DEPARTMENT OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Corporate Plan

2021–22

Corporate Plan

2021–22

Table of contents

Clerk's message

As the accountable authority of the Department of the House of Representatives, I am pleased to present the department's Corporate Plan 2021–22, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

In accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule) the plan, which covers the periods 2021–22 to 2024–25, sets out the purpose of the department, the activities undertaken by the department to achieve that purpose, and the measures used by the department to assess its performance.

The plan also describes the environment in which the department operates and the key strategies the department has in place to develop its capability, and summarises the department's approach to good governance and collaboration.

Copies of the plan have been forwarded to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Minister for Finance as required under the Act.

Claressa Surtees

Claressa Surtees
Clerk of the House

Who we are

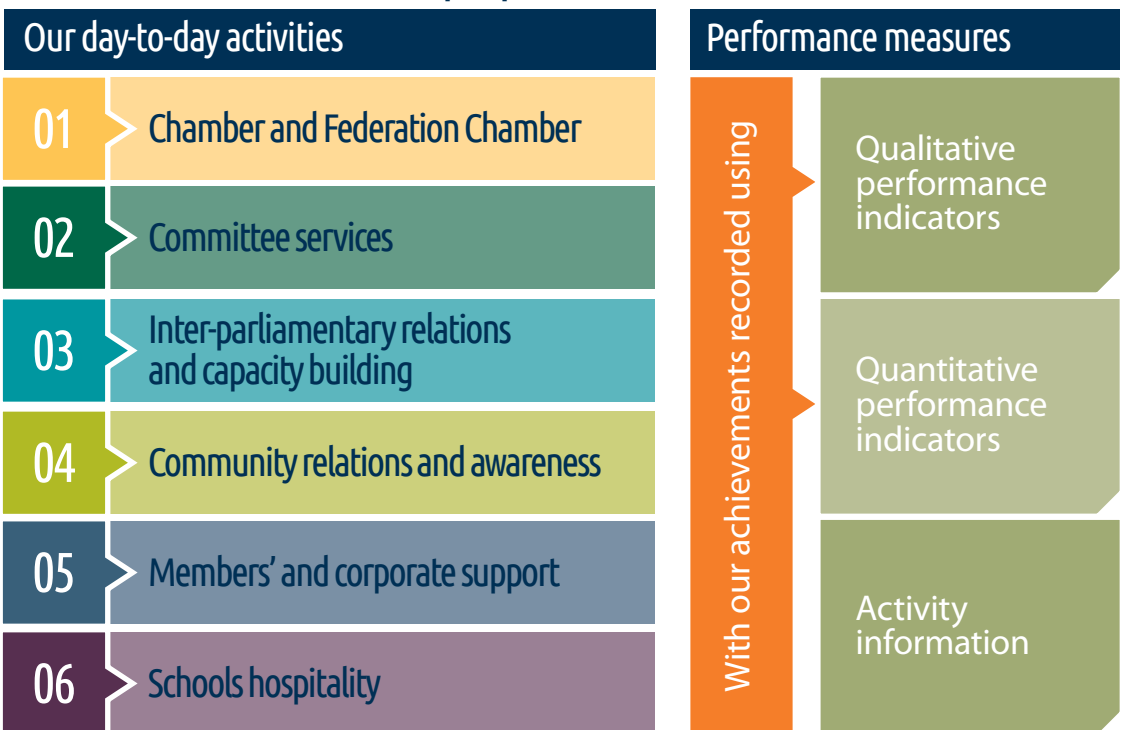## Department of the House of Representatives

One of four departments of the Australian Parliamentary Service established under the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*

Why we are here

Our purpose

To support the House of Representatives, and the wider Parliament, in the role of a representative and legislative body primarily by providing advice and services, and through engaging with the community and other parliaments

What we do to achieve our purpose

Our day-to-day activities

01 Chamber and Federation Chamber

02 Committee services

03 Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity building

04 Community relations and awareness

05 Members' and corporate support

06 Schools hospitality

Performance measures

With our achievements recorded using

- Qualitative performance indicators
- Quantitative performance indicators
- Activity information

How we manage our environment, capability, risk and collaboration

Environment

- » Stakeholder responsibility and engagement
- » Human resources capacity and capability
- » Business domain

Capability

- » Workforce capability
- » Information capability
- » Community awareness
- » Stewardship

Risk oversight and management

- » Independent audit
- » Risk management
- » Business continuity
- » Financial compliance
- » Fraud control

Collaboration

- » Department of the Senate
- » Department of Parliamentary Services
- » Parliamentary Budget Office

About the corporate plan

The **corporate plan**, along with **portfolio budget statements** and the **annual report**, including the **annual performance statement**, are the fundamental components of the enhanced Commonwealth performance framework. These components may be supplemented by internal planning documents, such as business plans or strategic plans.

Figure 1 shows how these components come together across the annual performance reporting cycle for 2021–22. The portfolio budget statements and corporate plan, developed towards the start of the reporting cycle, are the department's key strategic planning documents.
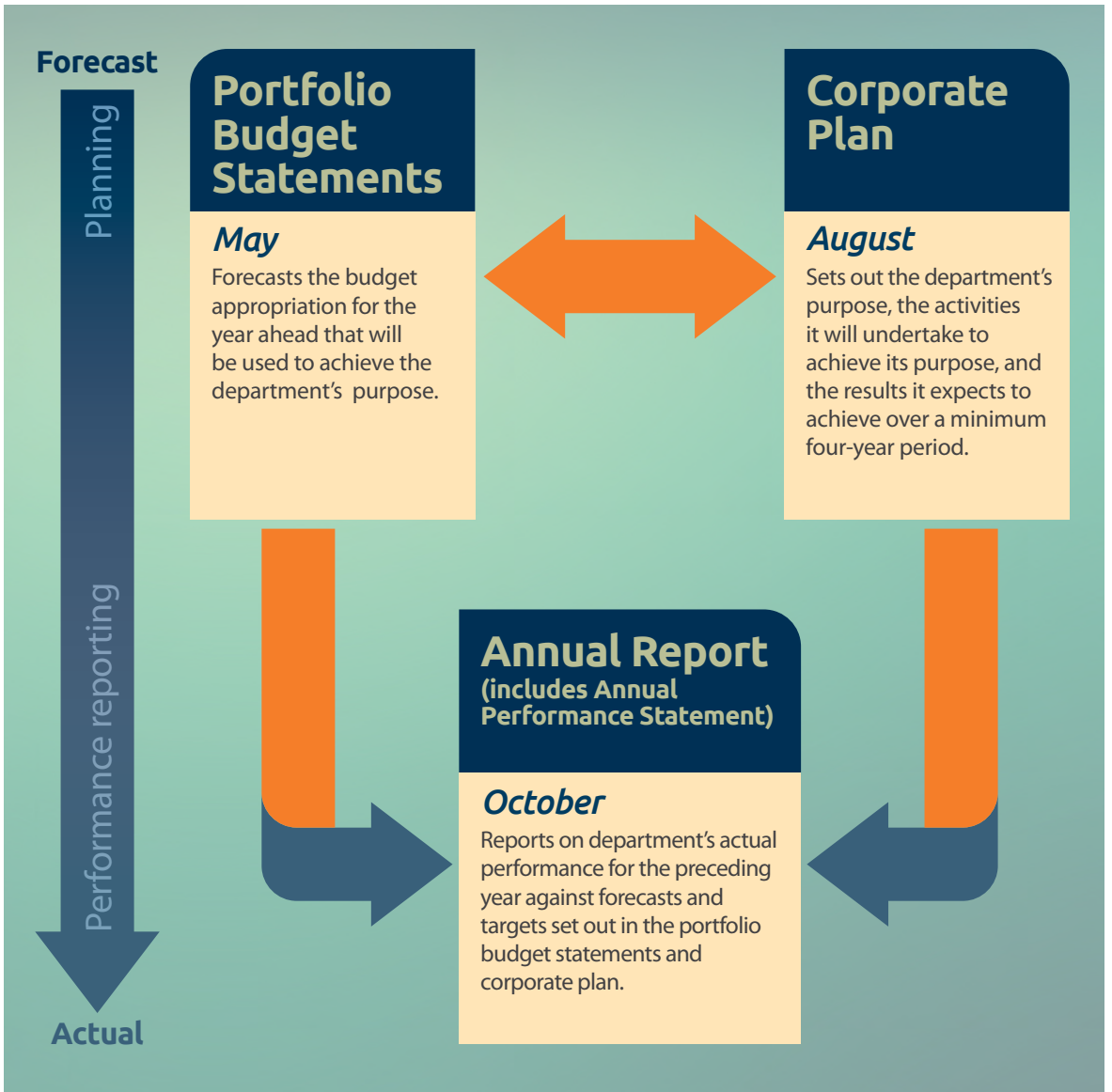
The portfolio budget statements describe how the department will use the resources allocated to it by the Parliament in the year ahead. It provides a forecast of performance against measures for the current year, and at a high level, prospective information on performance measures for the year ahead.

The corporate plan outlines what the department will do to achieve its purpose in the year ahead and in the three forward years. It provides detailed information on the performance measures and targets that will be used to assess the department's success in achieving outcomes to support its purpose.

In addition, program areas or individual offices in the department may produce business plans or strategic plans. These plans have an operational focus, identifying key initiatives and priorities for action for the specific program area or individual office.

The annual report, including the annual performance statement, is published at the end of the reporting cycle. The annual performance statement provides an assessment of the extent to which the department has succeeded in achieving its purpose in the preceding reporting period, using the performance measures and targets set for that year. The annual performance statement also includes an analysis of factors that have affected performance.

Figure 1: Enhanced Commonwealth Performance Framework

Forecast

Planning

Performance reporting

Actual

Portfolio Budget Statements

May

Forecasts the budget appropriation for the year ahead that will be used to achieve the department's purpose.

Corporate Plan

August

Sets out the department's purpose, the activities it will undertake to achieve its purpose, and the results it expects to achieve over a minimum four-year period.

Annual Report (includes Annual Performance Statement)

October

Reports on department's actual performance for the preceding year against forecasts and targets set out in the portfolio budget statements and corporate plan.
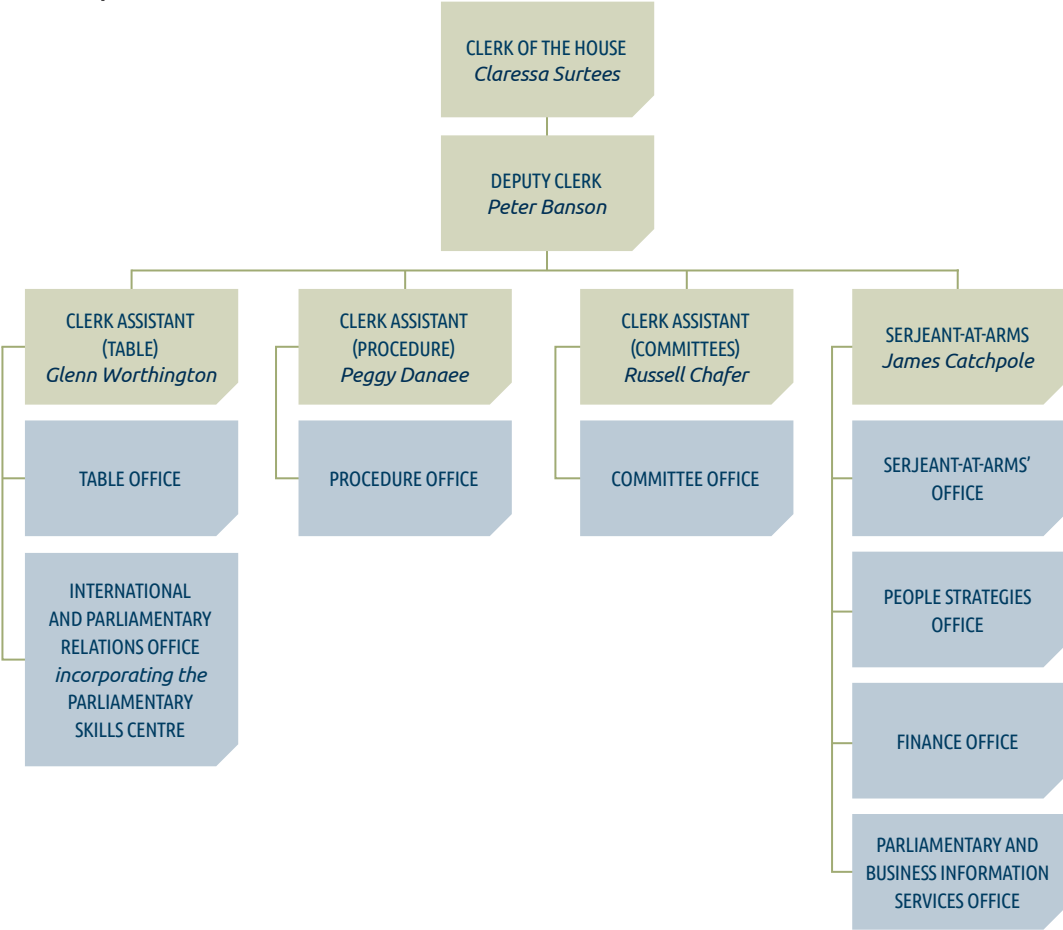
Purpose and organisational structure

The Department of the House of Representatives is one of four departments of the Australian Parliamentary Service established under the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*, the others being the Department of the Senate, the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), and the Parliamentary Budget Office.

> **Purpose—2021–22 to 2024–25**
>
> To support the House of Representatives, and the wider Parliament, in the role of a representative and legislative body primarily by providing advice and services, and through engaging with the community and other parliaments.

The department is managed by its Executive, comprising the Clerk of the House, Deputy Clerk, Clerk Assistant (Table), Clerk Assistant (Procedure), Clerk Assistant (Committees) and Serjeant-at-Arms. Their work is carried out through eight offices. Figure 2 illustrates the department's organisational structure.

Figure 2:   Departmental structure

CLERK OF THE HOUSE
Claressa Surtees

DEPUTY CLERK
Peter Banson

CLERK ASSISTANT (TABLE)
Glenn Worthington
- TABLE OFFICE
- INTERNATIONAL AND PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS OFFICE *incorporating the* PARLIAMENTARY SKILLS CENTRE

CLERK ASSISTANT (PROCEDURE)
Peggy Danaee
- PROCEDURE OFFICE

CLERK ASSISTANT (COMMITTEES)
Russell Chafer
- COMMITTEE OFFICE

SERJEANT-AT-ARMS
James Catchpole
- SERJEANT-AT-ARMS' OFFICE
- PEOPLE STRATEGIES OFFICE
- FINANCE OFFICE
- PARLIAMENTARY AND BUSINESS INFORMATION SERVICES OFFICE

Environment

The department operates in a dynamic political and economic environment. Factors, to varying degrees within the department's control, affect the nature and volume of its work in supporting the House of Representatives to carry out its legislative, representative and parliamentary engagement functions.

> The department's operating environment is characterised by its:
> » responsibility to, and engagement with, stakeholders
> » human resources capacity and capability
> » business domain.

Factors affecting the department's operating environment are outlined in more detail in the tables below, with an assessment of the extent to which the department can influence each factor.

Responsibility to, and engagement with, stakeholders

The department is accountable to a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in its work. The department is focused on providing expert support, a shared responsibility for stewardship of the institution of Parliament, and robust stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

The department has an ongoing commitment to strengthening the procedural capacity of the institution of Parliament through provision of additional procedural advice and increased learning opportunities for members and departmental staff.

The department also engages with the Australian community through information resources published on the parliament's website, various social media platforms and educational seminars on topics including legislation, the Commonwealth budget process and the work of parliamentary committees.

Factor	Extent of department's influence		
	Greater	Partial	Limited
Responsibility to the Speaker, who is accountable to the House for the work of the department, and (with the President of the Senate) manages the parliamentary precincts	●		
Responsibility to parliamentarians, who have specific requirements as legislators, representatives and building occupants	●		
Engagement with representatives of executive government, professional groups, peak bodies and private individuals who interact with the House or committees supported by the department	●		
Engagement with the Australian community as a stakeholder with an interest in the democratic process and the work of parliament	●		
Collaboration with the established community of overseas and domestic parliamentary counterparts		●	

Factor	Extent of department's influence		
	Greater	**Partial**	**Limited**
Shared responsibility (with members of parliament, and with the other parliamentary departments) to uphold the institution of Parliament, and the House in particular, with its unique history, traditions and procedures		●	
Collaboration with the other parliamentary departments and external agencies in support of the wider parliamentary service		●	
Engagement as a client of DPS with respect to delivery and support for various IT systems		●	

Human resources capacity and capability

The department relies on a professional, experienced and engaged workforce to achieve its objectives. With increasing competition for skilled people in the workforce generally, and with changing demographics including the coexistence of several generations in the workforce with different needs, the department continues to work to nurture a culture of professionalism and inclusion, and to retain a strong cohort of leaders who can respond effectively to current and emerging challenges.

In 2021–22 the department will continue to implement strategies arising out of its workforce plan, *Workplace, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy* and *Reconciliation Action Plan* to guide the people capability of the department and meet its future workforce requirements. Each business area has developed individual workforce plans to identify critical roles and assist with succession planning. These plans will assist the department to effectively manage workforce change by identifying future workforce needs and gaps, and putting in place appropriate responses, to ensure the continued delivery of the department's objectives and outcomes and the wellbeing of staff. A key focus in the next twelve months will be to develop capability matrices for critical roles.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the department consolidated many of its longstanding flexible working arrangements. In the coming year, the department will continue to embed the new *Flexible Working Arrangements Policy and Guidelines* to ensure staff and work areas can harness the benefits of a diverse workforce and improve productivity, wellbeing, engagement and motivation, all of which help the department deliver a high level of support to the Parliament.

The department will also complete a review of its recruitment and induction processes, and implement a new online recruitment and work performance management system, and a self-service human resources portal. These measures will help ensure the department is able to attract and retain highly skilled staff.

Factor	Extent of department's influence		
	Greater	**Partial**	**Limited**
The need for a specialist, highly professional workforce with continuous learning and development as a priority	●		
The need for experienced staff in senior executive roles and an experienced cohort of staff capable of contributing to strategic leadership and from which future senior managers may be drawn	●		
The need for a highly engaged, motivated and experienced workforce seeking rewarding careers in the parliamentary service	●		
A competitive public sector recruitment market that values career diversity, flexible working arrangements and opportunities for progression		●	
The need to ensure an overarching equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace that values and embraces differences in all our work.	●		

Business domain

The department faces demanding service expectations and constrained resources in the business domain. The department has robust governance processes to enhance business effectiveness and efficiency in response to these challenges. The department's workload is significantly influenced by the parliamentary cycle, comprising the parliamentary sitting calendar and the federal election cycle. As a result, workload peaks and troughs may not be readily forecast or evenly spaced.

In the previous financial year, a major focus of the department was its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The department supported the work of the House of Representatives, committees, and members, while implementing strategies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff. This will once again be an area of significant attention for the department and the broader parliamentary service.

This year, the department will also finalise the review of its Work Health and Safety Management System. Safeguarding the health and safety of staff will always be a priority, and the department seeks to provide a safe and respectful workplace where staff can contribute ideas, develop skills, celebrate collective achievements, and feel supported. The department will continue to engage with external reviews into the working environment at Parliament House, including the Australian Human Rights Commission Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces.

Under the Australian Constitution, the House of Representatives will expire on 1 July 2022, meaning it is likely that an election for the House of Representatives, and half of the Senate, will be called before that date. Although the department's purpose remains unchanged while the House is dissolved, some activities undertaken are significantly different, with staff managing a range of processes associated with the departure of retiring and non-returned members, the arrival of returning and new members, and planning for the opening and resumption of a new parliament. The department's priority continues to be supporting the work of the House for the remainder of the 46th Parliament, and 2021–22 will also include an element of planning around the anticipated election.

Factor	Extent of department's influence		
	Greater	Partial	Limited
The parliamentary sitting calendar and key events in the parliamentary cycle, including the federal election, resulting in varied workloads			●
Limited resources, including the operating budget		●	
Client expectations (both internally and externally) of high service standards and low risk tolerance		●	
Opportunities and challenges associated with rapid changes to technology and changing client expectations for the delivery of services and information		●	
Development and compliance with statutory governance and performance reporting frameworks that support robust strategic planning, performance review and oversight	●		
The unique physical location and environment of Parliament House			●
Ongoing changes to information and physical security			●
Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of the Parliament		●	
Involvement with external reviews into the working environment at Parliament House, and the department's response to these reviews		●	

Departmental activities and performance measures

Activities

The department undertakes six distinct activities in supporting the House to carry out its representative and legislative functions. These activities are:

» Activity 1—Chamber and Federation Chamber

» Activity 2—Committee services

» Activity 3—Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity building

» Activity 4—Community relations and awareness

» Activity 5—Members' and corporate support

» Activity 6—Schools hospitality

Performance measures

Each activity is described in detail in the following pages. Intended outcomes indicate how each activity contributes to achieving the department's purpose. The department's performance in undertaking its activities will be assessed during the period covered by this corporate plan using a range of performance measures.

The performance measures include both qualitative and quantitative measures. This reflects the fact that, while some departmental activities involve the delivery of quantifiable outputs, a significant determinant of the department's success in achieving its purpose is the level of satisfaction of stakeholders, including members of the House of Representatives and their staff, with the advice and services the department provides.

The department's performance is assessed using a variety of methods, which include:

» an annual survey distributed to all members of the House of Representatives

» more detailed qualitative information from targeted groups of members

» analytics relating to departmental social media and publications

» evaluations from external stakeholders, such as seminar participants, delegation participants, and staff from other parliaments

» internal Chamber support standards, internal records, and exception reporting.

The target for each performance measure is identified, along with the data source used to assess performance.

In addition to assessing outcomes using these qualitative and quantitative performance measures, the department monitors its work output. Outputs, presented as 'activity information', are assessed throughout the year by managers collecting the relevant data. Data are reported to the department's Executive at regular intervals.

No targets are set for outputs, as most are dependent on factors outside the direct control of the department, particularly the parliamentary cycle.

01 > Chamber and Federation Chamber

The department supports the House of Representatives by:

» providing advice and services to enable the Chamber and Federation Chamber to meet and address business as scheduled and fulfil its role as a representative institution, including:

  » processing of all bills

  » drafting of private members' bills

  » creating documents to support members in the Chamber and Federation Chamber

  » creating and processing the records and documents of the Chamber and Federation Chamber

  » collecting, analysing and publishing procedural and statistical information

  » advising and supporting the Speaker and members in relation to legislative, procedural and administrative matters.

Intended outcomes

» Advice and services meet the needs of members for procedural information and statistical data

» Advice is timely, accurate, comprehensive and impartial

» Bills and other business items are processed within deadlines and in accordance with the Standing Orders and House practice

Performance measures and targets	2021–22	2022→25	Data source
Level of satisfaction among surveyed members with the quality and timeliness of chamber support, procedural and statistical publications, analysis and advisory services	90% satisfied	90% satisfied	Members' survey
Chamber support service standards met for sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber and processing of bills, votes, messages, and other chamber documents with high degree of accuracy and within timeframes	100%	100%	Internal Chamber support standards

Activity information
Number of sittings of the House
Number of meetings of the Federation Chamber
Number of bills introduced

02 > Committee services

The department supports the House of Representatives and the Parliament by:

» providing procedural, research, analytical, drafting and administrative support to enable House of Representatives and certain joint committees to conduct and report on inquiries

» supporting other activities of those committees.

Intended outcomes

» Advice and services provided meet the needs of committee members for thorough, accurate and timely support that facilitates the work of committees

» Committee reports are prepared to a standard that meets members' requirements

Performance measures and targets	2021–22	2022→25	Data source
Level of satisfaction among surveyed committee members with the standard of administrative and procedural support provided	90% satisfied	90% satisfied	Members' survey
Level of satisfaction among surveyed committee members with the standard of research and drafting support provided	90% satisfied	90% satisfied	Members' survey

Activity information
Number of committee meetings, including hearings and briefings
Hours of meetings
Number of committee reports

03 ＞ Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity building

Together with the Department of the Senate, the department supports the Parliament by:

» providing advice and services to support the Parliament's national, international and regional relationships, including through the Parliament's role in hosting inter-parliamentary conferences and events

» assisting other parliaments, primarily within the Indo–Pacific region, by partnering in capacity building activities, including through the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships Fund.

Intended outcomes

» Arrangements for incoming, outgoing and virtual delegations and participation in relevant parliamentary organisations are undertaken in a manner that meets the expectations of the Presiding Officers and delegates

» The sharing of information and expertise contributes to international parliamentary strengthening work and capacity building activities

Performance measures and targets	2021–22	2022→25	Data source
Level of satisfaction of Presiding Officers and delegates with arrangements for official incoming delegations	90% satisfied	90% satisfied	Feedback from the Presiding Officers and qualitative feedback from delegation stakeholders
Level of satisfaction of Presiding Officers and delegates with arrangements for outgoing delegations	90% satisfied	90% satisfied	Feedback from the Presiding Officers and qualitative feedback from delegation stakeholders
Level of satisfaction among participants with capacity building activities	90% satisfied	90% satisfied	Formal survey/ feedback process for parliamentary capacity building activities

Activity information
Number and nature of incoming delegations managed
Number and nature of outgoing delegations managed
Number and nature of parliamentary capacity building activities

04 > Community relations and awareness

The department supports the House of Representatives and the Parliament by:

» providing services to deliver information to the public about the work of the House of Representatives in order to inform stakeholders, and increase public knowledge and awareness of, and interaction with, the work of the House of Representatives and the Parliament

» supporting the Parliamentary Education Office, administered by the Department of the Senate and to which the department makes a financial contribution.

Intended outcomes

» Access to the work of the House and the Parliament is widely available to the public, with engagement and participation rates tending to increase over time

» Increase external client knowledge and understanding of the work of the House of Representatives and the Parliament through the provision of seminars, with participation rates tending to increase over time

» School visitors continue to have access to meaningful programs to better understand the work of the Chamber

Performance measures and targets	2021–22	2022→25	Data source
Community is aware of, and engages with, published information about legislative and other parliamentary processes	Interaction with the work of the House increasing over time (% change on prior year)	Interaction with the work of the House increasing over time (% change on prior year)	Subscriptions for departmental social media accounts and publication analytics
Clients are satisfied with seminars	90% satisfied	90% satisfied	Seminar feedback forms

Activity information
Community contacts with the department's publications
Number of seminar participants

05 > Members' and corporate support

The department supports the House of Representatives by:

» providing advice and services to members relating to accommodation in Parliament House, salaries and allowances, and certain other entitlements

» delivering high quality and valued corporate advice and services to the department and members

» monitoring developments in best practice parliamentary and public administration and continuing to apply them as appropriate

» prioritising key risks to work, health and safety to maximise the wellbeing of staff and members

» assisting to set and deliver the department's corporate strategic direction

» seeking resources that will enable the requirements of the House and committees to be met into the future.

Intended outcomes

» Working through various forums across the parliamentary departments to ensure common policies and frameworks are effectively aligned and assessed to achieve the right outcomes

» Evaluations show a high degree of satisfaction with the provision of accommodation and office support services and in managing risks to the health and safety of members, their staff and departmental staff

Performance measures and targets	2021–22	2022→25	Data source
Speaker's level of satisfaction with the overall quality of non-chamber support services provided, including accommodation, office support, transport coordination, salary processing and other members' support services	Very satisfied	Very satisfied	Feedback from the Speaker's Office on the overall quality of non-chamber support services provided to the Speaker, the Speaker's Office and other members
Level of satisfaction among members with the overall quality of non-chamber support services provided, including accommodation, office support, transport coordination, salary processing and other members' support services	90% satisfied	90% satisfied	Members' survey

Activity information
Number of Parliament House accommodation and office support services
Number of transport coordination services provided to members

06 > Schools hospitality

The department supports the Parliament by:

» providing a booking service for school groups visiting Parliament House

» coordinating provision of hospitality for these groups.

Intended outcome

» Hospitality is provided in accordance with bookings made by visiting school groups

Performance measures and targets	2021–22	2022→25	Data source
Timely and accurate provision of advice to the Department of Parliamentary Services about hospitality required by visiting school groups, in accordance with bookings	100%	100%	Internal departmental records, and exception reporting from DPS, parliamentarians and school groups

Activity information

Number of visiting school students booked

Capability

Development of the department's capability ensures that the department continues to achieve its purpose, and that there is sufficient flexibility and expertise to meet future needs.

Workforce capability

The department will continue to strengthen workforce capability and expertise to ensure it is suitably skilled into the future. The ability to provide advice and support to the Speaker, members, the House of Representatives, and parliamentary committees is based on the knowledge, skills, and professionalism of department staff. There will be a continued focus on developing and sharing knowledge of parliamentary practice and procedure and the ability to apply that knowledge.

The department will also continue to invest in its future leaders. Consistent with the department's leadership statement, the department will remain focused on embedding leadership as a practice that can and should occur at all levels. Tailored management and leadership training remains central to building the department's workforce capability. Digital skills and the ability to leverage technology will also be a focus of the department's capability building activities in 2021–22.

In recognising the competitive recruitment market, and the department's demographic profile, the short to medium term capability development strategy focuses on:

- » developing parliamentary practice and procedural knowledge and skills across the department
- » equipping staff with transferrable skills by committing to constant skills renewal and building a culture which supports continuous learning
- » strengthening the department's leadership and management capabilities
- » tailoring workforce strategies to attract, engage and retain a diverse workforce
- » maturing the department's risk capabilities and culture
- » ensuring that all staff have the capability to ensure a respectful and inclusive workplace.

Workforce capability—initiatives	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024–25
Implement strategies associated with the workforce plan and evaluate and monitor outcomes	●	●	●	●
Provide professional development and learning for staff at all levels for leadership, procedural and specialist skills through participation in a program of courses and on the job training	●	●	●	●
Revise the department's performance management framework	●			
Build a diverse workforce by increasing representation and fostering an inclusive culture	●	●	●	●
Implement a new e-recruitment system and induction processes	●			

Information capability

The department's information systems are critical to its ability to support the House of Representatives, committees, and parliamentarians. The information created, managed, and published by the department is an asset for the nation. Public policy, stakeholder and audience expectations, the COVID-19 pandemic, and technological change, are all driving the department to progress the management, use and delivery of information.

The department's information systems are primarily supported by DPS and currently the department relies on several ageing, bespoke systems that require urgent attention. The focus of the department and DPS for much of last year was on quickly upgrading remote access and videoconferencing capabilities. This year the department will engage with DPS and advocate for the replacement of critical systems. The department will also continue to strengthen its own project management and business analysis expertise to support these projects.

Cyber security awareness is another key part of the department's information capability. The department will continue to apply a risk-based approach to cyber security and will work with DPS to promote cyber security awareness among staff. All new and enhanced systems will be required to have appropriate cyber security reviews completed.

Through the Knowledge Management Steering Committee, the department will also work to strengthen the information capability of all staff in the year ahead. A digital uplift survey will help the department benchmark the skills and knowledge of its workforce and will assist in identifying training and development needs. The expectations of parliamentarians, the community and other stakeholders are rapidly evolving, and the department will need to leverage the information systems and tools available to best meet those expectations.

The department will further expand the use of digital work practices in accordance with the principles of the National Archives of Australia's (NAA) *Building Trust in the Public Record Policy*. The department will also work with other parliamentary departments to implement frameworks for digital preservation and development of capability in information management.

Information capability—initiatives	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024-25
Progress critical ICT business systems enhancement and replacement program	●	●	●	●
Contribute to whole of parliament information initiatives	●	●	●	●
Strengthen information management practices in line with the principles of the NAA's *Building Trust in the Public Record Policy*	●	●	●	●
Work with DPS to promote cyber security awareness among staff	●	●	●	●
Design training and development for staff to maximise the use of available information systems and tools	●	●		

Community awareness

The department continues to promote the work of the House and committees supported by the department through a range of awareness activities, including digital content and publications, events and seminars. The department will also further enhance its digital publications and information offerings to meet the growing need for parliamentary information.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, last year the department developed the capability to deliver seminars online. This included the procurement of specialist equipment, the provision of additional tools and training to staff, as well as the development of tailored materials. This digital capability will continue to be developed and will complement in-person seminars at Parliament House in accordance with the COVID-19 access arrangements determined by the Presiding Officers.

The department will continue to implement initiatives associated with its Indigenous Engagement Strategy as it seeks to raise awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and aspirations among staff, and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples' engagement with the House and committees supported by the department.

With continuous change in the communication and media environments, it is critical that the department delivers information to audiences in a way that is easy to digest using a range of channels, platforms and formats. This year, the department will seek to better measure community awareness of and engagement with the Parliament to help ensure the department is communicating effectively with the public. Following the upgrades to information systems central to the work of the Parliament, the department also plans to transform the way statistics on the operation of the House of Representatives are presented to the community and other stakeholders.

Community awareness—initiatives	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024-25
Gain greater understanding of current and potential audience expectations	●			
Grow audiences to expand the reach of information	●	●	●	●
Review information offerings to ensure availability across a range of platforms and channels	●			
Measure effectiveness of offerings through ongoing reporting frameworks	●	●	●	●
Create innovative systems and processes to deliver information	●	●	●	●
Implement initiatives associated with the Indigenous Engagement Strategy and evaluate and monitor outcomes	●	●		
Improve the presentation of statistics on the work of the House of Representatives on the Parliament's website	●	●		

Stewardship

The department has an ongoing commitment to uphold the institutions of the Parliament, and of the House in particular, with its history, traditions and procedures. This commitment to stewardship derives from the strong elements of continuity and expertise that the department has provided in supporting members, the House and the Parliament since 1901. It is underpinned by the specialist procedural knowledge and skills of departmental staff, particularly knowledge of House procedure, and by the department's long-established culture of service to the House. Such a specialist and continuing commitment to Australia's parliamentary institutions is important in the ongoing global environment where faith in democratic institutions continues to be under challenge.

In line with the department's imperative of building procedural capability, new resources continue to be developed for the House's diverse audiences in collaborations across the department. Resources and services directed to enhancing procedural knowledge and technical skills for members (in their various chamber roles) and across the department will continue to be reviewed and, as necessary, revised and supplemented.

In the coming year the department will begin preparing for the dissolution of the House of Representatives and the commencement of the 47th Parliament. This will include updates to information resources for a new Speaker, members of the Speaker's panel and members newly elected to the House.

Stewardship—initiatives	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024-25
Promote and maintain the currency of key procedural resources such as the *Guide to Procedures*, *Infosheets* etc	●	●	●	●
Continue the drafting process for the principal procedural reference, *House of Representatives Practice*, 8th ed	●	●	●	
Reviewing the content and format of procedural information, including complementing current publications such as *House Review* with access to relevant video material	●	●		
Develop and implement strategies and resources for enhanced engagement by members, staff and others with the institutions	●	●	●	●
Provide procedural knowledge resources and services for members and staff, particularly those with additional procedural responsibilities	●	●	●	●

Risk oversight and management

The department has a comprehensive framework to develop, implement, monitor and review strategies in place to achieve and maintain good governance. The framework comprises independent audit and assurance, risk management, business continuity, financial compliance, and fraud control.

Independent audit

The department's Audit and Risk Committee provides independent assurance to the Clerk as to the department's financial and performance reporting responsibilities, risk oversight and management, and system of internal control. The Audit and Risk Committee consists of an independent chair, three independent members who are not officials of any Commonwealth agency, and one independent member from another Commonwealth entity. The committee meets at least four times per year and is supported by a departmental secretariat.

The department's Strategic Internal Audit Plan supports existing assurance frameworks while assisting with identifying and addressing department-wide risks and control issues. A revised plan for 2021–24 will be reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee in September 2021 and will inform internal audit activity over the next three years.

In 2021–22 topics for internal audit include the management of ICT capability, projects and risks, as well as business continuity planning. The ICT capability review will be conducted jointly with the Department of the Senate to review the provision of ICT services against the current Memorandum of Understanding and Service Level Agreements with DPS.

To ensure the Strategic Internal Audit Plan continues to be aligned with areas of highest priority it is subject to annual review. Outcomes of internal audits, and any recommendations arising, are reported to the department's Executive for response and to the Audit and Risk Committee for consideration and ongoing monitoring.

The Department of Finance has recently established a new Whole of Australian Government Management Advisory Services Panel. In the current year, the department will prepare to approach the market for an internal auditor under this new panel arrangement.

Risk management

The department has a Risk Management Policy and Framework to ensure that consideration is given to possible risks and potential opportunities as an integral part of well-informed departmental management, planning and decision-making processes. The Risk Management Policy and Framework defines the department's risk appetite and level of risk tolerance, and allocates responsibility to staff at various levels for aspects of risk planning, mitigation, oversight and reporting.

The Risk Management Policy and Framework is complemented by the department's Risk Management Plan, which comprises a detailed analysis of the likelihood and consequences of the department's key strategic risks, and the treatments to be applied in each case. The Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Plan are available to all staff, through the department's intranet.

A total of eight key strategic risks are identified in the department's Risk Management Plan. These risks relate to:

» strengthening the department's leadership and management capabilities
» ICT capability
» resourcing and staff capability
» service delivery
» collaboration with other parliamentary departments
» work health and safety.

The department has a monitoring and reporting framework, requiring regular reporting on risks and risk treatments to its Executive. The department's Audit and Risk Committee is responsible for providing independent advice on the suitability of the framework and monitoring system. Additionally, a system of working groups and committees with appropriate representation from the relevant parliamentary departments, provides the means to monitor and report on risks that are shared across the parliamentary service, for example ICT services and security.

The department also completes the biennial Comcover Risk Management Benchmarking Program survey. Results from this survey in 2021 indicate that the department has a risk maturity of 'embedded'. This is the second highest rating available and the maturity level the department identified as its goal. The next survey is scheduled for 2023.

Based on the results of the survey, the department will continue to focus on improving its risk capabilities and culture. Customised risk management training, based on education programs developed by Comcover, will be offered to staff involved in managing risk. Over the four-year period the department will further embed risk management into its business processes. To support this, the department has identified risk champions to lead activities addressing risk and encourage effective risk management practices.

Business continuity

The department is vigilant in ensuring business continuity arrangements are appropriate to the current environment and circumstances. This approach is intended to provide practical guidance on strategies that will help the department mitigate the impact of possible business interruption events to ensure there is minimal disruption to critical services.

The department has a network which is responsible for the governance and oversight of business continuity related matters. The Business Continuity Network includes the Deputy Clerk, the Serjeant-at-Arms and directors from all business areas of the department.

The network regularly considers the currency of the departmental business continuity plan and associated office level business resumption plans. A key priority for the year ahead is the internal audit into the department's business continuity arrangements. It is intended that this will inform the redevelopment of the business continuity plan, to incorporate best practice and lessons learnt from the challenges of the 2019 bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the year the department also established an internal COVID-19 coordination group. The group was established to facilitate information sharing within the department, to respond to identified COVID-19 risks and hazards, or quickly escalate issues that require action from the Executive. The group is also intended to provide a central point of enquiry for departmental staff for issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As well as participating in relevant inter-agency business continuity exercises, the department has its own program of scenario-based exercises that are held twice per year. To ensure business continuity preparedness across the department, the program of scenario-based exercises engages with different work areas each year, under the oversight of the Business Continuity Network. The Clerk's Office will take part in the first exercise for 2021–22.

Financial compliance

In order to meet the requirements of the PGPA Act and the PGPA Rules, in conjunction with other relevant government policies, officials within the department are supported with information and advice on financial management practices.

The Chief Finance Officer oversees a compliance framework that ensures that staff have been provided with a level of authority necessary to discharge their financial and other responsibilities whilst minimising the risk of mistake or misappropriation. The efficacy of the framework is reported quarterly to the Executive and the department's Audit and Risk Committee.

Fraud control

The department's Fraud Control Plan outlines strategies and processes for preventing and detecting fraud, and for investigating and reporting instances of fraud should they occur. Responsibility for implementing and monitoring aspects of the plan is allocated among senior staff of the department including the Clerk, SES officers and the Chief Finance Officer. The accompanying Fraud Risk Assessment identifies and assesses key fraud risks and treatments across categories including information management, finance and procurement, and staff, salaries and entitlements.

Fraud risk and responsibilities under the Fraud Control Plan are drawn to the attention of staff through a mandatory induction e-learning course.

Collaboration

Departmental officers collaborate with colleagues across the parliamentary service daily, and rely on their professional skills to provide services to members and others.

The four parliamentary departments are guided in their work by the *Strategic Framework: the parliamentary service*. This document outlines the common purpose of the four departments while recognising the unique nature of their individual responsibilities and capabilities. Building on the strong working relationships across the parliamentary service, the document is intended to guide the ongoing collaborative approach between the parliamentary departments.

This year will see the continued implementation of actions identified in the Australian Parliamentary Service *Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–22*. This plan articulates the collective vision and commitment to establishing respectful, sustainable and enduring partnerships between the Australian Parliamentary Service and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Other significant areas of collaboration for the parliamentary departments relate to shared ICT support and services, and the security of Parliament House and its precincts. In the year ahead, the parliamentary departments will continue to respond to the challenges of the COVID 19 pandemic, and will work together to ensure the safe, effective operation of parliament.

The working environment at Parliament House is under continuing external review, including through the Australian Human Rights Commission Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces. While not yet definitive, this is a significant new area of collaboration for the parliamentary departments.

Collaboration—initiatives	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	2024-25
In collaboration with other parliamentary departments, act on the strategies in the *Strategic Framework: the parliamentary service*	●	●	●	●
Continue to implement actions specified in the *Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–22*	●	●		
Monitor service level agreements with other parliamentary departments to ensure the department's needs continue to be identified and met	●	●	●	●
Continue to influence the development of a 'whole-of-parliamentary service' culture and governance	●	●	●	●
In collaboration with other parliamentary departments, responses to external reviews, including the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces	●	●	●	●

Further information

More information about the department's corporate governance and planning processes is available from the following sources:

» Portfolio budget statements
» Annual reports
» Service charters.

List of requirements

The Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 sets out the matters that must be included in the department's corporate plan.

Item	Topic	Matters to be included	Page number
1	Introduction	The following:	5
		(a) a statement that the plan is prepared for paragraph 35(1)(b) of the PGPA Act;	
		(b) the reporting period for which the plan is prepared;	
		(c) the reporting periods covered by the plan.	
2	Purposes	The purposes of the entity.	6, 9
3	Key activities	For the entire period covered by the plan, the key activities that the entity will undertake in order to achieve its purposes.	13
4	Operating context	For the entire period covered by the plan, the following:	
		(a) the environment in which the entity will operate;	10
		(b) the strategies and plans the entity will implement to have the capability it needs to undertake its key activities and achieve its purposes;	20
		(c) a summary of the risk oversight and management systems of the entity, and the key risks that the entity will manage and how those risks will be managed;	24
		(d) details of any organisation or body that will make a significant contribution towards achieving the entity's purposes through cooperation with the entity, including how that cooperation will help achieve those purposes; and	27
		(e) how any subsidiary of the entity will contribute to achieving the entity's purposes.	N/A
5	Performance	For each reporting period covered by the plan, details of how the entity's performance in achieving the entity's purposes will be measured and assessed through:	13
		(a) specified performance measures for the entity that meet the requirements of section 16EA; and	
		(b) specified targets for each of those performance measures for which it is reasonably practicable to set a target.	

Corporate Plan

2021–22