



# Part 2

## Performance

Annual performance statement	12
Chamber and Federation Chamber	27
Community awareness	41
Committee support	47
Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building	55
Members' and corporate support	60
Schools hospitality	66

# Annual performance statement

## Introductory statement

I, as the accountable authority of the Department of the House of Representatives, present the department's 2016–17 annual performance statement, as required under section 39(1)(a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). In my opinion, this annual performance statement accurately reflects the performance of the department, and complies with section 39(2) of the PGPA Act.

**David Elder, Clerk of the House**

## Purpose

The department's purpose, as set out in its 2016–17 corporate plan, is to support the House of Representatives, and the wider Parliament, in the role of a representative and legislative body by providing expert advice and services of a high standard (Outcome 1).

## Data sources

The results and analysis presented in this annual performance statement are based on data from several sources. These include a survey of members of the House, interviews with new members who were elected to the House in 2016, and a survey of departmental staff. Data from these sources has been supplemented with formal and informal feedback from stakeholders, including the Presiding Officers, visiting dignitaries and external clients, such as seminar participants and beneficiaries of the department's inter-parliamentary capacity-building activities.

## Members' survey

In previous years, 30 members of the House were randomly selected for survey and interview to gauge their level of satisfaction with the advice and services provided by the department. In 2017, for the first time, all 150 members were invited to complete an online questionnaire; hard copies were available on request. The survey was open from 20 March to 30 June 2017 and members were advised that their responses would be anonymous.

The survey asked members to indicate whether they were satisfied with each of the following:

- » the quality and timeliness of chamber procedural support and advisory services
- » the quality and availability of procedural and statistical publications, and support to obtain these
- » the quality and timeliness of parliamentary committee advice and services
- » the standard of committee reports
- » support for participation in official international delegations
- » support for their House of Representatives office accommodation
- » support for their salary payments.

Members could provide specific comments about each service and, at the end of the survey, they were invited to provide additional comments on any aspect of services.

A total of 24 members completed the online questionnaire, a response rate of 16 per cent. There were no requests for the survey in hard copy.

### ***New members' interviews***

To complement the members' survey, the 37 members newly elected to the House in 2016 were invited to participate in in-depth face-to-face interviews. The members were advised that the department was conducting the interviews to get feedback on the level and quality of its advice, information and services, and to gain an insight into service provision, particularly as it relates to new members. Areas covered in the interviews were:

- » the usefulness of the new members' seminar held in August 2016
- » the timeliness and quality of advice and support received in relation to participation in the Chamber and Federation Chamber
- » the quality, availability and usefulness of any procedural publications and resources
- » the quality and usefulness of advice and support received in relation to work on parliamentary committees
- » the support received from the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office in relation to accommodation in Parliament House and support services such as transport, stationery, salaries and allowances
- » any additional advice or support or services that would assist new members in adapting to the role of a member.

The new members were advised that their responses would be compiled into a summary report on satisfaction levels and areas for improvement or new initiatives, but that individual responses would remain confidential.

Interviews were conducted in May and June 2017 with 26 new members, a participation rate of 70 per cent.

### ***Staff survey***

The departmental staff survey for 2016–17 was available online from 30 June to 21 July 2017. Staff were advised that the survey would assist the department in gauging the level of staff satisfaction with current conditions. Staff were also advised that results of the survey would be distributed to staff, addressing key trends, but that individual responses would not be identified.

A total of 111 staff responded to the survey, a participation rate of 73 per cent.

### ***Other data sources***

At the commencement of the Forty-fifth Parliament, a register of feedback on departmental supports and services was established. The register is used to record oral and written comments received during the year, and includes feedback from members, their staff, participants in official parliamentary delegations and visiting dignitaries.

### Activity information

The department monitors its work output by collecting information on specific activities throughout the year. Comparisons with data from previous years provide a longitudinal perspective and an indication of the extent to which various outputs are affected by the parliamentary cycle.

## Results

### Activity 1: Chamber and Federation Chamber

<b>Performance criterion</b>	<b>Target</b>
Level of satisfaction among surveyed members with the quality and timeliness of chamber support and advisory services	99 per cent satisfied
<b>Criterion source</b>	
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 18; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18	
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>	
Target met. One hundred per cent of members who responded to the members' survey indicated satisfaction. Feedback from new members was largely consistent with the survey results. The majority of new members interviewed reported a high degree of satisfaction and some commented specifically on the professionalism and helpfulness of chamber support staff. However, a few new members indicated that they were unsure about the extent and nature of the support and advisory services available through the department for their chamber work.	
<b>Performance criterion</b>	<b>Target</b>
Level of satisfaction among surveyed members with the quality and availability of procedural and statistical publications, and support in obtaining such information	99 per cent satisfied
<b>Criterion source</b>	
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 18; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18	
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>	
Target met. One hundred per cent of members who responded to the members' survey indicated satisfaction. Feedback from new members on this criterion was varied. Some indicated that they were satisfied with the quality and availability of the department's procedural and statistical publications. Others indicated that they did not use the publications much, and it appeared that some new members were not aware of the range of publications and resources available to them. A small number commented that they found it difficult to locate the resources on the department's internet and intranet systems.	

### Activity 1: Chamber and Federation Chamber (continued)

<b>Performance criterion</b>	<b>Target</b>			
Percentage of chamber support service standards met for sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber, with no significant errors	100 per cent			
<b>Criterion source</b>				
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 18; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18				
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>				
Target met. Chamber support service standards were met, with no significant errors identified.				
<b>Performance criterion</b>	<b>Target</b>			
Percentage of bills, votes, messages, and documents processed within deadlines and with no significant errors	100 per cent			
<b>Criterion source</b>				
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 18; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18				
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>				
Target met. Processing of proposed legislation and other business was completed within agreed timeframes and no significant errors were identified.				
<b>Activity measures (no targets set)</b>				
<b>Source</b>				
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 17				
<b>Measure and results</b>				
	<b>2013–14<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>2014–15</b>	<b>2015–16</b>	<b>2016–17<sup>a</sup></b>
Number of sittings of the House	53	77	60	64
Number of meetings of the Federation Chamber	40	57	41	59
Number of bills introduced	182	203	162	248
a. Election year.				

### Activity 2: Community awareness

<b>Performance criterion</b>					<b>Target</b>
Level of satisfaction among surveyed members with community outreach initiatives in raising awareness of the work of the parliament					95 per cent satisfied
<b>Criterion source</b>	2016–17 corporate plan, p. 19; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18				
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>	<p>New measures are being developed for this criterion.</p> <p>The members' survey did not include a question on members' satisfaction with community outreach initiatives. In 2017 the department reviewed its performance measures to develop a more meaningful framework. Revised measures for community awareness based on quantitative data measuring the level of public interaction with published material on the work of the House, and levels of satisfaction with seminars offered to external clients, have been included in the 2017–18 corporate plan.</p>				
<b>Performance criterion</b>					<b>Target</b>
Number of participants in community awareness programs and subscribers to digital services					Number of participants and subscribers continues to increase over time
<b>Criterion source</b>	2016–17 corporate plan, p. 19; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18				
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>	<p>Target met.</p> <p>The number of participants in community awareness programs continues to grow over time. The department has progressively expanded its seminar program by creating tailored seminars to meet the needs of specific clients. The department continues to raise awareness through a range of digital publications, and use of those publications has increased over time.</p> <p>The department is developing a methodology for measuring different types of community engagement with its various digital platforms and will provide that information in future reporting.</p>				
<b>Activity measure (no target set)</b>					
<b>Source</b>	New activity measure				
<b>Measure and results</b>					
	<b>2013–14<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>2014–15</b>	<b>2015–16</b>	<b>2016–17<sup>a</sup></b>	
Number of seminars conducted	5	7	8	9	
a. Election year.					

### Activity 3: Committee support

<b>Performance criterion</b>					<b>Target</b>
Level of satisfaction among surveyed committee members with the thoroughness, accuracy and timeliness of advice and services provided					90 per cent satisfied
<b>Criterion source</b>					
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 20; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18					
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>					
Target met.					
Ninety-six per cent of respondents to the members' survey indicated satisfaction. One member commented that briefing material was sometimes circulated only a short time before meetings, allowing little time for committee members to review and consider the content.					
Feedback from new members was consistent with the survey results. Overall, new members expressed high levels of satisfaction with committee support services, commenting on the professionalism of secretariat staff. A small number, however, noted that briefing materials were sometimes circulated only a short time ahead of meetings.					
<b>Performance criterion</b>					<b>Target</b>
Level of satisfaction among surveyed committee members with the standard of committee reports					90 per cent satisfied
<b>Criterion source</b>					
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 20; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18					
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>					
Target met.					
One hundred per cent of members who responded to the members' survey indicated satisfaction. Feedback from new members was consistent with the survey results. Responses indicated a high level of satisfaction with the quality of reports and other written material produced by the committee staff.					
<b>Activity measures (no targets set)</b>					
<b>Source</b>					
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 20					
<b>Measure and results</b>					
	<b>2013–14<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>2014–15</b>	<b>2015–16</b>	<b>2016–17<sup>a</sup></b>	
Number of committee meetings <sup>b</sup>	327	574	555	541	
Hours of meetings <sup>b</sup>	619	1,018	912	845	
Number of committee reports <sup>b</sup>	21	70	72	46	
a. Election year.					
b. Excludes internal committees.					



### Activity 4: Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building

<b>Performance criterion</b>	<b>Target</b>
Level of satisfaction of Presiding Officers with arrangements for incoming and outgoing delegations	Very satisfied
<b>Criterion source</b>	
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 22; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18	
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>	
Target met.	
Good feedback was received from the Presiding Officers and their offices on arrangements for incoming and outgoing delegations during the year, including the Presiding Officers' own travel. In particular, the Presiding Officers were very satisfied with arrangements made for the MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia) Speakers' Consultation hosted by the Australian Parliament and conducted in Tasmania.	
<b>Performance criterion</b>	<b>Target</b>
Level of satisfaction among delegates and diplomatic representatives with arrangements for incoming and outgoing delegations	Very satisfied
<b>Criterion source</b>	
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 22; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18	
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>	
Target met.	
Eighty-nine per cent of respondents to the members' survey were satisfied with participation in official delegations. Comments indicating dissatisfaction related to limited opportunities for members to participate, rather than dissatisfaction with the quality of support for members who participated in outgoing delegations.	
Very good verbal and, for incoming delegations, written feedback from delegations and diplomatic representatives was received during the year. For outgoing delegations, feedback suggested members were very satisfied with arrangements. Post-visit feedback from delegates and Australian embassies and high commissions also indicated that visit objectives were met.	
<b>Performance criterion</b>	<b>Target</b>
Level of satisfaction among parliaments in the Pacific region with the training and any equipment purchases provided	Very satisfied
<b>Criterion source</b>	
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 22; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18	



### Activity 4: Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building (continued)

#### Result against performance criterion

Target met.

Survey feedback from participants in the Inter-Parliamentary Study Program conducted for staff of other parliaments, participants in the Australia–Samoa Parliamentary Partnerships Seminar Series and participants in the ‘Outrigger’ facilitators’ workshop under the Pacific Women’s Parliamentary Partnerships Project indicated a very high degree of satisfaction with the training provided.

An item of equipment was provided to the Niue Parliament and support to attend training in Australia was provided to the Cook Islands Parliament from the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships Fund. The parliaments were satisfied with this support. Other equipment and training purchases supported from the fund were deferred in 2016–17 while a review of the fund was undertaken.

#### Activity measure (no target set)

Levels of participation in parliamentary organisations

#### Source

2016–17 corporate plan, p. 21

#### Result

The department continued to support Australia’s membership in international parliamentary associations, including active participation in relevant conferences and general assemblies, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union General Assembly and the Asia–Pacific Parliamentary Forum.

The department provided significant ongoing support for other parliamentary organisations, including the Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table and the Australasian Study of Parliament Group.

#### Activity measures (no targets set)

#### Source

2016–17 corporate plan, p. 21, and new activity measure

#### Measures and results

	2013–14 <sup>a</sup>	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>
Number of delegations managed	33	48	47	46
Number and nature of non-delegation study programs and other activities:	34	44	29	19
occasions equipment supplied to Pacific parliaments	9	7	7	1
staff attachments and study visits	19	32	18	13
conferences, seminars and workshops	6	5	4	5

a. Election year.

**Activity 5: Members' and corporate support**

<b>Performance criterion</b>	<b>Target</b>
Level of satisfaction among members, their staff and departmental staff with the provision of accommodation and office support services	95 per cent satisfied
<b>Criterion source</b>	
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 24; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18	
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>	
<p>Target not fully met.</p> <p>Ninety-one per cent of respondents to the members' survey indicated satisfaction. Some members raised issues with office support services that are the responsibility of other entities, including the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) and the Department of Finance.</p> <p>Feedback from new members was consistent with the survey result, also covering services provided by other government entities. The majority of members interviewed were satisfied with their office accommodation and office support services. Suggestions for improvement related to refurbishment of members' offices and access to stationery.</p> <p>Eighty-seven per cent of departmental staff who responded to the 2016–17 staff survey indicated that they were satisfied that they had the materials and equipment they needed to do their work, and 89 per cent indicated that they were satisfied with the working environment.</p>	
<b>Performance criterion</b>	<b>Target</b>
Percentage of variations to salary and allowances and salary increases processed accurately	99 per cent
<b>Criterion source</b>	
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 24; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18	
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>	
<p>Target met.</p> <p>More than 99 per cent of variations to salary and allowances and salary increases for members and for departmental staff were processed accurately.</p> <p>While the members' survey did not ask about the accuracy of processing of salary and allowance variations, members were invited to comment on their satisfaction with the support provided by the department for salary payments. Eighty-eight per cent of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied. Reference was made in comments to two occasions when members had not been satisfied with the department's processing of superannuation variations.</p> <p>Feedback from new members was consistent with the survey findings. The majority of members interviewed indicated that they were satisfied with support for salary payments.</p>	

### Activity 5: Members' and corporate support (continued)

<p><b>Performance criterion</b></p> <p>Financial resources are managed efficiently and effectively, and expenditure levels are constrained within budgetary allocations</p>	<p><b>Target</b></p> <p>Budget variances kept to within +/-2 per cent of total departmental expenses</p>
<p><b>Criterion source</b></p> <p>2016–17 corporate plan, p. 24; 2016–17 Portfolio Budget Statements, p. 18</p>	
<p><b>Result against performance criterion</b></p> <p>Target not fully met.</p> <p>The department ended the 2016–17 financial year with a surplus. Variances in employee benefits and supplier expenses reflect an underspend against the budget of more than 2 per cent.</p> <p>The timing of the election and the commencement of the Forty-fifth Parliament at the beginning of the financial reporting period meant that staffing and activity levels did not return to normal until the second half of 2016–17. The department's financial position as at 30 June 2017 remains sound.</p>	
<p><b>Activity measures (no targets set)</b></p>	
<p><b>Source</b></p> <p>2016–17 corporate plan, p. 23</p>	
<p><b>Measure and results</b></p>	
	<p><b>2013–14<sup>a</sup></b>    <b>2014–15</b>    <b>2015–16</b>    <b>2016–17<sup>a</sup></b></p>
Number of Parliament House suite-related services provided to members	<p>735            331            361            617</p>
Number of transport services provided to members	<p>11,710        15,995        13,129        14,892</p>
Timeliness of transport services provided to members	<p>Feedback from members suggests general satisfaction with the timeliness of transport services, with a number of suggestions for enhancements</p>
Monthly budget reporting to the Executive and quarterly financial reporting to the department	<p>All budget reporting obligations to the Executive and the department were met</p>
<p>a. Election year.</p>	

### Activity 6: Schools hospitality

<b>Performance criterion</b>	<b>Target</b>			
Percentage of visiting school groups provided hospitality in accordance with booking	100 per cent			
<b>Criterion source</b>				
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 25				
<b>Result against performance criterion</b>				
Target met.				
A total of 117,654 students toured Parliament House during the reporting period. Of those students, 88,169 participated in a Parliamentary Education Office program and 95,887 requested and received hospitality. In 2016–17, there were no reports of instances where hospitality was not provided to school groups that had requested it.				
<b>Activity measures (no targets set)</b>				
<b>Source</b>				
2016–17 corporate plan, p. 25				
<b>Measure and results</b>				
	<b>2013–14<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>2014–15</b>	<b>2015–16</b>	<b>2016–17<sup>a</sup></b>
Number of visiting school groups	Data unavailable	2,144	2,155	2,153
Total number of visiting students	113,709	120,216	115,774	117,654
Number of students provided hospitality	Data unavailable	100,236	94,986	95,887
a. Election year.				

### Analysis

This analysis of the department’s performance draws on quantitative data from the 2017 members’ survey. While that data provides a valuable gauge of satisfaction, a degree of caution is required given the relatively small number of respondents—24 out of a possible 150—and the fact that participants were self-selected, rather than randomly selected. The qualitative information from comments in the members’ survey and from interviews with new members provides useful context, revealing a more nuanced picture of the department’s performance.

Collectively, results from the members’ survey and feedback from interviews with new members indicate that the department performed well in supporting its core activities during 2016–17—namely, providing expert advice and services of a high standard to the House, and the wider parliament, to achieve its purpose as a representative and legislative body.

### Chamber and Federation Chamber

Quantitative data from the members’ survey indicates that support provided for the Chamber and Federation Chamber met performance targets for quality and timeliness. The target for members’ satisfaction with procedural and statistical support was also met.

Departmental service standards for sittings of the Chamber and Federation Chamber were achieved, and chamber documents were processed on time and without significant error.

Although encouraged by these positive results, the department is acutely aware that its reputation rests on providing services that are of a consistently high standard, and that we continue to meet changing stakeholder expectations. For these reasons, the department is committed to continuous improvement. Therefore, drawing on qualitative feedback from the members' survey and from the new members' interviews, the department has identified some areas where support and services can be improved or extended.

Comments from new members indicate that there is scope to enhance aspects of the department's procedural and statistical publications. To address the feedback, the department will continue to diversify the content and format of procedural information so that it better meets specific requirements, and renew efforts to ensure that the material is readily accessible and members are kept informed about the full range of resources available to them. This will remain a strong focus in 2017–18 for the recently established position of Clerk Assistant (Procedure) (see page 3).

### ***Community awareness***

Increasing community awareness of the work of the House and of committees is an evolving area of the department's activities. Although for most performance criteria members are the primary stakeholders, the stakeholder group for outreach activities is largely external, extending to the entire Australian community and beyond. A 2017 review of the department's performance measures recommended changing the criteria and assessment methodology to recognise the breadth of the stakeholder group. In view of this, the 2017 members' survey did not include an assessment of members' satisfaction with the department's community awareness activities.

Available activity information for community awareness suggests that engagement continues to grow, with increased demand for seminars and increased subscriptions across digital platforms. The department's 2017–18 corporate plan includes revised performance measures for community awareness, which will provide the basis for future reporting.

### ***Committee support***

Data from the members' survey indicates that support for committees met performance targets for quality and timeliness. Members' comments about their experiences with committees were broadly positive. However, some members suggested that committee services could be enhanced, noting that on occasion committee meeting papers were circulated close to the meetings, giving members a relatively short time to read and absorb the content. Advice regarding this feedback from members has been discussed with committee secretariats by the Clerk Assistant (Committees) and options to address this issue have been developed.

### ***Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building***

The members' survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with the department's support for official delegations, which is provided as part of its inter-parliamentary relations activities. Oral and written feedback from participants of incoming delegations and from diplomatic representatives involved in the 2016–17 official delegation program was overwhelmingly positive, as was the feedback from the Presiding Officers, who are responsible for overseeing the delegation program.

Two respondents to the members' survey commented on the limited opportunities to participate in official delegations. Although the department manages the administrative arrangements for delegations, and has a role in developing a delegation program for review and endorsement by the Presiding Officers, a finite number of delegation places are available each year. While all members can express interest in participating in official delegations, delegation appointments are not determined by the department.

During the year the department supported a range of capacity-building activities for overseas parliaments, including professional development activities for members and staff. Assistance was also provided through small-scale equipment purchases to support the work of members and staff of Pacific parliaments. Formal surveys of participants in professional development activities and feedback from recipients of other capacity-building assistance suggests a high level of satisfaction.

### *Members' and corporate services*

Results from the members' survey on satisfaction with accommodation and office services, and from the annual staff survey, indicate that the department did not fully achieve its target. Context provided by the qualitative information in the members' survey, which was broadly supported by the interviews with new members, reveals that while there is scope to improve some services, the department needs to promote what is already available so that members are aware of the full range of services available to them. The limited comments in the staff survey do not identify specific concerns that departmental staff have with their accommodation and office services, but these matters can be followed up through other avenues.

To some extent, the result recorded for accommodation and office services reflects members' dissatisfaction with a number of services that the department is not responsible for (for example, office cleaning services and ICT services). The substance of the comments on these matters has been provided to the responsible entity.

The department processes salaries and allowances for members and for departmental staff. The department met its target in terms of accuracy of processing salaries and allowances. While processing errors are extremely uncommon, one administrative error during the reporting period resulted in overpayment of a salary-of-office allowance to a member. The excess amount is being recouped from the member. The department acknowledges feedback from members noting two occasions of dissatisfaction with handling of superannuation payments. Again, qualitative information from the members' survey and the new members' interviews reveals that, to some extent, feedback relates to services that the department does not provide (for example, processing of members' entitlements). Advice on members' feedback on these matters has been provided to the responsible entity.

Due to a budgetary underspend, representing a variation of more than 2 per cent, the target for management of financial resources was not met. The underspend was mainly due to the timing of the 2016 election and the lead time for resumption of full activities following the commencement of the new parliament. More detailed information on the 2016–17 budgetary variations, and a comprehensive explanation of the reasons, is provided in the financial statements (page 122). In 2017–18, the department will require more detailed quarterly variance reporting on expenditure from each work area. The new arrangements will help to increase the financial reporting capability of staff with budgeting responsibilities and enable the department to more closely monitor expenditure as the year progresses.

### ***Schools hospitality***

Schools hospitality is a collaborative effort between parliamentary departments. The department provides a booking service for school groups, and liaises with the Department of the Senate (which hosts the Parliamentary Education Office) and with DPS (which provides a guide service and hospitality for students in school groups where hospitality has been requested). Data about hospitality provision relies on exception reporting from DPS or school groups. Post-visit feedback from schools suggests that the target was met.

### ***Activity information***

A review of activity information for the four years from 2013–14 to 2016–17 (where available) gives an indication of the extent to which the department's work is affected by the parliamentary cycle. Elections held in September 2013 and in July 2016 affected levels of chamber activity, with reductions in the number of sittings and the number of bills introduced associated with the periods of inactivity while the House was dissolved. Committee work output was also affected, with fewer meetings and reports, largely due to lower levels of activity while new committees were being established and work programs determined. Increased activity for suite services was noticeable in election years, associated with the departure of members and with preparing suites for new members. Other work areas were less influenced by the parliamentary cycle. For example, the number of visiting students appears to have been substantially unaffected.

### ***New members' seminar***

Although not a discrete activity identified in the department's corporate plan, at the start of each new parliament the department holds an orientation seminar for members newly elected to the House. The program includes information on the role of a member, and guidance on the advice, facilities and services available to support members in their work as parliamentarians.

The new members' seminar for the Forty-fifth Parliament was held on 16–17 August 2017 and attended by all 37 new members plus one returning member. Feedback on the seminar was overwhelmingly positive. Participants commented that the seminar was well structured and presented and that they had benefited from attending. Notwithstanding, there were a number of suggestions for improving the new members' seminar for the start of the next parliament. Suggestions included increasing the procedural content, with a focus on the practical aspects of members' work in the chamber, and holding the seminar over two separate sessions, the first addressing 'need to know' matters and a follow-up session some time later dealing with matters that are less time-critical. The department will consider that and other feedback when organising the new members' seminar program for the next parliament.



### *The year ahead*

In 2017, the department's independent internal auditor reviewed the department's performance measures framework to improve its reporting under the enhanced Commonwealth performance framework. The review led to the development of a refined and more meaningful performance framework, with a revised purpose statement and more rigorous processes to collect information to assess performance. The revised purpose statement and performance measures are presented in summary in the department's 2017–18 Portfolio Budget Statements, and in more detail in the department's 2017–18 corporate plan.

The department acknowledges that a greater number of responses to the members' survey would have resulted in increased confidence in reporting against some of the key performance measures. Ahead of next year's members' survey, the department will consider its dissemination and follow-up processes with a view to improving response rates. Recognising also the value of the more detailed feedback obtained from face-to-face interviews, the department will continue to supplement the members' survey with interviews with specific groups of members.

# Chamber and Federation Chamber

The Clerk's Office, Table Office, Procedure Office and Chamber Research Office work together to support the day-to-day operations of the Chamber and Federation Chamber, with other areas contributing as necessary.

During the reporting period, the department met the additional demands associated with the opening of the Forty-fifth Parliament following the double-dissolution election. The offices' role included providing resources on House procedure to support the orientation seminar for new members. We also continued to:

- » advise the Speaker and members of the House of Representatives
- » advise on the programming of House business and provide procedural support
- » process and draft bills
- » prepare and publish the record of proceedings of the House
- » process, provide access to and manage the custody of the documents and records of the House
- » undertake procedural and parliamentary research
- » produce information and publications on House practice and procedure
- » maintain procedural and statistical records on the work of the House
- » provide secretariat support to domestic committees.

In 2016–17, the budget allocation for this activity was \$3.384 million and expenditure was \$3.210 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (pages 14–15); staff levels are shown in Appendix 1.

In January 2017, some of the additional funding (\$2.1 million over four years) received in 2016–17 for parliamentary strengthening through publications and systems was used to create the role of Clerk Assistant (Procedure).

## An election year

Following the dissolution of the House on 9 May 2016, we completed a range of administrative activities, including finalising House records for the Forty-fourth Parliament. In preparation for the opening of parliament, we made arrangements for the swearing-in of all 150 members and the elections of Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Second Deputy Speaker. At the request of the incoming government, we drafted amendments to the standing orders, including changes to sitting hours and arrangements for private members' business.

## Performance summary

The focus of the offices is on supporting the sittings of the House of Representatives Chamber and meetings of the Federation Chamber. Our performance is usually measured in two ways: qualitatively, based on an annual survey of members; and quantitatively, based on information relating to the sittings of the House, meetings of the Federation Chamber, and business conducted in the Chamber and Federation Chamber.

The annual survey of members was supplemented by interviews with all new members. Feedback from members on the range and standard of the services we provide was generally positive. This result was largely consistent with comments we received during the reporting period about the procedural resources available online and in hard copy and the briefings on parliamentary topics of interest to members and their staff. The annual performance statement provides more detailed analysis of the results of the survey and interviews.

Statistics on sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber in 2016–17 and the two preceding years are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Performance summary, Chamber and Federation Chamber, 2014–15 to 2016–17**

Aspect of performance	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>
Number of sittings of the House	77	60	64
Number of meetings of the Federation Chamber	57	41	59
Hours of sittings of the House <sup>b</sup>	726	592	570
Hours of meetings of the Federation Chamber <sup>b</sup>	208	132	237
Number of bills introduced	203	162	248
Number of bills that passed both Houses and were assented to <sup>c</sup>	168	118	126

a. Election year.

b. Excludes suspensions and rounded to the nearest hour.

c. Includes bills that passed both Houses in the financial year but were assented to in the following financial year.

The Forty-fifth Parliament opened in August 2016, only slightly later than sittings would ordinarily resume after the winter recess, and the statistics therefore show only a slight reduction in the number of sittings of the House compared with an average year, and a slight increase on 2015–16. There were 64 sitting days in 2016–17, an increase of four days (6.7 per cent) on 2015–16. However, the total number of sitting hours in the House was lower, and the number of meeting hours in the Federation Chamber was higher, partly as a result of changes to the order of business (see the next paragraph). In 2016–17, the House sat for 22 fewer hours than in the previous year (3.7 per cent less time), and the Federation Chamber met for an additional 105 hours in comparison to the previous year (79.5 per cent more time). Legislative activity continued at a high rate during the period: 248 bills were introduced (compared with 162 in 2015–16) and 126 bills were passed by both Houses and assented to (118 in 2015–16).

Changes to the House's program in the new parliament included an earlier adjournment on Mondays and Tuesdays and a change to the order of business for the Federation Chamber, making the optional Tuesday afternoon meeting a permanent fixture and adding a further 2 hours and 45 minutes of private members' business on Monday afternoons.

Detailed information on the business of the House and the Federation Chamber is in Appendix 2 and in the department's publication *Work of the Session* (available on the Parliament of Australia website).

## Advice on practice and procedure

During proceedings, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and other staff members provided immediate support and advice on the practice and procedure of the House to the Speaker, the Leader of the House, ministers, shadow ministers, members and others. They also provided detailed written advice on subjects such as the application of the standing orders and the practice of the House; the content of questions without notice; procedures for private members' business; delegated legislation and the disallowance process; the requirements of the Constitution and standing orders with respect to financial legislation; privilege matters; and requirements of the House for the registration of members' interests.

## Programming and coordination of business

During the year, we provided advice and services to facilitate sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber by:

- » offering programming and procedural advice to ministers, shadow ministers, party whips, other members, their staff and others
- » preparing and publishing, each sitting day:
  - » the *Notice Paper*—a document listing all unresolved business before the House and providing information about committee memberships and other matters
  - » the *Daily Program* (also known as 'the Blue')—an informal agenda for the day
  - » procedural scripts for all items of business for use in the Chamber and Federation Chamber
- » providing staff from the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office to:
  - » support sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber
  - » oversee ceremonial and security arrangements
  - » ensure the availability of chamber papers
- » processing members' questions in writing to ministers, which involved:
  - » editing them for compliance with the standing orders
  - » publishing them in the *Notice Paper* for the next sitting day
  - » managing answers to questions
- » providing a captioning service for the televised and webcast proceedings of the Chamber and Federation Chamber that describes the current item of business
- » publishing *This Week in the House*, a weekly online forecast of expected business for the House, and its counterpart, *Last Week in the House*.

Table 2 shows the number of questions in writing to ministers and answers that were processed by the House in the five years from 2012–13 to 2016–17.

**Table 2 Questions in writing to ministers and answers to questions in writing, 2012–13 to 2016–17**

	2012–13	2013–14 <sup>a</sup>	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>
Questions in writing <sup>b</sup>	411	201	633	1,310	761
Questions answered <sup>c</sup>	374	126	623	1,235	247

a. Election year.

b. Excludes questions withdrawn.

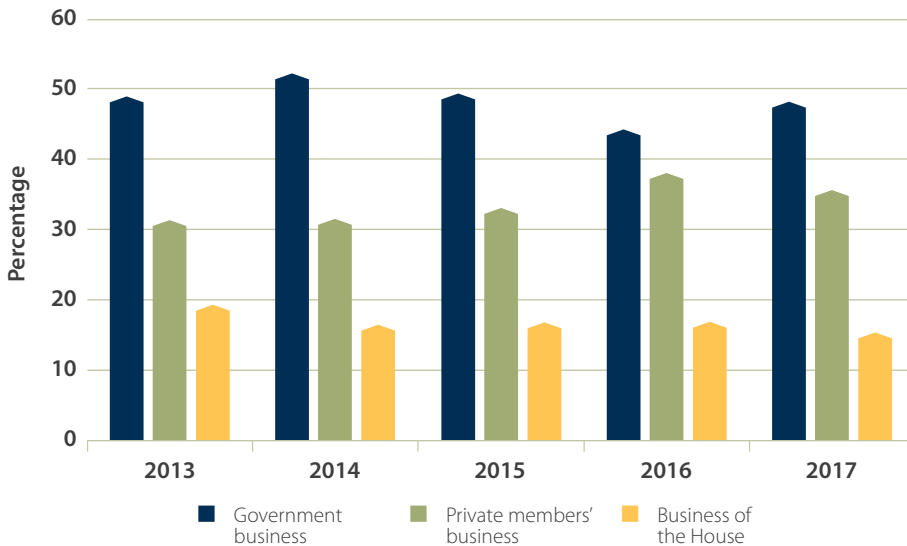
c. The responsibility for responding to questions in writing rests with the ministers to whom the questions are put.

All sittings required the coordination of people, documents and actions, and the programming of the following categories of business:

- » government business (for example, government legislation)
- » private members’ business (motions and bills proposed by private members)
- » House business (matters potentially involving all members—for example, question time, debate on committee reports and matters of privilege).

A longitudinal view of the amount of time the House (Chamber and Federation Chamber inclusive) devoted to each of these three types of business is shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4 Government and private members’ business and business of the House (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2013 to 2017**



**Note:** Private members’ business includes consideration of private members’ motions and bills and other opportunities for private members, such as adjournment debates and discussion of matters of public importance.

## Processing and drafting of bills

### Legislation

Support for the legislative process in 2016–17 included our traditional responsibilities of:

- » receiving bills from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and keeping them in custody under embargo before their introduction in the House
- » providing bills to ministers for introduction, and to all members in the Chamber after introduction
- » uploading bills, explanatory memorandums and proposed amendments to the Parliament of Australia website, and providing an over-the-counter service for access to hard copies of bills and associated material
- » processing all bills and amendments to bills:
  - » initiated in the House—from introduction to assent
  - » initiated in the Senate—from introduction in the House until passage by the House
- » providing a legislative drafting service for private members
- » preparing and delivering messages to the Senate. During 2016–17, we delivered 170 messages relating to the passage of bills (173 in 2015–16) and 30 other messages (21 in 2015–16)
- » preparing and issuing a Daily Bills List for each sitting day. The list provides cumulative information on the status of all bills before the parliament, or assented to in the current calendar year.

Chamber staff of both Houses continued to work with the developer of the bills system to maintain optimal levels of technical support. This included testing on upgrades to the system. Staff also provided input to the Bills System Advisory Group, which continued its role of overseeing the operational governance of the system, the quality of service and the fulfilment of business requirements.

Queries on the bills and legislation collection on the website totalled 1.6 million in 2016–17, representing 14.8 per cent of the 10.8 million queries made through ParlInfo Search.

During the year, 248 bills were introduced (162 in 2015–16), an increase of 53.1 per cent on the previous year. Of these, 239 were initiated in the House of Representatives and nine were received from the Senate. A total of 126 bills passed both Houses (118 in 2015–16), of which 121 were initiated in the House of Representatives (113 in 2015–16) and five in the Senate (five in 2015–16). Table 3 shows the number of bills introduced in the House and assented to in the five years from 2012–13 to 2016–17.

In 2016–17, the House passed 150 bills (136 in 2015–16), an average of 2.3 bills for each sitting (the same as in the previous year).

The House amended 12 (8 per cent) of the bills it passed, compared with eight (5.9 per cent) in 2015–16. The Table Office incorporated the amendments into the text of the bills and arranged for their reprinting (as third-reading prints) before transmittal to the Senate. The House agreed to Senate amendments, made amendments requested

by the Senate, or did both, in relation to 13 House bills (20 in 2015–16). After further processing by the Table Office, the bills were presented to the Governor-General for assent. The House made amendments to two bills in place of Senate amendments that were not agreed to (one of those bills is included in the total, above, of House bills with Senate amendments agreed to by the House).

The number of amendments moved during consideration in detail increased from 119 in 2015–16 to 173 in 2016–17. Fifty-nine were passed, of which one was an opposition amendment. The House did not amend any bills initiated in the Senate in 2016–17 or in the previous year.

The Table Office prepared 12 third-reading prints (eight in 2015–16) and 121 assent prints (114 in 2015–16). All documents accurately reflected the decisions of both Houses.

**Table 3 Number of bills introduced in the House, and number of bills assented to, 2012–13 to 2016–17**

	2012–13	2013–14 <sup>a</sup>	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>
Bills introduced	241	182	203	162	248
Bills assented to <sup>b</sup>	228	94	168	118	126

a. Election year.

b. Includes bills that passed both Houses in the financial year but were assented to in the following financial year.

### *Legislative drafting*

The department drafts bills, amendments and second-reading (in-principle) amendments for private members, and ensures that those documents comply with the Constitution and the standing orders. We also arrange copies for circulation in the Chamber.

In 2016–17, 35 private members' bills were introduced (including two private senators' bills). Of the 173 amendments moved during consideration in detail, 115 were private members' amendments, one of which was agreed to. Table 4 provides chamber statistics for private members' legislation for the past five years. The table does not reflect all of the department's work in this area, as some drafted material is not introduced into the House.

Since 2010, the department has had an arrangement with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel for one of its senior drafters to be seconded to the department. That arrangement continues to be mutually beneficial.



**Table 4 Private members' bills introduced and amendments moved (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2012–13 to 2016–17**

	2012–13	2013–14 <sup>a</sup>	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>
Bills introduced	30	7	12	21	35
Second-reading amendments moved	9	36	22	16	40
Consideration-in-detail amendments moved <sup>b</sup>	923	66	303	119	173

a. Election year.

b. Includes government amendments.

## Record of proceedings and House documents

### *Votes and Proceedings*

The *Votes and Proceedings* continued to provide an accurate, comprehensive and concise record of proceedings. The draft document for each sitting is published on the Parliament of Australia website, usually within an hour of the adjournment of the House.

The *Votes and Proceedings* is prepared from the *Votes Officer's Minutes* (better known as the *Live Minutes*), an electronic draft record of the proceedings of the Chamber and the Federation Chamber. The *Votes Officer's Minutes* are more detailed than the *Votes and Proceedings* and are compiled progressively throughout a sitting. Because they are available in real time, they provide a practical means for members, staff and the public to follow House proceedings online. Internal and external users continued to rely on this service and provide positive feedback.

### *Table Offices Production System*

Further enhancements were made to the Table Offices Production System (TOPS) during 2016–17. A set of scheduled enhancements was completed in August 2016 and other priorities were identified and progressed during the reporting period. That work will continue in 2017–18.

Table Office staff continued to work with colleagues from the departments of Parliamentary Services and the Senate on preparing and testing the interface between TOPS and the new ParlWork application. ParlWork, developed by the Department of Parliamentary Services in conjunction with the Department of the House of Representatives and the Department of the Senate, gives parliamentarians access to live chamber business information on their mobile devices. It draws on content from both chamber departments, and displays repurposed parliamentary information, including the *Live Minutes*, *Daily Program* and *Notice Paper* produced by the Table Office (alongside the Senate's equivalent documents, produced by the Senate Table Office). Questions in writing, and any answers provided, were also made available on ParlWork.

## Documents

During the year, the Table Office processed all documents presented to the House and recorded their details in the *Votes and Proceedings* and the *Index to Papers Presented to Parliament*. Copies were made available on request to members and their staff and others, principally in Parliament House. The original documents were added to the records of the House, which are maintained by the Table Office. Tabling stock requirements continue to be reviewed in light of the online availability of documents and the declining demand for hard copies.

In 2016–17, 3,702 documents were presented to the House, an increase on 3,023 in the previous year.

Each sitting day, the Table Office prepares and issues a Disallowable Instruments List in both electronic and hard-copy form. The list provides details of all instruments presented to the House that are subject to disallowance, by the number of sitting days remaining in which a notice of disallowance can be lodged.

## Parliamentary Papers Series

The Parliamentary Papers Series consists of documents of a substantial nature presented to the parliament since 1901. An electronic repository for the series, instituted in 2013, enables centralised electronic access to the documents through the ParlInfo Tabled Papers Register. The documents section of TOPS has helped to streamline the process of uploading parliamentary papers to the repository.

The Presiding Officers advised that 2016 would be the last year in which hard copies of the series would be distributed to the 27 external recipients. In 2015–16, the department took over responsibility from the external service provider for administering the distribution of the printed copies, and work continued during 2016–17 on clearing the distribution backlog.

The department is responsible for the custody and preservation of, and provision of access to, the official records of the House, including Acts, bills, the *Votes and Proceedings* and all documents presented to the House dating from 1901. The records are stored in an archive in the basement of Parliament House, and staff continue to monitor the suitability of the archive environment.

## Petitions

The House petitioning process enables Australians to raise issues with the House that are of interest to them. Table 5 shows the number of petitions presented to the House, and the number of signatories, for the past five years. In 2016–17, 185 petitions were presented, compared with 87 in 2015–16. The number of signatures increased to 235,751 from 118,846 in the previous year.

**Table 5** Petitions and signatories to petitions, 2012–13 to 2016–17

	2012–13	2013–14 <sup>a</sup>	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>
Number of petitions presented	125	75	101	87	185
Number of signatories	325,360	1,365,151	250,369	118,846	235,751

a. Election year.

## Research

The Chamber Research Office continued in its principal function of collecting, analysing and publishing procedural and statistical information on the work of the House and its committees.

In 2016–17, the office provided:

- » advice, and assistance with advice, to the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and members on the application of the standing orders and House practice
- » secretariat services to the Standing Committee on Procedure
- » advice about and publications on House statistics, practice and procedure
- » information to the public, the media and other parliaments on the operations of the House.

The services of the office continued to be in high demand, reflecting sustained high levels of interest in the procedures and operations of the House.

## Publications

The Chamber Research Office continued to produce regular publications outlining significant procedural events and popular statistics for a variety of readers. After each sitting fortnight, we published the *Procedural Digest*, an online, subject-based record of proceedings, and the *Statistical Digest*, a statistical record of the work of the House. *Work of the Session*, a comprehensive six-monthly overview of the business of the House and committees, was published in January 2017. The series of 22 infosheets on the work of the House was updated to incorporate changes introduced in the Forty-fifth Parliament.

Together, these publications provide a current and concise record of the work of the House and the more significant aspects of that work. The department's publications, including the *Infosheet* series, are listed in Appendix 5.

The Chamber Research Office maintains, publishes and distributes the standing orders of the House. The standing orders were reprinted as at 13 September 2016, incorporating a number of amendments made by the House on 31 August, 1 September and 13 September 2016.

We continued to expand and diversify our publications about the work of the House to cater to the wide range of needs and interests of members, staff and the public. The intention is to increase procedural capability and understanding of the House's role and formal processes. Several new publications were created. Three editions of *House Review*, a publication that provides a plain-English analysis of significant events in the House in the previous fortnight, have now been published on the Parliament of Australia website. *House Review* is prepared by the Procedure Office and is published on the second Friday of the sitting fortnight. It complements *Last Week in the House*, which collects and outlines the business transacted each week in the House, and the *Procedural Digest*, which provides more technical procedural analysis.

### *Parliamentary Procedural Records System*

The Parliamentary Procedural Records System, which records significant procedural events in the House and Federation Chamber, became operational in 2016. The system was the product of a joint project between the department and the South Australian House of Assembly and replaced the Procedural Records System. Further work to refine this technical database is anticipated in the coming year.

### *Collaboration with the Department of the Senate*

The Chamber Research Office continued its longstanding collaboration with colleagues in the Department of the Senate, including through participation in orientation seminars for the Australian National Internship Program and the Australian Defence Force parliamentary exchange program (discussed in more detail on page 42).

### *Collaboration with other parliaments*

Staff members are frequently asked to share their experiences and knowledge with counterparts from other parliaments. The offices continued to participate, with colleagues and members from other parliaments, in study programs, meetings during delegation visits and capacity-building work. Colleagues from other parliaments continued to be interested in the longstanding practices of the department in recording, analysing and publishing information on the procedural work of the House.

## Parliamentary committees

The department continued to provide effective secretariat and advisory support to five House committees and one joint committee dealing with the powers and procedures of the House (see Table 6).

In 2016–17, those committees held 47 meetings and produced 29 reports. Details of meetings and reports are set out in Appendixes 3 and 4.

**Table 6 Committees supported by the Chamber and Federation Chamber activity, 2016–17**

<b>House committees</b>
Selection Committee
Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration
Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests
Standing Committee on Procedure
Standing Committee on Publications
<b>Joint committee</b>
Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings

### **Selection Committee**

Table Office staff support the Selection Committee in fulfilling three important roles:

- » selecting and programming private members' business and committee and delegation business
- » selecting items of private members' business and committee and delegation business for referral to the Federation Chamber or return to the House
- » considering all bills introduced and determining whether to refer bills directly to House or joint committees for inquiry.

The committee has 11 members: the Speaker (as chair), the chief whips of the three largest parties, four government members and three non-government members. The committee met 13 times during the reporting period.

### **Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration**

The Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration considers, among other things, estimates of the funding required for the operation of the department each year. When conferring with its counterpart Senate committee—the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations and Staffing—the House committee may consider estimates of the funding required for the operation of the Department of Parliamentary Services each year.

The committee has nine members: the Speaker (as chair), four government members and four non-government members. It is supported by the Clerk, the Serjeant-at-Arms and other officers of the department. During the year the committee met three times and presented two reports (see page 76).

### **Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests**

The Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests met 11 times during the reporting period and presented three reports to the House. Two of the reports were presented under the resolution agreed to by the House that allows individual citizens to have published in Hansard a response to an adverse reference made to them in the House.

The report, *Claim of parliamentary privilege by a member in relation to material seized under a search warrant* (presented in November 2016), followed an inquiry by the committee. The task for the committee was to consider a member's claim for privilege in relation to material seized by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) under a search warrant executed on the Department of Parliamentary Services at Parliament House on 24 August 2016. The search was effectively a data search of records held in the name of one of the member's staff. The execution of the warrant and the claim of privilege occurred in accordance with a formal process established under the terms of a memorandum of understanding between the Presiding Officers and the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and a related 2005 AFP guideline. Shortly after the material was seized it was given into the custody of the Clerk of the House, at the request of the member. The committee concluded that the seized material fell within the definition of 'proceedings in Parliament'

and so was not subject to impeachment or questioning, and that the search warrant amounted to such an impeachment or questioning. The committee recommended that the House rule to uphold the member's claim of parliamentary privilege, the AFP be advised and the seized material be returned to the member. The House passed a resolution to that effect on 1 December 2016.

The committee presented six sets of alterations of members' interests during the period and in February 2017 reported on its operations in connection with the registration and declaration of members' interests in 2016.

### ***Standing Committee on Procedure***

The Standing Committee on Procedure usually meets once each sitting week. The committee commenced two inquiries during the reporting period, one into the maintenance of the standing orders and the other into the provisions relating to disorder in the House.

### ***Standing Committee on Publications***

The House Publications Committee makes recommendations to the House on which documents that have been presented to the House (and that the House or the Senate has not already made a determination on) should be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series. The committee may confer with the Senate Publications Committee, forming the Joint Committee on Publications. The House Publications Committee held four meetings in 2016–17 and met with the Senate Publications Committee on seven other occasions. The committee presented 10 reports containing recommendations on which documents presented to parliament should be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series. All recommended documents were agreed for inclusion.

In November 2016, the committee, together with the Senate Publications Committee, commenced an inquiry into the printing standards for documents presented to the parliament. Submissions to the inquiry were received and a roundtable public hearing was held on 22 June 2017.

### ***Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings***

The *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946* requires ABC radio and, in some circumstances, ABC television to broadcast the proceedings of parliament. It is the statutory role of the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings to advise parliament on general principles for the allocation of radio broadcasting time between the House and the Senate chambers and to determine a more detailed schedule of broadcasting allocations. The committee is supported by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office.

Under the Act, the committee has nine members, including the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. By tradition, the Speaker is chair and the President is vice-chair. The committee meets when required and did not meet during the reporting period.

## Procedural training and resources

In collaboration with the Table Office, the Procedure Office is working to further develop the procedural capability of members and staff, in particular by publishing key procedural resources. During the election period, senior Table Office staff reviewed and redesigned the guidance notes prepared for members who take the chair in the House and Federation Chamber and updated the professional development DVD for members, *House Rules*. The DVD was provided to new members at their orientation in August 2016, and is available to all members via their intranet. A glossary of key parliamentary terms was created to provide members with concise, practical guidance for their work in the Chamber. It was published in hard copy and on the members' intranet site. Summary guidance notes were created for ministers on their roles and opportunities in the Chamber and Federation Chamber. The regular program of House Briefing sessions for members and their staff continued and included topics such as private members' business and the budget process.

The department continued to use a range of measures to support its staff to develop the specialised knowledge and skills required for applying parliamentary law, practice and procedure. These included:

- » debriefs following each sitting week or fortnight, focusing on matters of procedural interest. The format was changed to include videos of some of the more complex events, allowing for easier explanation and analysis
- » regular parliamentary briefings and training provided by senior departmental staff
- » specialist training and coaching for departmental staff who undertake duty as Clerks and Deputy Clerks in the Chamber and Federation Chamber. The number of these sessions was increased and supporting written materials were made more detailed and formal
- » shadowing opportunities that enable staff to learn specialist skills such as preparing House procedures, the *Notice Paper* and the *Votes and Proceedings*. Once the trainee staff have sufficient experience, the use of shadowing allows chamber support staff to finish work earlier on some sitting nights and provides a back-up in the event of staffing absences or turnover
- » opportunities for participation in parliamentary conferences, including the annual Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table (ANZACATT) professional development seminar
- » participation in the Graduate Certificate in Parliamentary Law and Practice, currently taught by the University of Tasmania under the auspices of ANZACATT.

Departmental staff who are rostered for duty at the table were invited to identify their procedural training needs and preferences. Their responses prompted some changes to existing activities and the establishment of new ones. Beginning in March 2017, on each sitting day a briefing was provided for staff who act as Clerk and Deputy Clerk at the table in the Federation Chamber. Those briefings complement the sitting-day briefings traditionally provided by the Deputy Clerk for staff who are rostered for duty as Clerk and Deputy Clerk in the House. Both sets of briefings provide an opportunity for staff to prepare for the day's events and discuss procedural issues in general.



## Improving performance

Procedural training and development continued to be a priority during the year. The complexities that were addressed last year during prorogation, a second session and a double-dissolution election provided us with a rich period of learning and development that we have recorded and will capitalise on. In addition, the finely balanced numbers in the House in the Forty-fifth Parliament provide challenges and opportunities for professional development that build on the experience gained during the Forty-third Parliament. The significant turnover in members and the retirement of several senior departmental staff have necessitated a renewed emphasis on procedural capability. Where possible, resources and activities that are established for this purpose are designed so that they can be easily used or adapted for use by more general audiences.

## Outlook

Further improvements to TOPS and the Parliamentary Procedural Records System will make them easier to use and result in further efficiencies. The long-term pattern of chamber support activity resumed in 2016–17, with increases in the hours of meeting of the Federation Chamber and the number of bills introduced. This is expected to continue in 2017–18.

Our focus in 2017–18 will continue to be on providing high-quality services to meet the needs of the Speaker, members and others and ensuring that understanding of the role and operations of the House is increased.

In 2017–18, highlights for the Procedure Office will include the publication of two well-established procedural resources: the seventh edition of *House of Representatives Practice* and the sixth edition of the *Guide to Procedures*. Both publications are well known and cater to different levels of interest. *House of Representatives Practice* is the most authoritative reference on House procedure, providing a wealth of history and analysis. The *Guide to Procedures* is a much more concise resource and is ideal for readers who seek a more straightforward explanation of processes and events in the House.

# Community awareness

The department promotes the work of the House through a range of activities aimed at different sectors of the community.

In 2016–17 the budget allocation for the activity was \$0.835 million and expenditure was \$0.601 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 16); staff levels are shown in Appendix 1.

## Performance summary

In 2016–17, we continued to expand our electronic media offerings to provide general information about the House and its committees in an accessible format, and launched a new *About the House* e-newsletter. Our engagement with public sector organisations continued through the face-to-face seminar program and the parliamentary internship program, both of which grew in popularity.

The department continued its role in supporting school visits and providing background support to the Parliamentary Education Office. The parliamentary internship program continued its success in 2017, with the reinvigoration of an advisory board to guide the future direction of the program.

## Electronic media

The department uses its electronic media distribution channels to expand the reach of parliamentary business and educational information. Our Twitter and Facebook handles provide valuable information to their subscriber bases and receive consistently positive feedback. During the reporting period, our Facebook subscriber base increased by 21 per cent on the previous year (from 4,600 to 5,837 subscribers). Our Twitter following increased by 7.5 per cent and recently reached the milestone of 40,000 followers.

The department launched an electronic newsletter to coincide with the start of the Forty-fifth Parliament. This fortnightly publication aims to promote committee activity and provide information about the House and its procedure, educating subscribers and drawing them to related information on the Parliament of Australia website. It also enables the public to engage with the House through a regular 'Ask us anything' segment, which provides a channel for interested members of the community to have their questions answered.

## Seminars

The department's seminar program is designed to raise awareness of the work of the House, particularly among employees of government departments. The program includes a series of seminars covering the parliament, the budget, the processing of legislation and committees, as well as custom seminars for individual departments.

During 2016–17, we held nine seminars for a total of 252 participants, an increase of 14.5 per cent on the previous year. Feedback was very positive, with 100 per cent of surveyed attendees agreeing that their objectives were met.

## My First Speech competition

In November 2016, the department held the fourth annual My First Speech competition. The competition is open to Australian school students in Year 10. Entrants are asked to imagine themselves as a newly elected member of the House of Representatives and write a three-minute speech on issues they are passionate about and record themselves presenting it. Submissions were reviewed by a panel of members and the finalists were flown to Canberra to receive their awards at a ceremony on 1 December 2016. Finalists were also given a personalised tour of the Australian Parliament.

## Parliamentary assistants program

In 2016–17, the parliamentary assistants program, run by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, entered its seventeenth year. The program offers university students part-time employment in the House of Representatives to promote understanding of, and engagement with, the work of the parliament. (See page 64 for further details.)

## Parliamentary internship program

The Australian National Internship Program has operated since 1993 under an agreement between the Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University and the Australian Parliament's Presiding Officers. Australian and international students enrolled at the university under the program undertake an internship placement as part of their formal course of undergraduate study.

Due to the federal election, no students were placed with a member or senator in the second semester of 2016. In the first semester of 2017, 39 students were placed with a member or senator, which is one of the largest cohorts in the program's history.

During their placement, each student completes a research project on a subject agreed to by their host. The report is assessed by the university and counts towards the student's degree.

In 2016–17, an advisory board was established for the program and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Internship Program Steering Committee, which had not been active for some years, was reconstituted. The objectives of the advisory board are to provide expert guidance on the strategic direction of the program as it expands to meet the needs of the parliament and the university through national and international recruitment and placements.

## Parliamentary exchange program for the Australian Defence Force

Each year, a small number of Australian Defence Force representatives spend a week at Parliament House, hosted by a member or senator. Arrangements for participation are made by members and senators through the Minister for Defence Personnel in conjunction with the Department of Defence. In August 2016, 16 Defence Force representatives were hosted by senators and members through the program. The departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate collaborate to support the exchange program and provide orientation seminars on the work of the chambers and committees.

## Parliamentary Education Office

Jointly funded by the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives, the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) delivers parliamentary education services to teachers, students and other learners across Australia through:

- » experiential learning programs that enable students and teachers to understand and engage with the work of the parliament
- » comprehensive websites covering fundamental concepts such as representation, law-making, the separation of powers and responsible government
- » teaching resources aligned to the Australian civics and citizenship curriculum.

To date, almost 2.3 million students have expanded their knowledge of the role, function and value of the Australian Parliament through participating in a PEO program.

In addition to operational management from both departments, the PEO is guided by the PEO Advisory Committee. Co-chaired by the Deputy Speaker of the House and the Deputy President of the Senate, the committee offers advice on the strategic direction of the PEO, and forms an additional conduit between the PEO and parliamentarians. The committee reports to the Presiding Officers and meets twice a year, with the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) attending as an observer.

### *Education programs at Parliament House*

The PEO's immersive learning program at Parliament House is regarded as a highly effective method of parliamentary education. The program continued to run at capacity, with 88,169 students from 1,621 schools across Australia participating in 2016–17.

While these figures represent a small (1 per cent) decrease on 2015–16, student participation rates at Parliament House remain ahead of most other national institutions in Canberra and parliaments in a number of significantly larger countries.

### *Outreach, online and classroom resources*

The PEO offers several options for students and teachers who are unable to travel to Canberra, including outreach, a comprehensive web presence and video conferencing.

In 2016–17, the PEO delivered three weeks of outreach to 3,585 students in 64 schools across six electorates in Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

The PEO's primary website, [www.peo.gov.au](http://www.peo.gov.au), continued to perform strongly. A total of 1.35 million visitor sessions (representing 3.06 million page views) were recorded over the past year.

Reflecting the increasing use of technology in the classroom, the PEO completed the installation of video conferencing facilities to allow engagement with schools across Australia, particularly those in regional and remote areas.

### **Services for members and senators**

The PEO provides dedicated support to encourage and assist members and senators to engage with schools and students.

Members and senators are offered a complimentary annual allocation of education and information materials for students, teachers and others in their communities. In 2016–17, 116 members and 35 senators requested their allocation, an increase of 25 per cent from 2015–16.

The PEO's customised materials for members and senators continue to be popular. In 2016–17, personalised versions of *Representing You*—a tailored brochure outlining the role of a parliamentarian and the issues in their electorate, state or territory—were created for 46 members and 13 senators.

During sitting periods, members and senators are encouraged to meet school groups from their state, territory or electorate visiting Parliament House. Over the past 12 months, 99 members and five senators met with school groups during PEO programs.

### **Printed products and additional materials**

The PEO produced and distributed a range of publications during the reporting period, including:

- » 11,049 copies of the *Australian Constitution Pocket Edition*, which is produced in partnership with the Australian Government Solicitor
- » 6,864 copies of *Get Parliament*, an easy-to-understand booklet that explores Australia's system of government
- » 3,386 copies of *Role-play the Parliament: a Teacher's Guide*, a step-by-step guide to conducting immersive parliamentary education in the classroom.

Additional products—including materials for younger learners—are available through the PEO website.

### **Joint ventures and partnerships**

In 2016–17, the PEO delivered several tailored education programs, including:

- » 'Rotary Adventure in Citizenship', a week-long program for 25 Year 11 students from around Australia
- » committee and chamber debate role-play sessions for over 400 Year 12 students participating in the 2017 National Youth Science Forum
- » professional development to assist 40 science teachers to incorporate civics and citizenship in their work as part of the Australian Science Teachers Association's STEM X Academy.
- » 'The Outrigger—Navigating Gender Equality through Pacific Parliaments', a three-day training workshop on gender equality for parliamentary clerks and senior officers from 13 nations around the Pacific. The PEO facilitated the workshop in conjunction with the Parliamentary Skills Centre.

## Documentary shows a different side to parliamentary debate

In February 2017, more than 50 students visiting Parliament House from Beechworth Public School got an extra degree of realism when a film crew from the ABC recorded their debate on the issue of an eight-hour school day.

Recording footage for ABC TV's *The House*—a six-part documentary on the day-to-day operation of Parliament House—the crew joined students as they considered a bill for an Act to make the school day longer.

PEO Education Manager Angela Casey said the documentary demonstrated the benefits of the immersive learning approaches used in parliamentary education.

'Often, the views young people have about parliament are formed by the noisy highlights of question time,' she said. 'PEO teaching programs show a different perspective to parliament, and the work of it. This includes allowing students to explore an issue from all sides, and better understand the relevance the parliament has in their communities and personal lives.'



Parliamentary educator Marissa Beard (right) talks to presenter Annabel Crabb during filming for the ABC TV documentary *The House*. Photo: Tim Grainger, PEO.

## Outlook

The department will continue to raise community awareness of the work of the parliament through a variety of activities. It will conduct an audience analysis to develop a better understanding of the expectations and interests of its digital and face-to-face audiences. The analysis, along with improved evaluation and reporting systems, will assist the department to more effectively target its publishing efforts. The department will contribute to enhancements to the parliament's website, to improve accessibility and navigation on mobile devices.

Given the ongoing demand for learning programs at Parliament House, the department will continue to work with the PEO to identify strategies to meet this—and ensure program quality—in 2017–18. In particular, the PEO expects to increase options for students and teachers who are unable to travel to Canberra, including a greater use of video conferencing and digital technology, to extend and enhance access and to help teachers deliver parliamentary education in their own classrooms.



# Committee support

The Committee Office supports parliamentary committees by examining policy and legislation and scrutinising the executive. In 2016–17, the Committee Office comprised 10 secretariats that supported 13 House committees and 11 joint committees (see Table 7).

Expenditure on these services in 2016–17 was \$7.431 million, which was \$1.679 million less than the budget allocation of \$9.110 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 17); staff levels are shown in Appendix 1.

**Table 7 Committees of the Forty-fifth Parliament supported by the Committee Office, 2016–17**

House committees	Joint committees
Select Committee on Regional Development and Decentralisation (from 1 June 2017)	Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit <sup>a</sup>
Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources	Joint Select Committee on Government Procurement (from 1 December 2016)
Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Standing Committee on Economics	Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training	Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy	Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport	Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia
Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs	Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth
Standing Committee on Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources	Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities	Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security <sup>a</sup>
Standing Committee on Petitions	Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works <sup>a</sup>
Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs	
Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue	

a. Joint statutory committee.

**Note:** Five House internal committees (Appropriations, Privileges and Members' Interest, Procedure, Publications and Selection) and the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings are supported by other areas of the department and are discussed on pages 37–8.

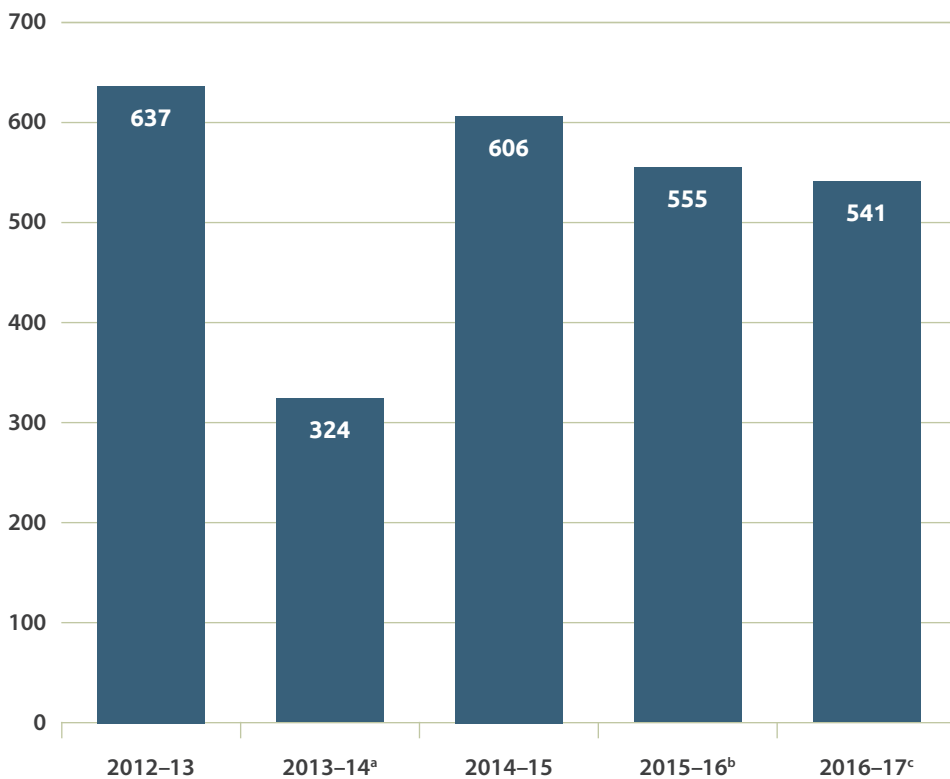
## Committee Office activity

In 2016–17, the Committee Office's support for the diverse work of committees involved:

- » facilitating committees' private meetings, public hearings and site inspections
- » providing procedural and inquiry-related advice for committees and stakeholders
- » fielding inquiries from interested stakeholders about the purpose and progress of inquiries
- » promoting committee inquiries and reports
- » conducting research and analysing evidence received by committees
- » drafting chairs' reports
- » facilitating the adoption and tabling of committee reports.

The committees supported by the Committee Office held 541 meetings in 2016–17. Appendix 3 provides a breakdown of that activity by committee. Figure 5 shows the number of meetings held by committees over the past five years.

**Figure 5** Number of committee meetings supported by the Committee Office, 2012–13 to 2016–17



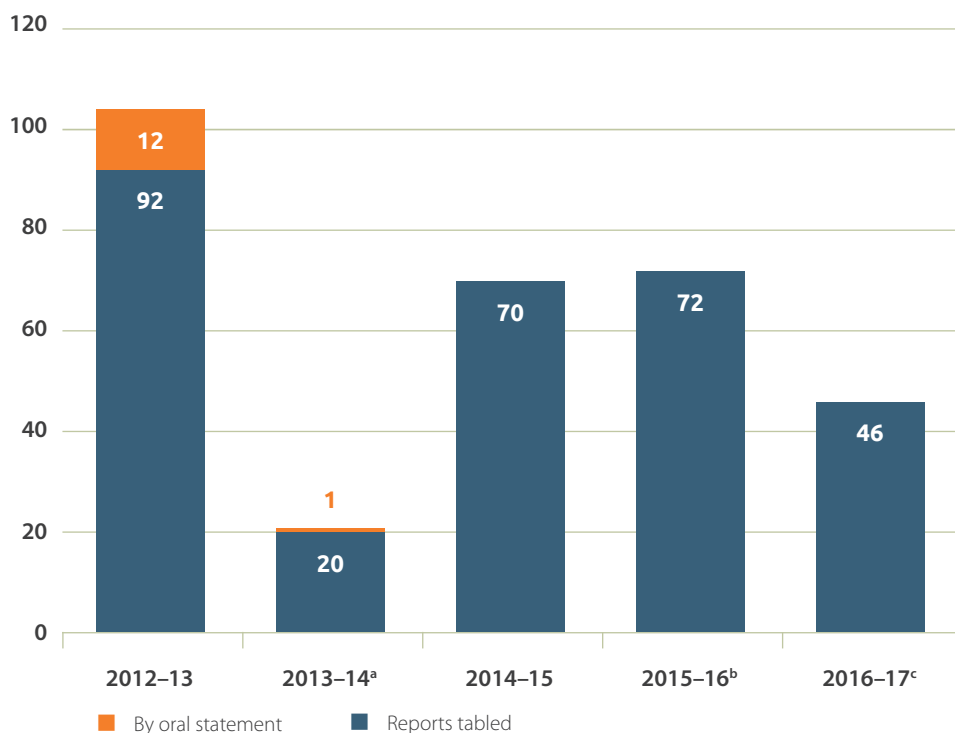
a. The Forty-fourth Parliament opened on 12 November 2013.

b. The Forty-fourth Parliament ended with the dissolution of both Houses on 9 May 2016.

c. The Forty-fifth Parliament opened on 30 August 2016.

The Committee Office tabled 46 reports in 2016–17. Appendix 4 provides a breakdown of that activity by committee. Figure 6 shows the number of reports tabled by committees over the past five years.

**Figure 6 Number of reports presented by committees, 2012–13 to 2016–17**



a. The Forty-fourth Parliament opened on 12 November 2013.

b. The Forty-fourth Parliament ended with the dissolution of both Houses on 9 May 2016.

c. The Forty-fifth Parliament opened on 30 August 2016.

## Government responses to committee reports

The government is obliged by resolution of the House to respond to recommendations contained in a report by a House or joint committee within six months of the report's tabling.

During 2016–17, 18 of the 46 tabled reports contained recommendations that required a government response. Government responses to two reports were received within the six-month timeframe; the other 16 reports are awaiting responses.

## Support for public administration—biennial conference

The chair and deputy chair of the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit (JCPAA), joined by Committee Office staff, attended the biennial conference of the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees held in Brisbane in April 2017. The conference was an opportunity to exchange ideas and knowledge about public accounts committees and public administration issues. The chair gave a jurisdictional update on

the committee's work during the Forty-fifth Parliament, and the deputy chair presented on the theme 'Parliamentarians versus politicians'. During the conference, Committee Office staff met with secretariat staff from other jurisdictions to discuss ideas specific to supporting public accounts committees. The council's next biennial conference will be hosted by the JCPAA in Canberra in 2019.



*Delegates to the Australasian Council of Public Accounts Committees conference, Parliament House, Brisbane, April 2017.*

## High-level committee business—Parliamentary Budget Office

The JCPAA has an important oversight role of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), which includes reviewing the PBO's annual budget and work plan. In 2016–17, the JCPAA approved the appointment of Ms Jenny Wilkinson as the next Parliamentary Budget Officer, commencing 24 July 2017, and commissioned an independent review of the PBO. In accordance with the legislative requirements (section 64XA of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*), the Presiding Officers wrote to the committee seeking its approval of Ms Wilkinson's appointment. The independent review focused on the operations of the PBO since its establishment in 2012 and made 16 recommendations, including on accuracy of policy costings; transparency and public understanding of budget and fiscal policy settings; and governance and resources.

## Forward-looking committee inquiries—driverless vehicles inquiry

The first inquiry in the Forty-fifth Parliament for the Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources Committee was into the social aspects of driverless vehicles in Australia. The secretariat supported the inquiry by organising 10 public hearings and four site inspections held around the country—in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Canberra. Committee members rode in a highly automated car in Canberra and in a driverless bus in Perth. The committee heard from more than 30 witnesses across its hearings and received approximately 50 written submissions from a broad range of stakeholders, including

Commonwealth and state government agencies, vehicle manufacturers, academics, industry groups, representatives of legal and insurance firms, and road safety experts. The committee's report is expected to be tabled in September 2017.



*Members of the Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources Committee during a 'drive experience' as part of the inquiry into driverless vehicles, Canberra, March 2017. Left to right: Mr Tim Wilson MP; Mr Peter Kahlil MP; Mr Ted O'Brien; Ms Michelle Landry MP (chair); Mr Luke Gosling MP (deputy chair); Mr David Littleproud MP; Mr David Pickett, Technical Manager, Volvo; Mr Brian Mitchell MP; Dr John McVeigh MP; Mr Greg Bosnich, Director Corporate, Volvo.*

## Information and communications technology

The Committee Office continued to expand its use of ICT to increase the efficiency of the office's work and provide greater access for stakeholders interested in engaging with committees.

### **Using multimedia to improve accessibility**

As part of its inquiry into the hearing health and wellbeing of Australia, the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport piloted live remote captioning for 10 of the 11 public hearings held. The pilot enabled participants to follow committee proceedings remotely in real time using their own electronic devices. The inquiry received 42 submissions and 17 exhibits, three of which were communicated in Auslan via video. The inquiry is just one example of the growing move towards improving accessibility of parliamentary proceedings.

### **Crowdsourcing questions for a public hearing**

The Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories used Facebook for the first time to call for questions from the Canberra community at its biannual briefing with the National Capital Authority held on 24 November 2016.

While parliamentary committees have had a longstanding practice of accepting submissions from the public, this was the first time a committee used Facebook (specifically, the department's About the House page) to take questions directly from the public. The Facebook post calling for input ahead of the hearing generated 22 individual responses.

At the hearing, the committee discussed community concerns raised via Facebook in addition to a range of other issues. The success of the trial has led the committee to crowdsource suggested questions again for its biannual hearing in June 2017.

### ***Introduction of e-petitioning***

At the start of the Forty-fifth Parliament, an e-petitions system and website were introduced to the House. The Speaker informed members that several changes were to be agreed to in standing orders to facilitate the new system.

The e-petitions system is designed to make it easier to petition the House. It enables members of the public to enter and sign petitions online, and to track the progress of any petition as it is presented, referred and responded to by the relevant minister. The introduction of e-petitioning shows that parliamentary processes can be modernised to the benefit of the House and the community.

The establishment of the e-petitioning system and website has proven to be a valuable enhancement for the public, the members of the House and the secretariat supporting the Petitions Committee. Since the system was introduced, the committee has received 75 per cent of its petitions as e-petitions. This figure is a positive reflection on the new system and a clear indication that the general public is receptive to petitioning the House online.

### ***Shared Committee Information Database and Report Builder***

The Committee Office continued to collaborate with the Department of the Senate on the Shared Committee Information Database (SCID), a data management and publishing tool. Report Builder, a new template for drafting committee reports, is closely integrated with SCID. Through SCID, Report Builder links committee and inquiry information, and enables web publishing of reports in PDF, HTML and e-book formats.

After several months of testing the new template, the Committee Office officially started using Report Builder in the Forty-fifth Parliament. A number of Report Builder defects continued to be resolved throughout 2016–17.

## Committee report success story—country-of-origin labelling for food

In October 2014, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Industry tabled the report *A clearer message for consumers: report on the inquiry into country of origin labelling for food*.

In early 2015, the country-of-origin food-labelling issue was brought to national attention after more than 20 Australians contracted hepatitis A from imported frozen berries. In response to that incident, and essentially ending more than 10 years of discussion and debate, the government accepted the committee's report as a whole (a government response to the report was tabled in June 2015). A policy working group was formed and the Minister for Industry invited the committee chair to participate. The minister gave three briefings to the committee on the progress of the policy reform, and the committee consulted widely with consumer and industry groups.

On 1 July 2016, the new program of country-of-origin labelling for food commenced. It includes a two-year implementation period to give Australian food producers time to change over their product packaging to meet the new labelling standard. Products featuring the new food labels are now appearing on supermarket shelves.

This is just one example of the positive impact that committee work has on government policy, and the valuable influence and relevance that committee work has in the lives of Australians more generally.

## Facilitating international visits

In April 2017, the secretariat supported an additional parliamentary delegation from the Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. The delegation visited London as part of its inquiry into whether to introduce legislation in Australia similar to the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015.

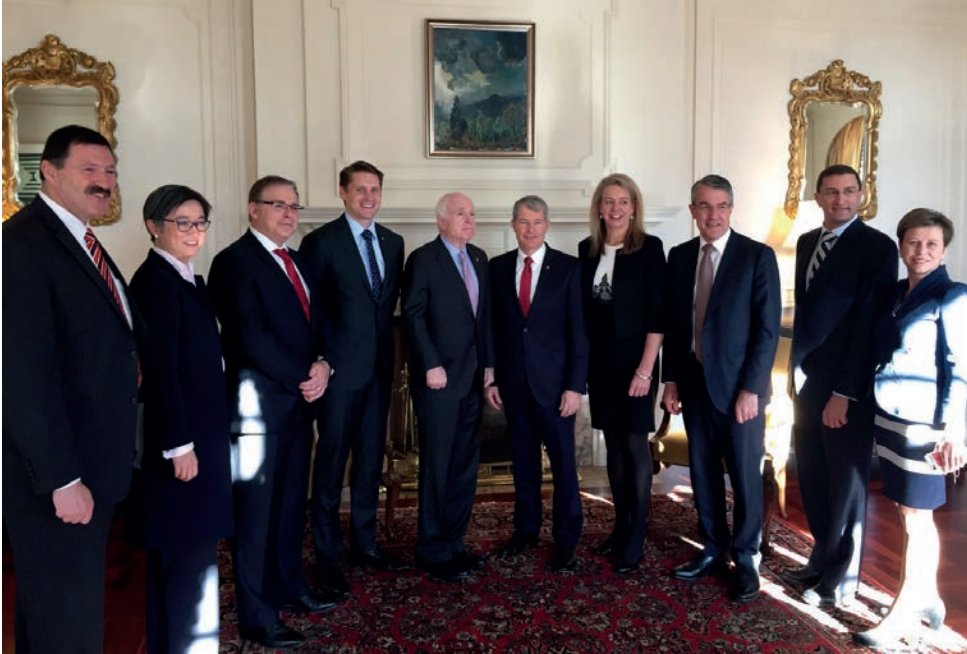
The delegation attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK's Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Modern Slavery at Westminster from 26 to 28 April, joining parliamentarians and officials from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and New Zealand. During the visit, the delegation met with UK parliamentarians involved in the introduction and implementation of the Modern Slavery Act. They also met with officials from the UK Home Office, organisations working to support victims of slavery in the United Kingdom, and businesses required to report under the Modern Slavery Act on how they ensure their global supply chains are free of slavery and human trafficking.

A delegation from the Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security travelled to Washington DC in January 2017 to meet with US security agencies and counterpart congressional committee members. Committee members spoke with officials from the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of



Homeland Security and the Pentagon about cooperative approaches to domestic and international threats of terrorism.

The committee has continued its close alliance with the United States, conducting private meetings with Senator John McCain and Professor James Clapper when they were recently in Australia.



*Delegation from the Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security in Washington DC, January 2017. Left to right: the Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM MP, Senator the Hon Penny Wong, the Hon Anthony Byrne MP, Mr Andrew Hastie MP (chair), US Senator John McCain, Senator David Fawcett, Senator Bridget McKenzie, the Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP, Mr Julian Leeser MP, Senator Jenny McAllister.*

## Outlook

The Committee Office is currently supporting several ongoing inquiries and, given the high level of committee activity over the reporting period, it is expected that a heightened level of activity will continue through 2017–18.

In the coming year, committee members will continue to be professionally supported by the Committee Office. Continuing to invest in our staff, in important areas such as procedural knowledge and leadership skills, will remain a key priority.

In the latter part of the year, the Committee Office will celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the House committee system. A seminar and other activities are being planned to reflect on the history, and celebrate the achievements, of the House committee system.



# Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building

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

The program's activities and projects in 2016–17 were coordinated by the International and Parliamentary Relations Office (IPRO) and the Parliamentary Skills Centre (PSC), with input from all four parliamentary departments. IPRO and the PSC are offices administered by the department, and IPRO receives part funding from the Department of the Senate.

Support for the parliament's international program continues to be provided by IPRO and the PSC as separate offices; however, in 2016–17 the decision was made to co-locate the two offices and for them to be managed by one director. The two offices fall under the responsibility of the Clerk Assistant (Table). IPRO continues to manage incoming and outgoing delegation programs, membership of international parliamentary organisations, and the international interests and travel of members and senators. The PSC continues to be responsible for all parliamentary strengthening and capacity-building programs of the Australian Parliament, including study programs for visiting parliamentarians and staff of other parliaments.

IPRO manages the administration of Parliamentary Regional Networks and Parliamentary Country Groups as established under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In 2016–17, it also assumed responsibility for administering the parliament's non-country Friendship Groups.

As part of the regular procedures for coordinating official outgoing delegation programs, IPRO arranges briefings for members and senators on a number of security issues, including information security. To address a growing concern over information security issues, the Presiding Officers requested IPRO to begin facilitating the provision of security advice to members and senators travelling overseas in a private capacity.

In 2016–17, the budget allocation for program activity was \$2.074 million and expenditure was \$1.254 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (pages 18–19); staff levels are shown in Appendix 1.

## Performance summary

A comprehensive program of incoming and outgoing visits during the year strengthened bilateral relations with several national parliaments. Due to the dissolution of both Houses of Parliament and the subsequent election, activity was lower in the second half of 2016. The Australian Parliament continued to support the capacity-building of parliaments in the region, and played an active role in parliamentary associations to which it belongs. As foreshadowed in last year's report, 2017 saw a return to the high level of incoming and outgoing delegation activity that is typical of that period of the parliamentary cycle.

## Parliamentary engagement

During 2016–17, IPRO coordinated 12 official visits overseas, including bilateral visits to 10 countries; attendance at six assemblies, conferences, workshops and seminars; and other visits, including Presiding Officer visits (see Appendix 6). There were seven official visits to Australia by parliamentary delegations from other countries as guests of the Australian Parliament (see Appendix 7) and 27 other visits (see Appendix 8), plus a range of capacity-building activities (see Appendix 9).

A regional focus was maintained in the visits programs. Nineteen of the 30 visits to Australia were from parliaments in the Asia–Pacific region, including the annual visit by a combined delegation from ASEAN countries. Four of the 12 overseas visits were to countries in Asia or Oceania.

In October 2016, the Presiding Officers hosted the second annual MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia) Speakers' Consultation in Hobart, Tasmania. The meeting was attended by more than 120 delegates from the five member countries, including Senator Ana Gabriela Guevara Espinoza, from Mexico's Senate; Deputy Alejandra Noemí Reynoso Sánchez, from Mexico's Chamber of Deputies; His Excellency Dr Ade Komarudin, Speaker of Indonesia's House of Representatives; Mr Sye-kyun Chung, Speaker of the Republic of Korea's National Assembly; and His Excellency Mr İsmail Kahraman, Speaker of Turkey's Grand National Assembly. The speakers met in Hobart to consult on the topic 'Open parliament for open government', which generated a wide-ranging discussion on the challenges, solutions and benefits of maintaining open parliaments.

During the reporting period, the Australian Parliament hosted visits by a number of presiding officers, including His Excellency Professor Dr Norbert Lammert, Speaker of the German Bundestag; the Rt Hon David Carter MP, Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives; Ms Gabriela Michetti, Vice President of the Argentine Republic and President of the Argentine Senate; and Madam Halimah Jacob, Speaker of the Parliament of Singapore.



*The Hon Tony Smith MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives (left) welcomes the Rt Hon David Carter MP, Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament's House of Representatives, to the Australian Parliament in February 2017. Photo: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.*

The work of incoming and outgoing parliamentary delegations continued to be promoted through the Parliament of Australia website, including publication of short articles and video interviews with delegation leaders.

Outgoing and incoming delegations gave positive feedback on the quality of the programs, both at debrief meetings and through correspondence. For example, an Australian ambassador who accompanied a visiting Presiding Officer wrote that the delegation was 'very happy indeed with the visit and the level of access they received'. The ambassador also commented on the visit program, saying that 'by any standard I think it was a tremendous success—in part owing to its excellent organisation'.

## Parliamentary cooperation

The Australian Parliament maintained its strong commitment to regional and international parliamentary cooperation in 2016–17. However, due to the timing of the election, the parliament was not represented at some association assemblies. Nevertheless, delegations attended an Inter-Parliamentary Union assembly and the Asia–Pacific Parliamentary Forum (for more detail, see Appendix 6).

In June 2016, IPRO coordinated a seminar at Parliament House for more than 80 members of the diplomatic community on the role and work of the Australian Parliament, committee operations, security matters and the parliament's international program. A deputy head of a foreign mission remarked that she found the seminar 'extremely useful' for her work and 'appreciated that the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives as well as the highest ranking parliamentary officials all took time to address and enlighten us about their work'.

## Parliamentary strengthening

The PSC has responsibility for coordinating the parliament's capacity-building activities. With the generous support of members, senators and colleagues from throughout the parliamentary service, as well as some state and territory parliaments, the centre facilitates the parliament's capacity-building and parliamentary strengthening activities with Pacific Island nations and other countries' parliaments.

The centre continued to coordinate activities under the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program and the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Project (funded under the Australian Government's Pacific Women's Shaping Pacific Development Initiative). The major focus of the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program during the year was work with the parliaments of Fiji and Samoa.

Support for the Parliament of Fiji was arranged in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme and included placements of parliamentary researchers from the Department of Parliamentary Services and the Victorian Parliament to assist the Fiji Parliament's budget analysis and provide mentoring support for Fiji's parliamentary sittings. In October 2016, the Deputy Speaker of the Fiji Parliament, the Hon Ruveni Nadalo, visited Canberra and Melbourne for mentoring support from his Australian counterparts.

Two seminars were held in Apia for members and staff of the Samoan Legislative Assembly, on the topics of committee operations and parliamentary procedure. They were conducted with the help of two former Speakers of the House of Representatives, Ms Anna Burke and Mr Harry Jenkins AO, and senior staff from the department.

During the year, the major activities of the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Project involved facilitating research scholarships for parliamentary officers from Fiji and Samoa; training facilitators and making support arrangements for the learning program on gender equality, 'The Outrigger—Navigating Gender Equality through Pacific Parliaments'; and arranging a visit for a new woman parliamentarian from Tonga to the South Australian Parliament.

Departmental staff and colleagues from all parliamentary departments, through the coordination of the PSC, contributed to study programs for visiting members and staff of a number of overseas parliaments. In March 2017, an Inter-Parliamentary Study Program was conducted for parliamentary staff, with participants from China, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Kiribati, Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu.

## Improving performance

In February 2017, amendments were made to the Parliamentary Entitlements Regulations 1997 to provide for a global budget of \$250,000 per financial year for each Presiding Officer's overseas travel, and to give the Presiding Officers the authority to formally approve the outgoing delegations program for each year. These changes streamlined the approval process for all overseas delegation travel. They enable IPRO to be more responsive to members and senators, and strategic with forward planning for outgoing delegations. The parliament also continued to benefit from the amended process for Presiding Officer approval of additional delegations introduced in the previous year.

The co-location of IPRO and the PSC has allowed for greater knowledge-sharing between the offices and efficiencies in the coordination of the international program through the sharing of common resources.

The outgoing delegation online portal continued to be utilised, where appropriate, for official outgoing delegations. The portal allows up-to-date information to be made available to delegations both prior to and during official visits.

## Outlook

The year ahead will include a full program of delegation visits, with the continued implementation of the 2016–19 delegations program as approved by the Presiding Officers. In the first half of 2017–18, 15 outgoing delegations (including committee visits, a parliamentary field visit and attendance at assemblies) and five official incoming parliamentary delegations are scheduled.

Parliamentary strengthening programs administered through the PSC will remain a priority area for the international program, and initiatives and activities established under the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program and the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Project will continue to be supported. The Australian Parliament largely relies on funding from government or other sources, such as the United Nations

Development Programme, to support much of its parliamentary capacity-building work with other parliaments. The PSC will continue to respond to invitations to the Australian Parliament to collaborate on parliamentary strengthening, giving due consideration to the limited resources available for such work.

The next annual Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Forum, to be held in Honiara, Solomon Islands, in September 2017, will be a major focus for the PSC in the year ahead. The PSC also expects to support several study programs for staff of other parliaments, and will coordinate the first Inter-Parliamentary Study Program for deputy speakers of Pacific parliaments, which will be held in November 2017.

# Members' and corporate support

Members' and corporate support is provided by the Finance Office, the Parliamentary and Business Information Services Office, the People Strategies Office and the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, all of which report to the Serjeant-at-Arms. The offices liaise with the Department of Finance and the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) to provide comprehensive services to departmental staff as well as members and their staff, including:

- » facilitating committees' private meetings, public hearings and site inspections
- » advice and support on financial and human resource management, as well as records management, publishing and office services
- » payment of members' salaries and allowances
- » organisation of members' office accommodation, furniture and fittings
- » provision of mail and courier services and a booking service for committee rooms and chamber gallery seating
- » maintenance and publication of key information about members and former members.

The 2016–17 budget allocation for the activity was \$8.551 million and expenditure was \$8.945 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (pages 20–1); staff levels are shown in Appendix 1.

## Performance summary

A high priority for the program is to provide advice and support to the Speaker and the Speaker's Office on the control and management of the precincts, chamber and gallery security, and ceremonial and other events at Parliament House. Staff work closely with colleagues in the Department of the Senate, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Australian Federal Police and DPS.

During the year, we completed a number of ICT projects to support the work of the two chambers, committees and members. This included the development of an online petitioning system for the House.

## Opening of the Forty-fifth Parliament

A major activity for the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office during the reporting period was preparation for the opening of the Forty-fifth Parliament. This involved ceremonial duties, gallery attendance and security, and logistics associated with members' accommodation at Parliament House. The opening was marked by ceremonies and traditional practices derived from those of the UK Parliament and included a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony to pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land.

## Address in Reply

The Address in Reply for the Forty-fifth Parliament was presented to the Governor-General at Government House on 23 May 2017. The Address in Reply is the formal acknowledgement by the House to the Governor-General for the speech given at an opening of parliament. The address is printed on goatskin parchment and signed by the Speaker and the Clerk.



*Presentation of the Address in Reply at Government House, Canberra, 23 May 2017. In the foreground, left to right: Claressa Surtees, Deputy Clerk of the House; David Elder, Clerk of the House; the Hon Tony Smith MP, Speaker of the House; Ms Nicolle Flint MP, Member for Boothby; the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, Prime Minister; His Excellency General the Hon Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), Governor-General. Photo: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.*

## Services and advice

### **Media services**

The Serjeant-at-Arms and staff continued to work with the various media bureaus and the governing committee of the Parliamentary Press Gallery to ensure compliance with the rules for media-related activity in Parliament House and its precincts.

During the year, the Serjeant-at-Arms, the Usher of the Black Rod and their delegates liaised closely with the press gallery to balance media access, security and parliamentary requirements at major parliamentary events, including budget day and the opening of the Forty-fifth Parliament.

The Presiding Officers approved wide-ranging access to Parliament House for the ABC to document the work of the Australian Parliament. The outcome of the filming will be a TV documentary series consisting of six half-hour episodes to be screened on ABC TV in the second half of 2017. The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office supported arrangements to facilitate filming activities throughout the building over a number of weeks.



On a day-to-day level, the Serjeant-at-Arms and delegates work with members' and ministers' offices, representatives of the press gallery, the Australian Federal Police and the Parliamentary Security Service to ensure that media events on the precincts are conducted in compliance with the media rules and with minimum inconvenience to all.

During the year, the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office responded to around 180 requests to film or photograph in the private areas of the building.

### **Information services**

As part of the department's commitment to keep members and their staff informed about developments in the House, four editions of the members' bulletin, *House Update*, were published and seven procedural briefing sessions were held during the year.

### **Accommodation services**

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office provides a concierge service for members and, as part of that, coordinates accommodation, capital works and routine maintenance services in the House of Representatives wing.

In early 2016, endorsement was given to proceed with the construction of two new suites for members' accommodation. DPS took the lead in managing the design and construction phases, with close oversight of scope and quality requirements provided by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office. Construction of the suites began in December 2016 and they were completed and handed over in February 2017.

After the election on 2 July 2016, the office was tasked with allocating accommodation for the new members. Defeated members were given two weeks to clear their suites so that they could be prepared for the new members. After consultation with the whips, and endorsement by the Speaker, suite allocations were finalised in readiness for the arrival of the new members.

During the year, the office arranged 73 office relocations as a result of the election, ministry reshuffles and changes to office-holder positions. That number is significantly higher than the 28 relocations in 2015–16. The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office worked closely with the government and opposition whips to ensure the relocations were completed quickly. The office also coordinated over 600 requests to supply and move furniture. Again, that number is significantly higher than the previous year's (428), which may reflect increased activity due to members settling into their suites after the election. All tasks were performed within agreed timeframes, to agreed standards, and to the satisfaction of the whips and individual members.

### **Office furniture replacement project**

The second phase of the furniture replacement project continued during the year. Installation of new furniture was completed in 84 of the 125 members' staff offices as at 30 June 2017, and 55 suites in total were completed during 2016–17. To begin the process, floorplans are developed in consultation with members and their staff; furniture is then installed during non-sitting weeks to minimise disruption.



### ***Maintenance, access and transport services***

Requests for maintenance work in members' suites are coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, and include both emergency and routine work. During the year, the office coordinated 399 emergency requests, which were all attended to promptly. In addition, the office coordinated 229 routine requests for repairs or alterations to suites or common areas. We take a proactive approach by performing office shutdowns and inspections over the autumn and winter recesses, so that issues can be identified, reported and addressed while parliament is not sitting.

The office coordinated 1,321 requests for assistance with telephone faults, relocations and allocations of telephone numbers (1,126 in 2015–16). The increase is a result of the election and the furniture replacement project. Faults reported were referred to telephone support in DPS within five minutes of receipt, and appropriate timeframes for resolution were agreed with the affected areas.

As the area responsible for access to members' suites, the office approved 919 requests by DPS for access to suites and general circulation areas for general maintenance and services. This is a significant increase on the previous year (615 requests) as a result of the election and an increase in support from the office for DPS projects.

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office operates a Transport Office that delivers a parliamentary shuttle service during sitting periods. The shuttle provides a readily available, secure car-with-driver service in Canberra for members. In 2016–17, the Transport Office managed 9,390 bookings from members, compared with 8,172 bookings in 2015–16 (figures exclude unbooked shuttle trips from the House of Representatives entrance). This represents a 15 per cent increase in bookings on the previous year, reflecting a greater number of sitting days in the period.

### ***Parliament House security***

The Serjeant-at-Arms represents the department on the Security Management Board. The board is established pursuant to section 65A of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* to advise the Presiding Officers on security policy and the management of security measures for Parliament House. The board met six times during the reporting period.

### ***Security screening***

Certain guests are exempt from security screening on entry to Parliament House. Approvals for any other exemptions are made jointly by the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod. During the year, exemptions were approved for 36 groups and individuals (compared with 26 in 2015–16).

### ***Information and communications technology***

Under the revised ICT service delivery framework, most of the department's ICT functions are provided by DPS. In support of this arrangement, the department continued to participate in a range of ICT advisory and management committees. Negotiations with the other parliamentary departments continued on a revised memorandum of understanding and service-level agreement.

The Joint Management Committee, which comprises senior parliamentary department staff, oversees the service-level agreement; it met four times in the reporting period. The Serjeant-at-Arms is the department's representative on the committee.

### ***Software services***

A number of ICT systems supporting the work of the chamber, its committees and its members were put into production in the period. These included:

- » ParlWork (see page 33)
- » Parliamentary Procedural Records System (see page 36)
- » e-petitions system (see page 52)
- » Report Builder template (see page 52).

The implementation stage of the Venue Management System project was finalised, and ongoing support arrangements were agreed with the Department of the Senate and DPS.

The department continues to use e-Trim to file and manage records electronically, and upgraded its version of e-Trim to enhance this capability. A project to identify methods of improving the user experience is underway. The department is committed to meeting the targets under the National Archives' Digital Continuity 2020 Policy by December 2020.

### ***Internet and intranet services***

We continued to support the new consolidated intranet portal for senators and members, the portal for outgoing parliamentary delegations and the new departmental intranet site. A project to consolidate House news for members of the public and other interested parties commenced in June 2017.

### ***Printing***

The department's in-house printing service produced around 1.5 million impressions in 2016–17 (a decrease of 0.4 million from 2015–16). The decreased volume is a result of further efficiencies achieved in the printing and distribution of chamber documents and committee reports.

### ***Parliamentary assistants program***

The parliamentary assistants program is managed by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office. Parliamentary assistants are university students who perform the roles of messengerial attendants for an average of 10 hours per week; rosters are planned around student commitments and the requirements of the House.

Six students took part in the program in 2016–17: three were existing assistants, and three were new appointments. The new assistants came from the ACT, New South Wales and Victoria, and all were studying at universities in Canberra. Former parliamentary assistants were also engaged in the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office to work at the front counter and in other areas of members' services.

## Members' salaries

All processing of members' salaries and entitlements by the People Strategies Office was in accordance with legislation and administrative decisions. In the 2017 members' survey, 88 per cent of respondents said that they were satisfied with support for salary payments. Annual expenditure on members' salaries and other entitlements was \$47.531 million.

## Corporate support

The People Strategies Office provides corporate services and advice to the department. Operational performance indicators for finance, human resources and other corporate support services were met in 2016–17, and the department was in compliance with internal and external governance and reporting requirements. Also during the year:

- » the staff survey was reviewed and benchmarked with a view to modernising the terminology and gaining feedback on newly emerging themes
- » the department's leadership statement was updated and leadership training and development programs for staff were redeveloped
- » an Indigenous secondment program was developed.

Related information is detailed in Part 3 of this report.

## Outlook

In 2017–18, the department will continue to provide advice and services of a high standard to support the Speaker, members in Parliament House and the department.

We anticipate that priorities for the members' services and corporate support program during the year will include:

- » overseeing several major capital works projects that will have a significant impact on all occupants of the House of Representatives wing
- » completing the second phase of the furniture replacement project
- » planning and preparing for the hosting of a Serjeant-at-Arms conference in 2018
- » finalising a new memorandum of understanding and related service-level agreement with DPS for the provision of ICT support
- » installing new, more efficient print machinery for the in-house printing service
- » developing a new system to support chamber gallery bookings
- » making further enhancements to various systems supporting the chamber, its committees and its members
- » developing a consolidated news page for information on the House and its committees
- » negotiating a new enterprise agreement for departmental staff.

# Schools hospitality

The department receives a special appropriation to provide modest hospitality to school groups visiting Parliament House. School visits are coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, working in partnership with the Parliamentary Education Office and Visitor Services.

In 2016–17 the administered appropriation for the schools hospitality program activity was \$0.322 million, and expenditure (including accrued expenses) was \$0.324 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 22); staff levels are shown in Appendix 1.

## Performance summary

In 2016–17, 117,582 school students participated in educational tours of Parliament House, up from 115,744 in the previous year. The number of students from the ACT, Queensland and South Australia decreased, while all other states recorded higher numbers than in the previous financial year (see Table 8).

**Table 8 Students visiting Parliament House, by location and year, 2012–13 to 2016–17**

Year	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Other	Total
2012–13	1,657	67,955	881	16,395	4,742	1,471	17,245	5,064	241	115,651
2013–14	1,859	62,597	835	18,193	5,390	1,581	17,766	5,488	–	113,709
2014–15	2,158	67,385	819	19,489	5,061	1,750	18,531	5,023	–	120,216
2015–16	3,004	64,438	654	16,056	5,849	1,621	18,950	5,159	13	115,744
2016–17	2,783	65,653	686	15,828	5,610	1,683	19,971	5,440	–	117,654

All visiting students participated in a guided tour and visited both chambers. Eighty-one per cent (95,887) received hospitality and 75 per cent (88,169) participated in the PEO program (see pages 43–4 for more information on the PEO's activities).

## Improving performance

From July 2016, bookings were taken on a rolling monthly basis for the following two calendar years. This process was developed in conjunction with stakeholders to bring our booking schedule into line with the schedules of other designated agencies on the visits program and has been well received.

Through the Venue Management System, an online calendar was introduced to allow schools and agents to view availability of school programs at Parliament House before making a booking. The school visits section of the website was updated to make it easier for users to access information and make bookings.

## Outlook

By 30 June 2017, we had booked 112,383 students from 1,703 schools for the following 12 months. Last year at the same time we had 106,775 students booked from 1,671 schools.