage Pacific parliaments with the work of the IPU, ICRO coordinated a two-day regional workshop in Tonga in November 2013, in association with the IPU and the Tongan Legislative Assembly. Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from 13 Pacific parliaments attended the workshop and its theme was 'Modern parliaments: the Pacific perspective'.

As part of transitional arrangements following the withdrawal of the Australian Parliament from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in December 2012, ICRO continued to support the work of the w.comm national women's parliamentary group.

### **Parliamentary strengthening**

Support for democratic development at the international level was provided through established capacity-building programs and by responding to requests for assistance received from other parliaments and international organisations.

Two new projects were established under the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program which will provide capacity building to support the re-establishment of the Fiji Parliament and the ongoing development of the Papua New Guinea Parliament.

Eleven study visits from parliaments from Africa, Asia and the Pacific were also arranged in response to requests received. These include two international delegations coordinated by the Research Section: the Standing Committee of Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Kenyan Parliament (December 2013), and parliamentary officers from the Indian Rajya Sabha (February 2014).

## Performance outlook

In 2014–15, 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 further develop the *Navigating the Senate* website, complete the entries for volume 4 of *The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate* and add those entries to the online edition of the dictionary. The section will continue to work on updating the design and development of the 'Making Laws' exhibition on the work of the Parliament, and will also work with other parliamentary departments to commemorate the centenary of the events of World War I and the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015 of the signing of Magna Carta.

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

Demand for the PEO's education programs is expected to remain strong, as demonstrated by forward bookings for 2015. The implementation of a new Venue Management System is expected to improve the booking process for schools and tour operators. The PEO will continue to develop and adapt resources to support the new national curriculum in civics and citizenship and will further explore options to improve the accessibility and delivery of programs to schools and students unable to participate in programs at Parliament House.

The review of the international program commissioned by the Presiding Officers in 2013 reported in April 2014 and the Presiding Officers responded in June 2014. The response provides strong endorsement of the international program as an integral part of the work of the Australian Parliament. The response will be implemented during 2014–15. The major aspects of the response are the establishment of an advisory group and the restructure of the administrative support functions. An Inter-Parliamentary Relations Advisory Group will be established to provide advice to the Presiding Officers and develop a strategic plan for the international program. A restructure of the administrative support functions will be effected through the creation of two new offices in the Department of the House of Representatives. An International and Parliamentary Relations Office will be established to manage the incoming and outgoing delegation programs, membership of inter-parliamentary organisations, and the international interests and travel of members and senators. A Parliamentary Skills Centre will be established to take responsibility for the delivery of all parliamentary capacity building and strengthening initiatives. The first visit of a multi-country Latin American delegation to Australia will take place in September 2014. This visit has been added to the incoming visits program to enhance links with parliaments in that region. A new 'Parliamentary Field Visit' will take place under the outgoing delegation program in November.