

# Departmental overview

## The Senate secretariat

The Senate department provides secretariat support for the Senate and its committees, and advice and support to enable senators and others to participate in their meetings. Its work is substantially driven by the requirements of the Senate and senators.

The department provides services and undertakes activities in the following areas:

- Advice about Senate and committee proceedings
- Secretariat support for the Senate
- Secretariat support for committees
- Administrative advice and support for senators
- Public information and parliamentary education
- Capability, governance and accountability.

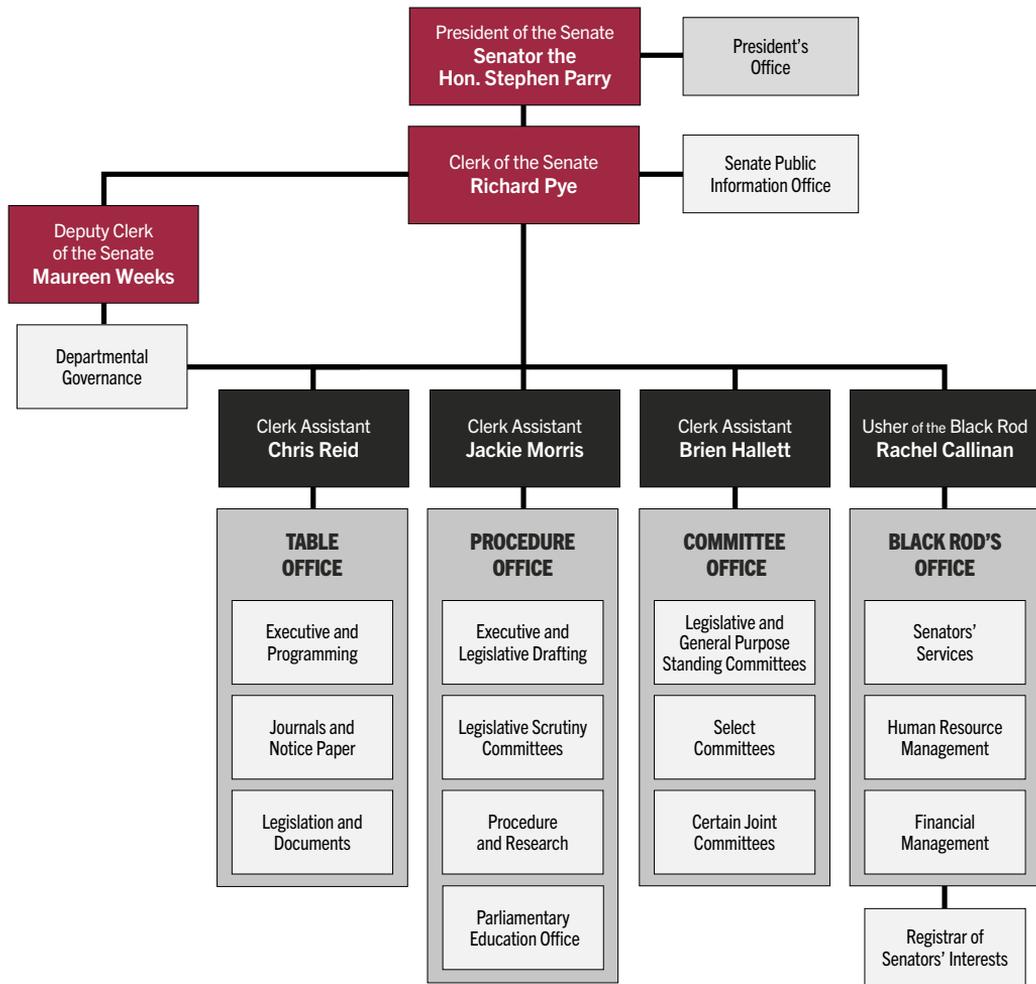
In undertaking its functions the department is responsible not to the government of the day but to the Senate and all senators, maintaining complete impartiality in serving equally senators from all political parties and independent senators.

Before turning to the department's performance during 2016–17, this overview sets out the department's organisational structure, program structure and objectives.

## Organisational structure

The department is responsible to the Senate through the President of the Senate, Senator the Honourable Stephen Parry, who was first elected to that position on 7 July 2014 and re-elected at the commencement of the 45th Parliament on 30 August 2016. The administrative head of the department is the Clerk of the Senate, Mr Richard Pye, who was appointed as Acting Clerk on 30 January 2017 and formally succeeded Dr Rosemary Laing on 9 March 2017. The department is organised into the Clerk's Office and four other offices, as shown in figure 1.

**Figure 1 – Organisational structure**



Senior staff from across the department provide direct support to the Senate on sitting days as clerks at the table. The following staff performed such duties during the year:

- Rosemary Laing
- Chris Reid
- Jackie Morris
- James Warmenhoven
- Stephen Palethorpe
- Richard Pye
- Rachel Callinan
- Tim Bryant
- David Sullivan
- John Baczynski
- Maureen Weeks
- Brien Hallett
- Sue Blunden
- Toni Matulick

The Usher of the Black Rod performs certain formal and ceremonial duties on sitting days. During 2016–17, the following staff assisted with these duties:

- John Baczynski
- Jedidiah Reardon
- Anthony Szell
- Glenn Krause

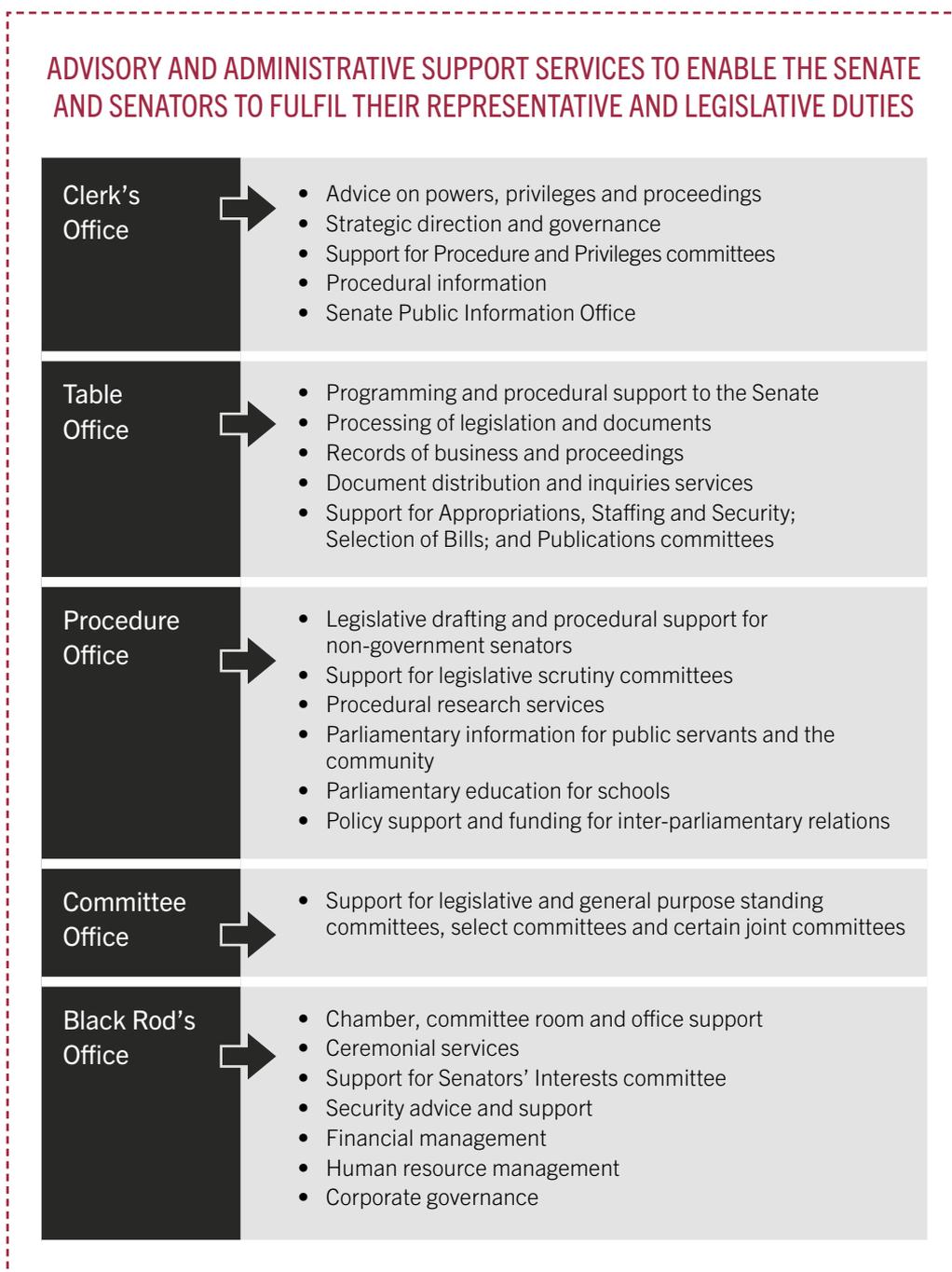
## Outcome and program structure

In order to achieve its outcome, the department’s objectives, set out in its corporate plan, are to:

- continue to develop expertise in the constitutional and procedural bases of the Senate and its committees
- ensure the highest standard of accurate and prompt procedural advice
- maintain and improve services to the Senate, its committees, senators and other users of departmental resources using efficient and up-to-date technology
- publish a greater range of information about the Senate’s role and work, faster and in a variety of formats
- ensure our workforce planning, recruitment and staff development practices deliver a highly skilled, knowledgeable and motivated workforce.

The department delivers its outcome through a single departmental program comprising the services provided by its five offices. Figure 2 identifies their responsibilities.

**Figure 2 – Office responsibilities**



The department also participates on a range of interdepartmental committees through which the parliamentary departments coordinate common and joint activities. Chief among these are regular meetings of the heads of the four parliamentary departments; the Parliamentary Administration Advisory Group; the Security Management Board; the Parliamentary ICT Advisory Board; and numerous boards managing joint projects and endeavours such as the implementation of the Parliament's Reconciliation Action Plan.

## Reporting on performance

The next chapter contains the annual performance statement for 2016–17. It also contains a performance report for each of the department's five offices, each of which commences with a table reporting results against the criteria contained in the department's portfolio budget statement and in office work plans.