
SPEAKER'S BRIEF

43rd Parliament

November 2011

**Prepared by the Department of the House of
Representatives**

Contents

Contents	i
Introduction	1
<i>Contact details for the department's Executive</i>	<i>1</i>
1 The Speaker	3
<i>Roles</i>	<i>3</i>
Representative role	3
Procedural role	4
Practicalities	4
Services in relation to the House	4
Authority to administer oath or affirmation	5
Statutory responsibilities	5
Responsibilities regarding the Department of Parliamentary Services	5
<i>Committees and associations</i>	<i>5</i>
Selection Committee	6
Committee on Appropriations and Administration	6
Joint House Committee	7
Parliamentary associations	8
Security Management Board	8
Unofficial advisory committees	9
POITAG	9
<i>Media</i>	<i>9</i>
Broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings	10
Televising of parliamentary proceedings	10
Media rules including filming and photography within the Chamber and building	10
Media review	11
<i>Other sources of advice</i>	<i>11</i>
Parliamentary Service Commissioner	11
Parliamentary Service Merit Protection Commissioner	11
2 Speaker's facilities and entitlements	13
<i>Speaker's office</i>	<i>13</i>
Accommodation	13
Security	13
Hardware and software facilities	13
In-house printing	13
<i>Speaker's staff</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Travel</i>	<i>14</i>
In Canberra	14
Provision of motor vehicle for the Speaker—Fringe Benefits Tax implications	15

Travelling allowance	15
Family entitlements (including some comments on the Speaker's travel).....	16
<i>Official hospitality</i>	16
3 Chamber and Main Committee: Advice and support	17
<i>Advice</i>	17
Standing Orders	17
Speaker's Panel.....	18
Speaker's vote	18
<i>Chamber operations</i>	19
Security	19
Chamber practice.....	19
Matter of Public Importance	20
Distinguished visitors	20
Legislation.....	21
Legislative drafting services.....	21
Documents presented in the House	21
Procedural publications	22
Second Chamber.....	22
Right of reply	23
<i>Information technology</i>	23
Live Minutes/Votes Officer's Minutes system.....	23
Technology in the Chamber.....	23
Chamber/Main Committee captioning system	23
<i>Areas of the department responsible for Chamber support</i>	24
Table Office.....	24
Chamber Research Office	24
Serjeant-at-Arms.....	25
<i>Current developments</i>	26
Redevelopment of the Document Production System	26
Electronic petitions	26
Electronic Parliamentary Papers Series	26
Redevelopment of the Procedural Records System	26
Finalisation of projects.....	27
4 Administration of the Department of the House of Representatives	29
<i>Corporate governance</i>	29
Legislative structures	29
Senior management	30
Consultative Committee	30
Corporate and business plans.....	31
Service charters	32
<i>Accountability and external scrutiny</i>	32
<i>Management of people</i>	32
Staffing.....	32

Bullying and harassment.....	33
Investors in People	33
Workplace relations issues	34
Graduate recruitment program.....	35
<i>Financial matters</i>	35
Overview	35
Financial Position as at 31 October 2011.....	37
Committee on Appropriations and Administration	39
Medium to long-term viability (3-10 years).....	40
Internal audit, risk management and fraud control	40
<i>Cooperation and coordination across the Parliament</i>	41
Coordinating meetings	41
Podger review and shared services arrangements.....	41
Parliamentary Budget Office	41
Coordination across the parliamentary departments	42
5 International activities	43
<i>Overview</i>	43
<i>Official incoming and outgoing parliamentary delegations</i>	43
<i>Parliamentary organisations</i>	44
IPU	44
Parliamentary Groups.....	44
CPA.....	45
APPF.....	45
<i>International conferences</i>	45
APPF.....	45
IPU	45
CPA.....	46
Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference.....	46
Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers Conference	46
<i>Other programs</i>	46
6 Members' entitlements and services	49
<i>Members' services</i>	49
Members' salaries.....	49
Members' survey	49
Bulletin.....	49
Members' briefings.....	50
Former Members' association	50
<i>Facilities</i>	50
Accommodation and chamber seating.....	50
Review of accommodation in Parliament House.....	51
Transport	51
Newspapers	51
Flags	52

Postage allowance	52
Stationery and stores.....	52
Messengerial attendants	52
Parliamentary assistants.....	52
<i>Information technology</i>	53
Responsibilities.....	53
Equipment allocation.....	53
Software.....	53
Electronic mailboxes.....	54
Internet site	54
Printing	54
7 Committee services.....	57
<i>Overview</i>	57
Staffing structure of committees.....	57
<i>Information technology</i>	58
Electronic management of committee documents.....	58
Electronic accessibility of committee reports and proceedings	59
<i>Oversight of committees</i>	59
Liaison Committee of Chairs and Deputy Chairs.....	59
8 Community engagement	61
<i>Introduction</i>	61
<i>Products</i>	61
Magazine—About the House.....	61
Television—About the House and MPI.....	61
Electronic information services	62
Media liaison.....	62
<i>Educational activities and materials</i>	62
Seminars	62
University lecture program.....	62
Australian National Internships Program (ANIP)	62
Community publications and resource material	64
<i>Public Activities in Parliament House</i>	64
2013 Open Day and 25 th anniversary of the opening of Parliament House	64
Public visitors during proceedings	64
Public displays.....	65
9 Parliamentary education	67
Parliamentary Education Office (PEO).....	67
School visits to Parliament House.....	68
Government Parliamentary and Civics Education Rebate (previously the Citizenship Visits Program – CVP).....	68

Attachment 1 – Corporate Plan 2010 - 2013	69
Attachment 2 – The department’s service charter.....	74
Attachment 3 – Community service standards	78
Attachment 4 – Members’ survey results 2011	81
Attachment 5 –Committees supported by the department	83
Attachment 6 – Guidelines on provision of services to the Speaker	84
Attachment 7 – Agreement for a Better Parliament: Parliamentary Reform (6 September 2010)	87

Introduction

These notes outline key roles and responsibilities of the Speaker and the Department of the House of Representatives (the department), including support provided to the Speaker and Members by the department.

Contact details for the department's Executive

Clerk	Mr Bernard Wright	6277 [REDACTED]
Deputy Clerk	Mr David Elder	6277 [REDACTED]
Clerk Assistant (Committees)	Ms Joanne Towner	6277 [REDACTED]
Clerk Assistant (Table)	Ms Claressa Surtees	6277 [REDACTED]
Serjeant-at-Arms	Ms Robyn McClelland	6277 [REDACTED]

1 The Speaker

Roles

The Speakership is the most important office in the House of Representatives: the effect of section 35 of the Constitution is that the House cannot operate without a Speaker. The Speaker's authority is derived from the House, to which his or her duty lies and to which he or she is answerable.

The importance of the Presiding Officers is acknowledged by their position in the Australian Order of Precedence (a formal list used to determine issues of protocol at official functions), where they rank directly after the Governor-General and State Governors, the Prime Minister, and a State Premier within that Premier's State.

A Member elected Speaker is entitled, while Speaker, to the title 'Honourable', which, with the approval of the Sovereign, may be retained for life. This privilege is usually given to those who have served as Speaker for three years or more.

In the Chamber and for ceremonial occasions the Speaker may wear a black gown. Traditionally, Speakers from the non-Labor parties have worn the formal dress but Speakers from the Australian Labor Party have not done so.

Representative role

On assuming the Speakership a Member becomes, for certain purposes, the spokesperson for the House.

Official communications from and to the House are signed by and addressed to the Speaker. The Speaker receives delegations from other Parliaments and special visitors on behalf of the House.

As you are aware, in representing the House the Speaker represents and is responsible to the House and all of its Members. He or she is not responsible to the executive government and seeks to preserve the House's independence from it.

The Speakership is an office of such significance that the representative role necessarily involves the occupant in important official ceremonial and representational activities. Such activities may be initiated within the Parliament or within government – for example CERHOS or the Australian War Memorial. One of the consequences of the occupancy of the Speakership is the obligation to forego activities which are properly available to other members; the Speaker is not free to engage in unofficial activities which could, for example, give rise to questions about associations with particular interests.

Procedural role

As Presiding Officer, the Speaker chairs the meetings of the House. The Speaker supervises rather than participates in proceedings; he or she does not normally take part in debate and does not vote in the House except in the event of numbers being equal, in which case the Speaker has a casting vote. The Speaker makes statements or announcements to the House as necessary, and may be asked questions on matters of parliamentary administration.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Speakership in Australia has long been regarded as a political appointment, successive Speakers have sought to discharge their duties with impartiality.

Practicalities

Each sitting day the Speaker meets with the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, the Deputy Speaker and (as of the start of the 43rd Parliament) the Second Deputy Speaker to be briefed on the program for the day and to discuss any procedural or other issues. The Speaker's senior adviser has also attended.

The Speaker has traditionally taken the Chair in the Chamber at particular times each sitting day. These are at the opening of proceedings, during Question Time, during the adjournment debate and, in this Parliament, during divisions. Further details on the powers, functions and duties of the Speaker are set out at pp. 170-180 in *House of Representatives Practice* 5th ed.

Services in relation to the House

The Speaker has responsibilities in relation to the administration of the House of Representatives and, with the President of the Senate, the administration of services provided jointly to Members and Senators and the operation of Parliament House.

In some ways the Speaker has a role in relation to the department that is analogous to that of a Minister of State in relation to a government department. The Chief Executive Officer of the department is the Clerk of the House who is responsible for the efficient and effective administration of the department's resources.

Jointly with the President of the Senate, the Speaker has an equivalent 'ministerial' role in respect of the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) (see comments at p. 5 and the separate brief to be prepared by DPS).

The *Parliamentary Precincts Act 1988* (Precincts Act) gives the Presiding Officers responsibility for control and management of Parliament House and its immediate surroundings (the precincts). They have overall responsibility for security services and may, subject to any order of either House, take any action they consider necessary for the control and management of the precincts. In respect of the ministerial wing these powers are subject to any limitations and conditions agreed between the Presiding Officers and the

executive government. The Speaker exercises sole authority over the House of Representatives area in Parliament House.

Authority to administer oath or affirmation

At the beginning or renewal of each Speaker's term of office the Speaker is authorised by the Governor-General to administer the oath or affirmation of allegiance to any Member not present at the opening of Parliament and to new Members elected during the course of a Parliament. We expect that a Commission will be provided to you early in the new year.

Statutory responsibilities

The Speaker is responsible for the issue of writs for by-elections. The Speaker also has a variety of specific duties laid down by a number of laws, and in particular by the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

Responsibilities regarding the Department of Parliamentary Services

Jointly with the President of the Senate, the Speaker has something of the 'ministerial equivalent' role in respect of the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) as he or she has with respect to this department.

DPS was formed on 1 February 2004 following the amalgamation of three departments: the Department of the Parliamentary Library, the Department of the Parliamentary Reporting Staff and the Joint House Department (see the section on the Podger Review at p. 41).

DPS provides information services, analysis and advice to the Parliament through the Parliamentary Library; Hansard transcription, information technology, communications and broadcasting services; a range of building and estate management services and facilities; and security of the Parliament House building, its occupants and external perimeter.

The Secretary of DPS is Mr Alan Thompson who reports directly to you and the President of the Senate. Contact information for Mr Thompson is:

Tel: 6277 [REDACTED]

Fax: 6277 [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]@aph.gov.au

A separate brief on DPS will be provided by that department.

Committees and associations

The Speaker is a member of several parliamentary associations and committees and receives advice from a number of committees as well. The parliamentary committees include: the Selection Committee (Chair – see notes below); the Committee on Appropriations and Administration (Chair – see notes at p. 6); the House Committee (Chair – see notes at p. 7); and the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings (Chair – see notes at p. 10).

Selection Committee

Pursuant to the *Agreement for a Better Parliament: Parliamentary Reform* agreed to by the government, opposition and non-aligned Members after the 2010 election (**Attachment 7**), the House has re-established a Selection Committee in this Parliament, with responsibility for selecting and programming private Members' business and committee and delegation business. This role had been undertaken by a meeting of party whips in the 42nd Parliament, although there had been such a committee in earlier Parliaments chaired by the Deputy Speaker.

Established under Standing Order 222, the Selection Committee has retained the traditional roles of not only selecting this business but also allocating times for individual business items, as well as times for individual speeches. Two significant roles have been added. One is that the Committee looks at all bills introduced and has the power to refer bills directly to House or joint committees for inquiry; this power can be exercised by an individual member of the Committee. The second is that the Committee can recommend items of private Members' business for a vote of the House.

The Committee consists of 11 members: you as Chair (or, in your absence, the Deputy Speaker), the chief whips of the three parties, three government Members, two opposition Members and two non-aligned Members. The Committee typically meets twice each sitting week on Tuesday and Wednesday (and sometimes on Thursday). As an aid to Members and others, determinations and recommendations of the Selection Committee relating to items of business before the House are reflected on the *Notice Paper*. Secretariat support is provided by staff of the Table Office; the Secretary to the Committee is the Clerk Assistant (Table), Ms Claressa Surtees (ext. [REDACTED]).

Committee on Appropriations and Administration

In the previous Parliament, the department proposed to the then Speaker the establishment of a House Appropriations and Administration Committee. The proposal has been widely supported over the years, including by the Standing Committee on Procedure in its 2010 report on the House committee system, and then as part of the reform agenda in the *Agreement for a Better Parliament: Parliamentary Reform* agreed to by the government, opposition and non-aligned Members after the 2010 election (**Attachment 7**).

The Appropriations and Administration Committee was established under Standing Order 222A in the 43rd Parliament to:

- consider estimates of the funding required for the operation of the Department of the House of Representatives each year;
- provide to the Speaker for presentation to the House and transmission to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, the Committee's estimates of amounts for inclusion in appropriation and supply bills for the Department of the House of Representatives;

- consider proposals for changes to the administration of the Department of the House of Representatives or variations to services provided by the department;
- consider and report to the Speaker on any other matters of finance or services as may be referred to it by the Speaker;
- consider and report to the House on any other matters of finance or services as may be referred to it by the House;
- make an annual report to the House on its operations;
- consider the administration and funding of security measures affecting the House and advise the Speaker and the House as appropriate; and
- consider any proposals for works in the parliamentary precincts that are subject to parliamentary approval and report to the House on them as appropriate.

When conferring with the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations and Staffing, the House Appropriations and Administration Committee may:

- consider estimates of the funding required for the operation of the Department of Parliamentary Services each year; and
- provide to the Speaker for presentation to the House and transmission to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, estimates of amounts for inclusion in appropriation and supply bills for the Department of Parliamentary Services.

The House committee is not called an 'appropriations and staffing' committee, to reflect the fact that under the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* the Clerk has responsibility for staffing matters.

The Committee is chaired by you and has nine members (four government and four non-government). It is supported by the Clerk, the Serjeant-at-Arms (Secretary to the Committee) and officers of the department. To date the Committee has met six times, presented its first report on Budget estimates and tabled its first Annual Report.

Joint House Committee

The House of Representatives House Committee is established under standing order 218 and meets with the Senate House Committee pursuant to Standing Order 238, as the Joint House Committee:

218 House Committee

- (a) A House Committee shall be appointed to consider any matter about the provision of facilities in Parliament House referred to it by the House or the Speaker.
- (b) The committee shall consist of seven members: the Speaker and six other members.

238 Conferring with Senate Committees

A committee may confer with a similar committee of the Senate.

There are similar provisions in the Senate Standing Orders relating to the Senate's House Committee.

You and the President are the joint chairs of the Committee.

In accordance with the terms of reference of each House Committee, the Joint House Committee generally considers matters that are referred to it by the Presiding Officers, or by the parliamentary departments where it is a matter which affects joint services. The Presiding Officers usually also invite members of the Committee to raise their concerns about the provision of amenities and services. Thus the Committee has acted as a forum for its members to raise and consider matters relating to the provision of services and amenities to Members and Senators in Parliament House.

The role of the Joint House Committee is advisory only. Executive responsibility for the provision of services and amenities rests with the Presiding Officers and the parliamentary departments. While the Committee can make recommendations, neither the Presiding Officers nor the parliamentary departments are bound by decisions of the Committee. The Serjeant-at-Arms is the notional secretary to the House Committee, and attends meetings of the Joint House Committee, together with you and your Senior Adviser. The Secretary of DPS provides secretariat support to the Joint House Committee.

Parliamentary associations

With the President of the Senate, you are the Joint President of the Commonwealth of Australia Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Joint President of the Australian Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Chairman and Joint President of the Australian National Group of the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (see the international activities section of the brief at p. 43).

Security Management Board

Security continues to be an important issue. [Redacted]
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- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Unofficial advisory committees

The following advisory committees have been appointed in the past by the Presiding Officers to provide advice to them:

- Presiding Officers Information Technology Advisory Group (POITAG) (see below for details)
- Parliamentary Education Office Advisory Committee (see p. 67 for details)
- Artworks Advisory Committee (see DPS brief for details).

The advantage of such committees is that they widen the scope of advice available to the Presiding Officers. They can serve as useful sounding boards and filters. Like all committees, the key to their success lies very much in their membership. It is also important that there is a good balance of views within each committee. The inclination in relation to POITAG and the advisory committee on the PEO can, naturally enough, be for enthusiastic users of computers and for enthusiastic educationalists, respectively, to serve or to be asked to serve. This obviously makes valuable expertise and experience available although it can mean that the groups may be more enthusiastic than the general run of other Members not involved in the subject areas.

POITAG

The Group comprises approximately 11 Senators and Members. The Group's terms of reference require it to provide advice to the Presiding Officers on the information technology and communication needs of Senators and Members. In the 43rd Parliament POITAG is chaired by Senator Kate Lundy.

Media

The Presiding Officers are responsible for media policy at Parliament House. The framework for media access to the Parliament appears complex, and is shaped by legislation, Standing Orders, resolutions of parliamentary committees and of the Houses themselves, and guidelines and rules set by the Presiding Officers. The Serjeant-at-Arms, Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms and senior staff in the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office are the principal advisers in relation to media policy. These staff administer the various rules in relation to media policy on behalf of the Speaker.

Broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings

Under the *Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act 1946*, the ABC makes a radio broadcast of parliamentary proceedings whenever the Senate or the House of Representatives is sitting. The role of the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings is to regulate this radio broadcast, and the Committee has determined the allocation of broadcast time, alternating between the Senate and the House.

You and the President of the Senate are *ex officio* members of the Committee, and in accordance with practice, you are the Chair and the President is the Vice Chair. The Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms is the secretary to the Committee. The Committee meets on an as required basis, typically meeting only a few times over the life of a parliament. The Committee has been more active in the 43rd Parliament, with members undertaking a review of media arrangements in Parliament House (see below).

Televising of parliamentary proceedings

In relation to the televising of parliamentary proceedings, the Parliamentary Proceedings Broadcasting Act refers only to the televising of joint sittings of Parliament. Each House authorises the televising of its proceedings by means of resolutions and sets its own conditions on broadcasters. Cameras operated by parliamentary staff (DPS) film the proceedings of each sitting in both Chambers and film committee proceedings in some committee rooms. These 'feeds' are used on the TV monitoring system in Parliament House, for live webcasts on the Parliament's website and by free to air and cable TV networks.

Media rules including filming and photography within the Chamber and building

Each Presiding Officer controls filming and photography in the areas of Parliament House under her/his authority. Filming and photography in jointly controlled areas requires the approval of both Presiding Officers. In 2002, the Presiding Officers approved consolidated guidelines for filming, photography and media activity in the building; the current version was updated in 2008. In comparison with similar national legislatures the guidelines give generous access to the media, while protecting the privacy of Members and preserving the dignity of the parliamentary institution. Requests for filming for commercial purposes during sittings are unlikely to be approved under the guidelines. The Serjeant-at-Arms, Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms and staff in the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office have administered these guidelines on behalf of and in consultation with previous Speakers.

The more than 300 media personnel who have photographic passes for Parliament House are referred to as the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery. Most of them are located in an area of suites and studios at the southern end of the second floor of the Senate wing. While each person regards themselves as independent in their professional capacity, they elect a committee to represent them in various matters of administration and management. The current officeholders are: President, Philip Hudson; Vice President, David Speers; and Secretary, Jeremy Thompson. The Serjeant-at-Arms or Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms can provide a further briefing in relation to media matters.

Media review

Members of the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings are undertaking a review of media arrangements in Parliament House, on behalf of the Presiding Officers. The review is covering:

- the Presiding Officers' guidelines for filming and photography and general media rules in Parliament House and its precincts;
- the resolutions of the two Houses that provide for the broadcasting of the proceedings of the Houses and their committees;
- any other matters relating to the arrangements for the media in Parliament House that may be relevant to the review; and
- enforcement of the guidelines, penalties for breaches, and media arrangements applying in other legislatures.

Contributions have been received from Members and Senators, parliamentary departments, the media, international and national legislatures, and other stakeholders. The next steps are round table discussions with contributors, scheduled for the first sitting weeks in 2012. Further information about the review is available from the review secretary and Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, Ms Siwan Davies (ext [REDACTED]).

Other sources of advice

Parliamentary Service Commissioner

The Parliamentary Service Commissioner is a statutory officer appointed under the Parliamentary Service Act by the Presiding Officers. The Commissioner's functions are to advise the Presiding Officers on the management policies and practices of the parliamentary service and, at the request of the Presiding Officers, to inquire into and report on other matters relating to the parliamentary service. The Podger review (see p. 41) is an example of the work that the Commissioner can undertake for the Presiding Officers.

The Commissioner also holds the office of Public Service Commissioner.

The current Commissioner (appointed in December 2009) is Mr Stephen Sedgwick, to whom you have direct access and who can be contacted as follows:

16 Furzer Street, Phillip ACT 2606

Tel: (02) 6202 3500

Fax: (02) 6202 3851

Email: [REDACTED]@apsc.gov.au

Parliamentary Service Merit Protection Commissioner

The Parliamentary Service Merit Protection Commissioner is a statutory officer also appointed under the Parliamentary Service Act by the Presiding Officers of the Parliament. The Merit Protection Commissioner's functions under the Act are similar, in relation to the

parliamentary service, to the functions of the Public Service Merit Protection Commissioner. They are essentially to:

- inquire into alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct
- inquire into any parliamentary service action requested by the Presiding Officers
- review any action in accordance with determinations that a parliamentary service employee asks for in relation to their parliamentary service employment.

The Parliamentary Service Merit Protection Commissioner also holds the office of Public Service Merit Protection Commissioner.

The current Commissioner is Ms Annwyn Godwin, to whom you also have direct access and who can be contacted as follows:

16 Furzer Street, Phillip ACT 2606

Tel: (02) 6202 3500

Fax: (02) 6202 3851

Email: [REDACTED] [@apsc.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@apsc.gov.au)

2 Speaker's facilities and entitlements

Speaker's office

Accommodation

The Speaker's suite consists of offices for you and your staff and includes formal rooms and two courtyards for use in hosting official functions. In the formal rooms the suite has purpose-designed furniture, some of which is classified as artworks, such as the dining table.

In your duties as Speaker you will be supported in relation to stationery and other requisites, newspapers, postage and printing services and every effort will be made to accommodate you and your staff's requests. In addition to the telephone, facsimile and internet access you have in the Speaker's suite, you may wish to have additional access to these services at your electorate office (and, if applicable, an additional office in the capital city of your home State – see pp. 84-85), home residence and Canberra residence in support of the Speaker's duties of office. The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office is responsible for managing the supply and maintenance of all such services provided to your residences or electorate office.

Security

[REDACTED]

Hardware and software facilities

In the Speaker's Parliament House suite, computer workstations are provided for all staff of the Speaker. Currently, eight computers are allocated: four standard desktop workstations plus three laptop computers with three docking stations for the Speaker's advisers. A laptop computer is issued to you. One high speed laser printer is provided. A networked multi-function device with colour printing, scanning and copying capabilities is also provided. Staff from the department's Valet Service (see p. 55) will provide training and support for you and your staff for this device. Four Blackberry devices are allocated to your advisers.

In-house printing

The department's in-house printing service provides a range of printing for your office including items such as invitations and place cards for Presiding Officers' functions held in Parliament House. These items will be arranged through the International and Community Relations Office when organising official hospitality. Printing for your office is for parliamentary requirements but not for electorate purposes.

Speaker's staff

The current approved staffing structure for the Speaker's Office and the Deputy Speaker's Office is set out below. The Prime Minister will approve the staffing structure for your Office.

Current Speaker's Office staffing

Staffing level	Salary range
Senior Adviser (see note 1)	\$114,745-\$139,467
Adviser x 2 (see note 2)	\$82,611-\$116,465
Assistant Adviser (see note 2)	\$68,874-\$82,611
Executive Assistant (see notes 2 and 3)	\$55,782-\$65,977

Current Deputy Speaker's Office staffing

Staffing level	Salary range
Assistant Adviser (see note 2)	\$68,874-\$82,611

Current Second Deputy Speaker's Office staffing

Staffing level
Sessional assistant on sitting days

Notes:

1. Salary range determined by the Prime Minister. The Speaker has the ability to determine the salary within this range. A parliamentary staff allowance of \$28,325 p.a. is currently paid.
2. A parliamentary staff allowance of \$25,750 p.a. is currently paid.
3. Staff employed at this level may advance to the next level after one year of experience at the top of the range.

Travel

In Canberra

The House of Representatives provides transport services to you while you are in Canberra. As Deputy Speaker you elected to use an executive self drive vehicle; as this entitlement is the same for Speaker, the vehicle continues to be available for your use. The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office manages the lease plan for the vehicle, including all ongoing expenses such as fuel purchased by you or your staff and mechanical servicing.

If you choose not to continue to use the leased vehicle, you may use Comcar exclusively whilst in Canberra. The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office is available to discuss these Canberra travel options with you or your staff.

Provision of motor vehicle for the Speaker—Fringe Benefits Tax implications

Under current arrangements, if the department provides you with a leased motor vehicle, the department incurs a fringe benefits tax (FBT) expense and this is included on your payment summary (group certificate) as notional income to be used for the calculation of some surcharges or offsets and income tests relating to certain government benefits. There are alternative means of providing you and your office with transport while in Canberra that may reduce this FBT expense and the need to include the notional income on your payment summary.

Normally when travelling on business an employee or associate is not liable for FBT as the travel is not of a personal nature. As you are in Canberra for parliamentary business, it would be assumed that the provision to you of a car when in Canberra is not subject to FBT. However, if the car is garaged at your residence when you are in Canberra (according to the Tax Office it does not matter whether the residence is owned by you, rented or even a hotel, or that you own more than one residence), there is an FBT liability. However, Members and Senators who make use of Comcar (rather than a leased car) while on parliamentary business in Canberra are *not* liable for FBT for travel (this is because Comcar is not available for exclusive use and more importantly, not garaged at the place of residence). FBT is payable by the department and this cost is not passed on to you. You are only possibly affected by the reporting of an FBT amount on your payment summary.

There are three options with regard to the provision of motor vehicle transport while on parliamentary business in Canberra. These are as follows:

1. use Comcar and a leased vehicle not garaged at home. You would use the leased vehicle or Comcar for most of your travel while in Canberra and only Comcar for travel to and from your Canberra residence. The department would maintain the leased vehicle and this would be used by you or other designated persons. This would maintain the provision of a motor vehicle to be used by your office but no FBT liability would be incurred. This would also reduce expenses to the department and reduce notional salary on your payment summary. However, if the leased vehicle is garaged at your Canberra place of residence overnight, there will still be an FBT liability (if the car is only garaged at your residence on an irregular basis, this would reduce the FBT liability),
2. use Comcar exclusively. This would not give you the flexibility of using a car for official business. However, there would be no FBT liability, or
3. use a vehicle provided by the department for travel in Canberra including to and from your residence overnight. This would incur an FBT liability.

Travelling allowance

Travelling allowance is payable to the Speaker for each overnight stay in a place other than home base in accordance with Part 2 of Remuneration Tribunal Determination Number 16 of 2011. Under paragraph 3.8(b) travelling allowance is payable when the stay is occasioned

primarily by official business as the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The determination does not define official business. However, Members and Senators are restricted in the receipt of benefits in relation to party business, for travel and postage purposes.

Family entitlements (including some comments on the Speaker's travel)

The Presiding Officers enjoy the same basic entitlements as all other Parliamentarians in respect of family members—for example in respect of travel to and from Canberra and the issue of photographic passes.

There are additional overseas travel entitlements for Presiding Officers, subject to consultation with the Prime Minister. Since 1996, the Presiding Officers have determined their own overseas travel arrangements to a maximum of five overseas visits, accompanied at official expense by a spouse and staff member, in each financial year. The Prime Minister's concurrence with each visit is necessary under the *Parliamentary Entitlements Act 1991* but the practical effect has been that the Presiding Officers themselves determine their overseas travel arrangements, whether leading official parliamentary delegations or making individual bilateral visits, within the limit of five visits each financial year. The Presiding Officers may delegate one or more of these five visits to their deputies to represent them.

Presiding Officers' spouses have an unlimited entitlement to accompany the Presiding Officers on official business within Australia.

Official hospitality

The Speaker, individually as well as with the President of the Senate on certain occasions, traditionally hosts a range of functions in an official capacity. These include, for example:

- dinners or receptions for official incoming parliamentary delegations
- functions for particular groups such as the Association of Former Members, parliamentary interns and Inter-Parliamentary Study Program participants etc
- Christmas functions for Members of the House
- dinners or receptions involving Members from both sides and external guests (e.g. members of the Diplomatic Corps).

Guidelines have been prepared in relation to the services provided to the Speaker by the department. These cover a range of services including official hospitality and are based on similar guidelines issued by the government of the day for its Ministry. The guidelines are attached for your information (**Attachment 6**).

3 Chamber and Main Committee: Advice and support

In support of your role as Presiding Officer in the House of Representatives Chamber, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and other members of the Executive, the Table Office, the Chamber Research Office and the Serjeant-at-Arms Office provide procedural advice and a range of chamber support, legislative and research services.

Advice

In the Chamber the primary source of procedural advice is the Clerk at the Table. During Question Time this will be Mr Wright. Other officers (including Mr Elder, Ms McClelland, Ms Surtees and Ms Towner) are rostered for duty as the Clerk in the Chamber at other times on sitting days. The Clerk on duty is available should you have any questions about the item of business currently before the House, other items on the Program, or the application of specific Standing Orders. The Clerk on duty will also draw your attention to new matters as they arise. A button on the Speaker's chair alerts the Clerk that you wish to speak to him/her. You can also communicate with the Clerk by computer, and the Clerk can provide advice to the Speaker by computer (see also p. 23).

In addition, Executive and senior officers are rostered for duty as deputy clerks in the Chamber. During the sitting the Deputy Clerk at the Table will update your chamber papers and procedures and note any changes in the proposed sequence of business.

Before each sitting, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk brief you and the Deputy Speaker (and, from the start of this Parliament, the Second Deputy Speaker) on the day's program and any other matters of relevance. This is an opportunity for you to ask about House and Main Committee practice and to explore options for handling expected events.

In addition the Clerks are available at any time to discuss other matters that may be of concern to you, or to provide detailed written advice.

Standing Orders

A primary duty of the Speaker is to ensure that the rules of parliamentary procedure—as embodied in the Standing Orders and practice—are interpreted and applied accurately. The current print of the Standing Orders is as at 20 October 2010, and reflects the significant changes in the 43rd Parliament arising, in part, from the *Agreement for a Better Parliament (Attachment 7)*. The current Standing Orders are always available online:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/pubs/standos/index.htm>.

The Standing Committee on Procedure has an ongoing reference to “monitor and report on procedural changes implemented in the House of Representatives in the 43rd Parliament”, and to date has released two interim reports under that reference: the first covering the changes, generally, and the second focusing on the referral of bills to committees.

It should be noted that the obligation on Members to abide by the Standing Orders and rulings of the Chair may in future be complemented (subject to approval by the House) by a code of conduct for Members. On 23 November 2011 the Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests released a discussion paper containing a draft code of conduct, and discussion of whether there should be a code, and if so what the nature of any complaint procedure could be, and a possible role for the proposed Parliamentary Integrity Commissioner. The Committee's inquiry followed commitments made in the *Agreement for a Better Parliament (Attachment 7)*. It is now a matter for the House as to whether a code will be implemented.

Speaker's Panel

At the commencement of the Parliament the Speaker nominates a panel of not less than four Members to assist the Chair. Members are nominated by the Speaker tabling a warrant in the House. The Table Office prepares this warrant.

In previous Parliaments it has been the practice for the Speaker to appoint both opposition and government Members, with government Members being in the majority. However, in this Parliament the opposition has not to date nominated any Members to serve on the panel. As requested, a draft letter asking for Opposition Members to be nominated has been prepared for your consideration.

The names of Speaker's Panel members are listed at the back of the Notice Paper just before details of committee memberships and current inquiries. The current members are:

- Mr Adams
- Ms Bird
- Mrs D'Ath
- Mr Georganas
- Ms Livermore
- Mr Murphy
- Mr Sidebottom
- Mr Kelvin Thomson
- Ms Vamvakinou

As you know, the Deputy Speaker's office organises a roster for Chair duty in the Chamber and Main Committee, in consultation with your office, and coordinates day-to-day management of the roster to address unforeseen absences.

Speaker's vote

Under the Constitution, the Speaker cannot vote in a division in the House unless the numbers are equal, and then he or she has a casting vote. The provision for a casting vote also applies to Members deputing for or acting in the position of Speaker, that is, Deputy Speaker or Second Deputy Speaker or another Member as Acting Speaker. The provision for a casting vote does not apply to members of the Speaker's Panel in the Chair, unless

specifically appointed by resolution of the House as Acting Speaker. It has been considered that the Standing Orders providing for the nomination and duties of the members of the Speaker's Panel do not fulfill the requirements of s. 36 of the Constitution, which refers to the House choosing a Member to perform the duties of an absent Speaker. As Deputy Speaker, you were provided with a separate, more detailed note on the Speaker's casting vote. A further copy of this note can be provided to you.

Chamber operations

Security

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Chamber practice

The Table Office provides procedural scripts ('procedures') for use in the Chamber, by the Speaker, Ministers and relevant Members, indicating the procedural steps to be followed for a particular item of business and highlighting, in red, specific text for you as Speaker. Whenever possible the Clerk and Deputy Clerk will review and discuss with you any complex or sensitive procedures at each day's pre-sitting Speaker's briefing. The Clerks on duty in the Chamber and the Main Committee also have backup sets of procedure proformas in case unexpected items of business arise.

In addition, the Table Office also prepares Speaker's Procedural Notes for use by the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker, the Second Deputy Speaker and members of the Speaker's Panel. The notes provide additional information and practice tips for use by occupants of the Chair in the Chamber and the Main Committee.

A DVD of procedural extracts is also available. It illustrates procedures for certain items of business.

Matter of Public Importance

The routine of business provides for discussion of a matter of public importance (MPI) on every sitting day, except Mondays, after the first day of meeting of a Parliament. The Speaker determines whether a matter of public importance is in order. A matter is proposed by letter—it must be received by 12 noon—and, if in order, the Clerk recommends it for your approval. A proposed matter determined to be in order and granted priority appears on the Daily Program on Tuesdays. A separate notification of the proposed matter is distributed in the Chamber on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

The Speaker sometimes asks Members to amend the wording of a proposed matter in order to make it accord with the Standing Orders. In the event of more than one matter being proposed for discussion on the same day, the Speaker gives priority to the matter which, in his or her opinion, is the most urgent and important. The Speaker cannot be required to give reasons for choosing one matter ahead of another. One aspect of the *Agreement for a Better Parliament* is that a proportionate share of MPIs should be allocated to all non-government Members.

Distinguished visitors

The Table Office liaises closely with your office about distinguished visitors expected to be present in the Chamber or Main Committee galleries on sitting days and prepares a procedure for you, or the Deputy Speaker in the Main Committee, to announce the visitors (including, where necessary, phonetic pronunciation).

Because there may be some sensitivity about announcements (and often little advance warning about such visitors) liaison is maintained as necessary between your office, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Prime Minister's office and the Table Office about procedures for distinguished visitors.

It is your decision as to which gallery the distinguished visitors will be invited to sit in; the choices are: the distinguished visitors gallery on the floor of the Chamber (a raised platform was installed in February 2010); the special visitors gallery in the front row of the first floor central gallery (excluding the four seats adjacent to the central aisle on the government side which are reserved for Senators); and the Speaker's gallery in the second and third rows of the first floor central gallery. Guidelines have been developed by the Speaker's Senior Adviser in relation to seating protocols in these galleries. The Serjeant-at-Arms can also provide advice in relation to these matters.

Legislation

On average approximately 200 bills are introduced into the Parliament each year, with typically over 90% being initiated in the House. In 2011, 238 bills were presented to the House, including 15 received from the Senate. Table Office staff manage the processing of bills and related documents as well as the incorporation of any changes to the bill text arising from consideration/amendment by the House (and the Senate). Copies of all bills, explanatory memoranda and amendments are loaded to the internet, and the status of bills in the legislative process is updated and published on the homepage of the bills on the internet.

The Table Office also prepares documents—messages—transmitting legislation and resolutions passed by the House to the Senate. Both Houses communicate formally with each other via formal hardcopy messages.

When a bill is to be forwarded to the Senate for consideration, the Table Office will prepare a message folder for the Speaker's signature, together with a copy of the bill which will be signed/certified by the Clerk. Other messages to the Senate will be prepared for your consideration from time to time (e.g. advising the Senate of a change in committee membership, or of a resolution of the House). The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office will arrange for the Clerk to certify the bill (where applicable) and liaise with your office to arrange for a Serjeant to bring these message folders to you for immediate consideration and signature.

When a bill has been passed by both Houses and agreed to in the same form, it is printed, incorporating any agreed amendments, checked by the Table Office and certified by the Clerk. The Table Office prepares for your consideration and signature a letter of transmittal to accompany the certified bill to the Governor-General for assent. The Attorney-General also provides a certificate to the Governor-General.

The Table Office also supports the Selection Committee (see p. 6), which in this Parliament, among other things, programs debate on private Members' bills.

Legislative drafting services

The Clerk's office and Executive, supported by a drafter on secondment from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (OPC), are the main providers of assistance to all Members for the drafting of private Members' bills and motions, second reading amendments and detailed amendments.

Documents presented in the House

Members and other building occupants may request tabled documents through the Inquiry Counter of the Table Office (ext. [REDACTED]), or by using an on-line ordering system. In the 42nd Parliament, a tabled papers register was developed through ParInfo Search, to facilitate access to all documents presented to the Parliament. A separate brief on Budget Day arrangements will be forwarded to you during the autumn 2012 sittings. Other government documents can be obtained through the Government Publications

Scheme which is a statutory entitlement, and all Members have been informed of the arrangements applying. However, as no Members have used the scheme in recent years, the department would support its abolition.

Procedural publications

House of Representatives Practice is the official authority for issues of procedure and practice. A new version of *House of Representatives Practice* is currently in preparation. It will be published in 2012 and will incorporate procedural changes made since the start of the 43rd Parliament. An electronic version with enhanced search capability was made available to all Members and their staff in the 42nd Parliament.

The department also prepares and maintains a number of other procedural publications, including:

- *Guide to Procedures*—a concise introduction to the procedures of the House
- *House of Representatives Infosheets*—there are 21 in the series, available as hard copy A4 pamphlets and on the website. They are widely used by Members
- *Members' Guides*—there are five in the series, available to Members through the Senators' and Members' Services Portal
- *Standing Orders*—the current print of the Standing Orders is as at 20 October 2010
- *Work of the Session*—a summary of the business of the House and its committees, published twice each year (Autumn and Winter Sittings and Spring Sittings)
- *Procedural Extracts* and the *Procedural Digest*—respectively a chronological and a subject-based record of items of procedural interest
- *Statistical Digest*—statistics on legislation, questions, petitions and various other items of business, and the amount of time spent on these items.

Second Chamber

The Main Committee has met in Committee Room 2R3 since its inception in 1994. The department sought funding in the 2006-07 Budget Process to construct a new Second Chamber on the eastern side of the building, on the second floor, adjacent to the Chamber, and plans have been developed for a permanent location for the Second Chamber. This proposal followed recommendations about the relocation of the Second Chamber in a report by the Standing Committee on Procedure in July 2000, and the establishment of a working group chaired by the Deputy Speaker to consider possible options for relocation. The funding request was not agreed to.

However, there are high volumes of bookings for committee rooms, of both Houses, particularly in sitting weeks and increasingly demand for bookings cannot be satisfied. Such pressure has increased, given the increased activities of the 43rd Parliament in relation to the role of House committees in pre-legislative scrutiny of bills. It might be appropriate to again raise the possibility that a new Second Chamber be constructed, which would release

Committee Room 2R3, the largest House committee room, for its original primary purpose as a meeting room for House committees.

Right of reply

There is a 'Right of Reply' procedure under which applications for the publication of a reply to comments made in the House are forwarded to the Speaker and, in essence, unless the Speaker thinks they are frivolous or vexatious they are forwarded to the Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests. No applications are outstanding at present.

Information technology

Live Minutes/Votes Officer's Minutes system

Parliamentary computer network users and internet users are able to follow House proceedings on-line using the Live Minutes on the House website or the internal Votes Officer's Minutes (VOM) system. The minutes provide a proof record of business dealt with and decisions taken and include details of speakers, the timing of all actions (e.g. when a Member commenced his or her speech and the time documents were presented), who has asked questions in Question Time and so on. The record is updated continuously throughout the day and information is refreshed every 15 seconds. The VOM has proven to be a very useful mechanism to keep abreast of House progress on the program.

Technology in the Chamber

As you know, Members may use laptop computers in the Chamber, and mobile phones for text messaging. They are prohibited from speaking on mobile phones in the Chamber. The principle is that equipment is permitted provided its use is not disruptive or a major distraction to proceedings of the House.

Two computer screens and a PC are provided in the Chamber for the occupant of the Chair. Similarly screens and PCs are provided for the Clerks at the Table. These PCs provide access to the internet, generic email, the TV broadcast, an online version of *House of Representatives Practice*, the Chamber seating plan and list of Members. There is also a communication facility called "Chamber Chat" that enables one-to-one communication between the Chair and the Clerk. It has been used particularly during Question Time to enable the Clerk to respond to requests and offer advice without having to approach the Chair. The department is ready to discuss future use of this or other services that may be useful for the Chair.

As you know a laptop is provided in the Main Committee for the Chair.

Chamber/Main Committee captioning system

Dedicated captioning television channels are available for the Chamber, Main Committee, and Senate Chamber. The procedural captions are fully integrated with broadcasting information, e.g., on the name and electorate of the Member speaking, and have the flexibility to provide further information. The captions are also made available through the

webcast. The captioning system for the House is maintained by the Table Office. Consideration is being given to having the captions only available. It would then be possible to have these screened into the Chamber and the Main Committee for the information of Members and visitors.

Areas of the department responsible for Chamber support

Table Office

The Table Office provides secretariat support for the Chamber and Main Committee, including procedural and programming advice and support, the preparation of the *Notice Paper*, the *Daily Program* and the official record of proceedings of the House—the *Votes and Proceedings*—all action in relation to bills after their introduction to the House, and the provision of a document supply service (tabled papers and legislation) for Members and other building occupants. In addition the Table Office provides secretariat support for the Selection Committee (see further detail at p. 6), the House Publications Committee and that committee when it meets jointly with the Senate Publications Committee.

All House documents published by the Table Office are available electronically to users and are loaded to the internet. Members wishing to place questions on notice, or give notices of motion do so either via the Clerks on duty at the Table or through the Table Office in RG 89. Electronic proformas for questions on notice and notices of motion are available to Members through the Senators' and Members' Services Portal.

Chamber Research Office

The Chamber Research Office (CRO) is responsible for:

- parliamentary procedural research and development of procedure and practice
- maintenance of *House of Representatives Practice* and custody of the Standing Orders
- publication of other material relating to the procedures and practices of the House, e.g., *Guide to Procedures*, *Infosheets* and *Members' Guides*
- provision of information on procedural and parliamentary matters, including publication, in the *Statistical Digest* and *Work of the Session*, of statistics of proceedings
- provision of secretariat and research support for the Standing Committee on Procedure
- provision of secretariat and research support for the Standing Committee on Petitions.

The CRO maintains a number of procedural and statistical databases. These enable accurate information to be readily provided to the Speaker. The databases include:

- the Procedural Records System (PRS)—which records items of procedural interest such as Speakers' rulings, interpretations of the Standing Orders and chamber

practice from 1982 onwards. In some cases, all rulings are recorded (e.g. unparliamentary language) and in others, only new or slightly different insights into practice and procedure are recorded. The PRS can be searched by standing order number, by the name of the Speaker (or Deputy Speaker) or by subject. New entries in the PRS are printed out and distributed to the Speaker and other occupants of the Chair following each sitting period in *Procedural Extracts*. The items are presented chronologically. A secondary publication which presents the material in a more user friendly, subject organised format—*The Procedural Digest*— is also produced and circulated to the Speaker and other occupants of the Chair, and is also published online.

- statistical records of the sittings and proceedings in the Chamber—which are updated daily on sitting days. The answer to any Chamber or sitting-related question beginning with 'How many' or 'How long' can probably be quickly answered by reference to the statistics records. The statistics generally relate to the passage of bills and Chamber procedures. The database is non-political so generally party political statistics are not kept (unless they are of procedural interest—such as the number of government Members expelled from the Chamber). Generally, statistics are not kept on individual Members.

Serjeant-at-Arms

The Serjeant-at-Arms, or the Deputy or an Assistant Serjeant, is on duty in the Chamber at all times the House is sitting. The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office maintains a duty roster of serjeants in-the-Chamber, in a similar way to the Deputy Clerk's duty roster of clerks and deputy clerks at-the-Table. In addition to the ceremonial role of the Serjeant-at-Arms in leading the Speaker's procession at the commencement and conclusion of proceedings at each sitting, the Serjeant has duties to receive and deal with Senate messages from the Usher of the Black Rod, and to ensure the integrity of the Chamber environment. This latter aspect of the duties extends to maintaining appropriate security, including in the lobbies and galleries on the first and second floors, media access and visitor access and utilities or infrastructure—such as air-conditioning, lighting, broadcasting etc. The Serjeant-in-the-Chamber is expected to always keep one eye on the Speaker, or Chair, in case she or he wishes the Serjeant to address some matter arising in the Chamber during proceedings.

In addition, the team of Chamber attendants are staff of the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office. There are at least five or six attendants on duty in the Chamber, and its precincts, at all times the House is sitting, with an expanded team on duty during Question Time, or other special proceedings such as Budget night. The team of Chamber attendants, including the parliamentary assistants, assists with the running of the House by distributing Chamber documents, opening and locking doors variously for divisions and quorum calls, taking messages, lecterns and water to Members, taking Member's speaking notes to the Hansard reporters and performing general housekeeping duties.

Current developments

Redevelopment of the Document Production System

A major project has commenced to redevelop (for both the House and the Senate) the Document Production System, which is the software application supporting the preparation and publication of all Chamber business documents. The primary objective of the project is to deliver a system which efficiently creates, manages and publishes Chamber documents both in electronic and hard copy forms.

The project is being funded jointly by the two Chamber departments, with an officer from this department serving on the project team together with officers from the Department of the Senate and the Department of Parliamentary Services. Tenders to undertake the project have been sought, received and evaluated, and it is expected that a contract will be entered into in December.

Electronic petitions

During the 42nd Parliament, the Standing Committee on Petitions recommended in a report *Electronic petitioning to the House of Representatives* that the House introduce electronic petitioning. A submission was provided to the Speaker with a proposed response by the Speaker to the report for presentation to the House. In the response, it was stated that the adoption of electronic petitioning was a matter for the House to determine, and that a response from the Leader of the House to the report would be envisaged. A copy of the proposed response was sent to the Leader of the House on 19 February 2010. No response from the Leader of the House has yet been received. It is proposed to follow up again on this matter in early 2012.

Electronic Parliamentary Papers Series

The department, in co-operation with the Department of the Senate, is developing an electronic repository for the Parliamentary Papers Series, following a recommendation to that effect by the Joint Committee on Publications in June 2010 and subsequent approval by the Presiding Officers in November of that year. The repository will enable users to access parliamentary papers electronically, expanding on the details about parliamentary papers already available through the Tabled Papers Register on the Parliament's website. Introduction of the electronic repository is dependent upon implementation of the new parliamentary website (refer p. 54).

The parliamentary departments will keep the Presiding Officers informed as work progresses.

Redevelopment of the Procedural Records System

The department is working with the South Australian House of Assembly to redevelop the department's Procedural Records System, with a view to sharing the solution with the House of Assembly. The project is planned to be finalised in the 43rd Parliament.

Finalisation of projects

During the 42nd Parliament, a number of major projects relating to the business and records of the House were finalised, including redevelopment of the bills system, redevelopment of the ParlInfo system, and upgrade of the basement archive to protect the official records of the House of Representatives. The first two projects were undertaken by the three parliamentary departments. Departmental staff worked with the Department of Parliamentary Services on the basement archive project. Finally, a project to update the department's news and features website, *House News*, to include streaming video and audio content, was also completed during the 42nd Parliament. The news material will be core content for the redeveloped parliamentary website to be launched soon.

4 Administration of the Department of the House of Representatives

Corporate governance

The Speaker has responsibilities to the Parliament in relation to the department, for example in tabling its annual report. The Clerk of the House, who is responsible for managing the department, reports to you. Key elements of the department's corporate governance framework are outlined below.

Legislative structures

The department's operations are governed by the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* and the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA Act), and are subject to the provisions of the *Fair Work Act 2009* and other legislation. Those Acts set out the responsibilities of the Clerk for the management of the department.

The Parliamentary Service Act provides the framework for the employment of the staff of the Department of the House of Representatives and the other parliamentary departments. The objectives of this Act are to:

- establish a non-partisan parliamentary service that is efficient and effective in serving the Parliament
- provide a legal framework for the effective and fair employment, management and leadership of parliamentary service employees
- define the powers and responsibilities of secretaries, the Parliamentary Service Commissioner and the Parliamentary Service Merit Protection Commissioner (see p. 11)
- establish the rights and obligations of parliamentary service employees.

The legal framework provided by the Act for the employment of parliamentary service employees follows that established by the *Public Service Act 1999* for public service employees, except where differences are necessary to reflect the unique character of the parliamentary service and the obligation of parliamentary staff to serve the Parliament. The Parliamentary Service Act sets out the values specific to the parliamentary service.

Under the Act the secretary of a parliamentary department, including a Clerk of a House, may engage employees for the purposes of his or her department. Under the Act, the Speaker does not have a role in the employment process.

The Public Service Act has been reviewed in line with the recommendations of the report *Ahead of the game: Blueprint for the reform of Australian Government administration*.

On 4 November 2011 the heads of the parliamentary departments advised the Presiding Officers that the parliamentary departments have been examining the changes that will be required to our Act so that it will continue to be aligned with the Public Service Act.

The principal changes are:

- (a) a shorter set of Parliamentary Service Values, complemented by an overarching statement about the Parliamentary Service and a set of employment principles;
- (b) a revised statement about the role and function of the SES;
- (c) refinements to the Code of Conduct and related provisions;
- (d) a requirement for secretaries to establish procedures for making whistleblower reports and for dealing with them;
- (e) simplification of the provisions for temporary employment (currently referred to as non-ongoing employment); and
- (f) other technical and miscellaneous changes.

When the work is complete a further submission will be made to seek policy approval for the changes to our Act.

Senior management

Senior management of the department consists of the Executive and managers at the Executive Band 2 level. The Executive comprises the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and three Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 1 staff (Clerk Assistant (Committees), Clerk Assistant (Table) and Serjeant-at-Arms) each of whom has management responsibility for a group of offices of the department.

The Executive meets regularly to discuss and decide on departmental management matters. In addition, biannual meetings are held with departmental managers to review achievements and examine future strategic directions. The biannual meetings incorporate comprehensive written reports on the implementation of the annual business plan and performance against external and internal performance indicators. The department's organisation chart is on the next page.

Consultative Committee

The department's Consultative Committee is an important mechanism for communicating and consulting with staff on workplace issues. The Committee is chaired by the Deputy Clerk and comprises management, union and staff representatives. In the last year the Committee discussed a wide range of issues, including monitoring of the employee Enterprise Agreement, the department's recruitment practices, results of the annual staff survey, travel policy, attendance guidelines, an external review of Committee Office staffing,

car parking and disability access at Parliament House, and the redevelopment of the Parliament's website.

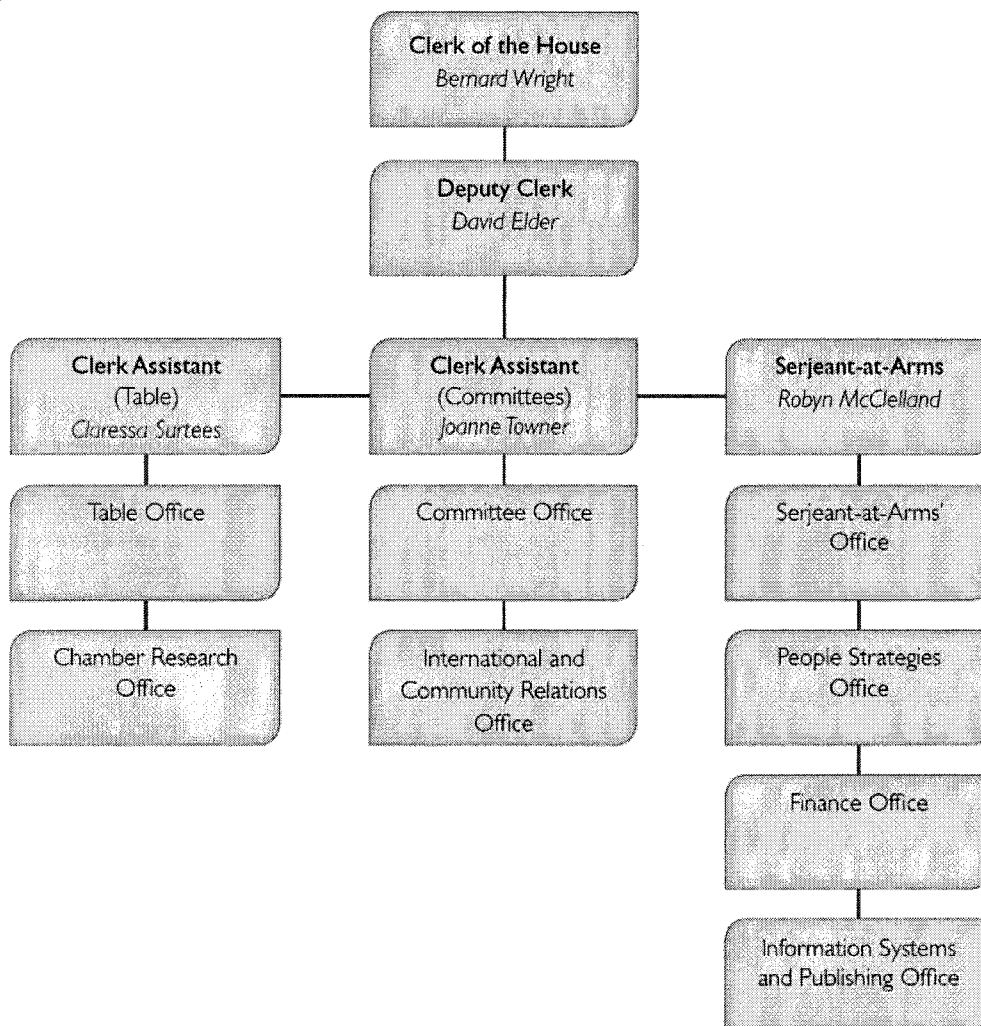
Corporate and business plans

The department has a corporate plan for 2010-13. The corporate plan was developed during 2010 and involved departmental staff undertaking a workshop to form the direction of the plan. A copy of the revised corporate plan for 2010-13 is at **Attachment 1**.

The department develops an annual business plan which flows from the corporate plan, the portfolio budget statements and the risk management plan. The business plan sets the priorities for the year by translating the key issues from the corporate plan to the level of the business units in the department.

The business plan is one of the documents reported on at the biannual reporting meetings.

The department's organisation chart



Service charters

The departmental service charters for Members and for the community provide the basis for the standards of service that Members and the public can expect from the department (**Attachments 2 and 3**). A copy of the Members' services charter is included in the *Members' Handbook*.

Accountability and external scrutiny

The department is accountable to the Speaker and Members of the House. The Clerk reports to the Speaker. Members may put questions to the Speaker relating to any matter of administration for which the Speaker is responsible. Additionally, the Committee on Appropriations and Administration (see p. 6) has provided Members with a new opportunity to scrutinise the financial position of the department and to consider new policy proposals as part of the budget process.

The department's primary external accountability mechanisms are the portfolio budget statements (PBS) and the annual report. The PBS is a Budget document. It includes a covering letter from the Speaker to Members 'in recognition of my obligation for accountability to the House, and through it, the public'. The PBS informs Members of the proposed allocation of resources to the department and specifies performance targets and measures to be met.

The annual report is prepared by the Clerk pursuant to section 65 of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* and given to the Speaker for presentation to the House. Pursuant to guidelines approved on behalf of the Parliament by the Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, the department reports on performance against targets outlined in the PBS for the year concerned, and presents the financial statements of the department. The department's financial statements are audited by the Australian National Audit Office.

The department's operations are primarily administrative and generally are not subjected directly to formal external scrutiny. The department may be subject to scrutiny by the Australian National Audit Office and matters of departmental administration may be the subject of complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Management of people

Staffing

The department has a current staff strength of 181, consisting of 138 ongoing staff and 43 non-ongoing staff. Thirty-three of the non-ongoing staff are employed on a sessional basis, mainly related to the sittings of the House.

It is very pleasing to report that staff of the department have responded professionally and enthusiastically to the challenges of minority government. Their ability to adapt to the new arrangements, for example in relation to the many references of bills to committees, has been pleasing. Despite the pressures that staff have been under, morale has been

maintained at a high level, reflecting their commitment to the institution. The department conducts an anonymous annual leadership survey of its staff and the 2011 survey produced very pleasing results. This matter is commented on in the Annual Report.

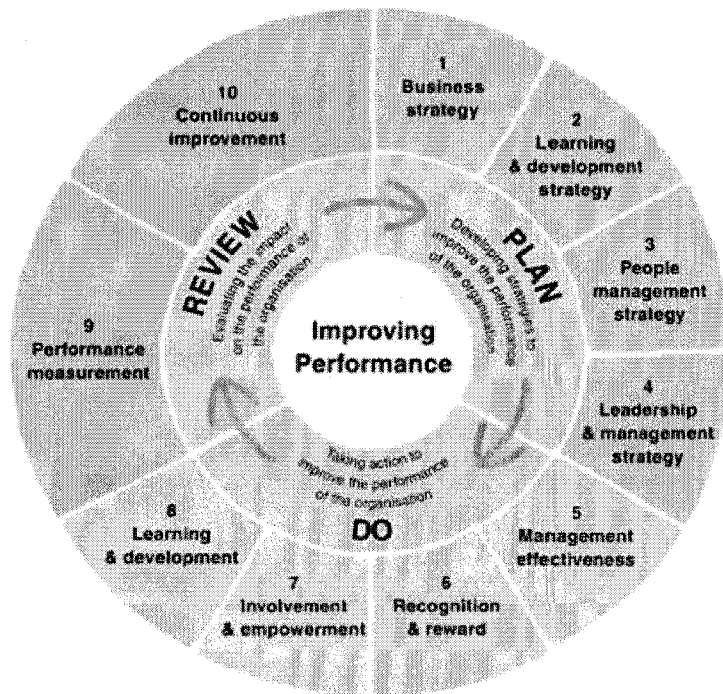
Bullying and harassment

Staff of the department seek to serve the House, and its committees and members in a professional manner, and regardless of party affiliation. The department takes seriously its obligation to provide a safe, harmonious and productive work environment for staff. We have a Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy which support the Parliamentary Service Code of Conduct and which upholds Parliamentary Service values and integrity and good reputation of the Parliamentary Service. The Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy applies to all persons who have a relationship or dealing with members of the departmental staff, and this includes members and their staff. This fact has been drawn to the attention of members on a number of occasions, most recently in the November 2011 *House Update*.

Investors in People

The department is an accredited *Investors in People* employer. Accreditation was awarded in July 2001 following a detailed program to develop the department's leadership, communication, staff development, and planning and evaluation practices. Reaccreditation occurs every three years. The department undertook a post recognition review in 2009. The assessor was satisfied that the department continued to meet the requirements of the IiP Standard. Investors in People is an international standard (see figure on the next page) that is not prescriptive, but provides the framework within which organisations can address key management issues, such as planning, communication and training and development.

The Investors in People framework



The direct effects of continuing the principles of the Investors in People standard may include improved productivity, lower staff turnover, improved staff motivation and attitude, improved customer service, more effective communication, better understanding of corporate goals and improved corporate image.

Workplace relations issues

The *Fair Work Act 2009* and government policy require agencies to operate in a devolved environment and work towards settling their own workplace agreements, based on productivity gains.

The department has an enterprise agreement in place designed to produce employment conditions which are attractive to current and future staff and which will enable current and emerging requirements to be met. The making of agreements is seen as an effective means of enabling the department to move forward and better serve the House and the Parliament.

The *Department of the House of Representatives Enterprise Agreement 2011-12* covers all staff in the department, except SES.

The Agreement is comprehensive in that it replaces all existing references to staff conditions of employment, including awards and agreements. The Agreement has a nominal expiry date of 30 September 2012.

All SES staff are covered by individual determinations made under Section 24(1) of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*, in keeping with the provisions applied to other staff under the enterprise agreement. The department will naturally await details of government plans in relation to this.

Graduate recruitment program

The department designed and implemented a graduate recruitment program that commenced in 2004, and in 2008 the Department of the Senate joined the program. The program involves three-month placements of people from the graduate programs of Commonwealth government agencies.

The program has proved very successful in generating interest from individual graduates and a range of agencies. Six graduates completed three-month placements from January to July 2011. Reports concluded that all placements had been very successful and achieved the program's objectives.

The recruitment process is underway for the 2012 program.

Financial matters

Advice on the department's budget follows. **It should be noted that the information in this section pre-dates the government's announcement, in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook released on 29 November, of an additional one-off efficiency dividend of 2.5 per cent in 2012-13 to be applied to the majority of Commonwealth agencies.** We will advise you and the Appropriations and Administration Committee of the implications for the department once known.

Overview

The department's budget is prepared in accordance with the government's financial management framework that operates across the Commonwealth. There is a single outcome specified for the department:

Advisory and administrative services support the House of Representatives to fulfill its representative and legislative role.

The department has one program containing five components which contribute to the achievement of the outcome.

1. Chamber and Main Committee – resources supporting the effective operation of the Chamber and Main Committee of the House of Representatives.
2. Community awareness – resources supporting the provision of services to increase community understanding of, and interaction with, the work of the House of Representatives and the Commonwealth Parliament.

3. Committee services – resources supporting the House of Representatives and some joint committees in fulfilling their role in the parliamentary consideration of policy and legislation and the scrutiny of government.
4. Inter-parliamentary relations – provision of advice and support to facilitate the conduct of the Parliament's international and regional affairs.
5. Members' services – provision of advice, services and support to Members in Parliament House, payment of Members' salaries and allowances.

The department's level of activity and, consequently, its level of expenditure follows the parliamentary cycle. Depending upon the timing of an election in relation to the commencement of a financial year, the department can generate a significant surplus. The year after the election is usually the year of highest activity and expenditure levels. This creates pressure on the department's budget which may result in a deficit occurring during the year. The following table provides details of the department's financial position over the last three years.

Department's financial position, 2008 to 2011

Year	Financial result	Status of parliamentary cycle
2008-09	Surplus of \$0.149m	2 nd year of parliamentary cycle
2009-10	Surplus of \$1.8m	3rd year of parliamentary cycle
2010-11	Surplus of \$0.6m	Election year

There are emerging cost pressures in the current financial year and it is possible that the department will report an operating loss in 2011-12. As part of the 2011-12 Budget process, the department was successful in obtaining additional funding to support the extra sitting hours of the Chamber and Main Committee and to support the new Joint committee on the National Broadband Network.

Summary of additional funding

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Funding for additional sitting hours	0.502	0.506		
Joint Committee on the National Broadband Network	0.516	0.521	0.525	0.529
Total	1.018	1.028	0.525	0.529

A new enterprise agreement will be in place at the end of 2012 and the competitive staffing environment will add pressure to salary costs. General supplier costs (travel, external printing, advertising, stationery etc.) will increase at a rate higher than the department's appropriation funding.

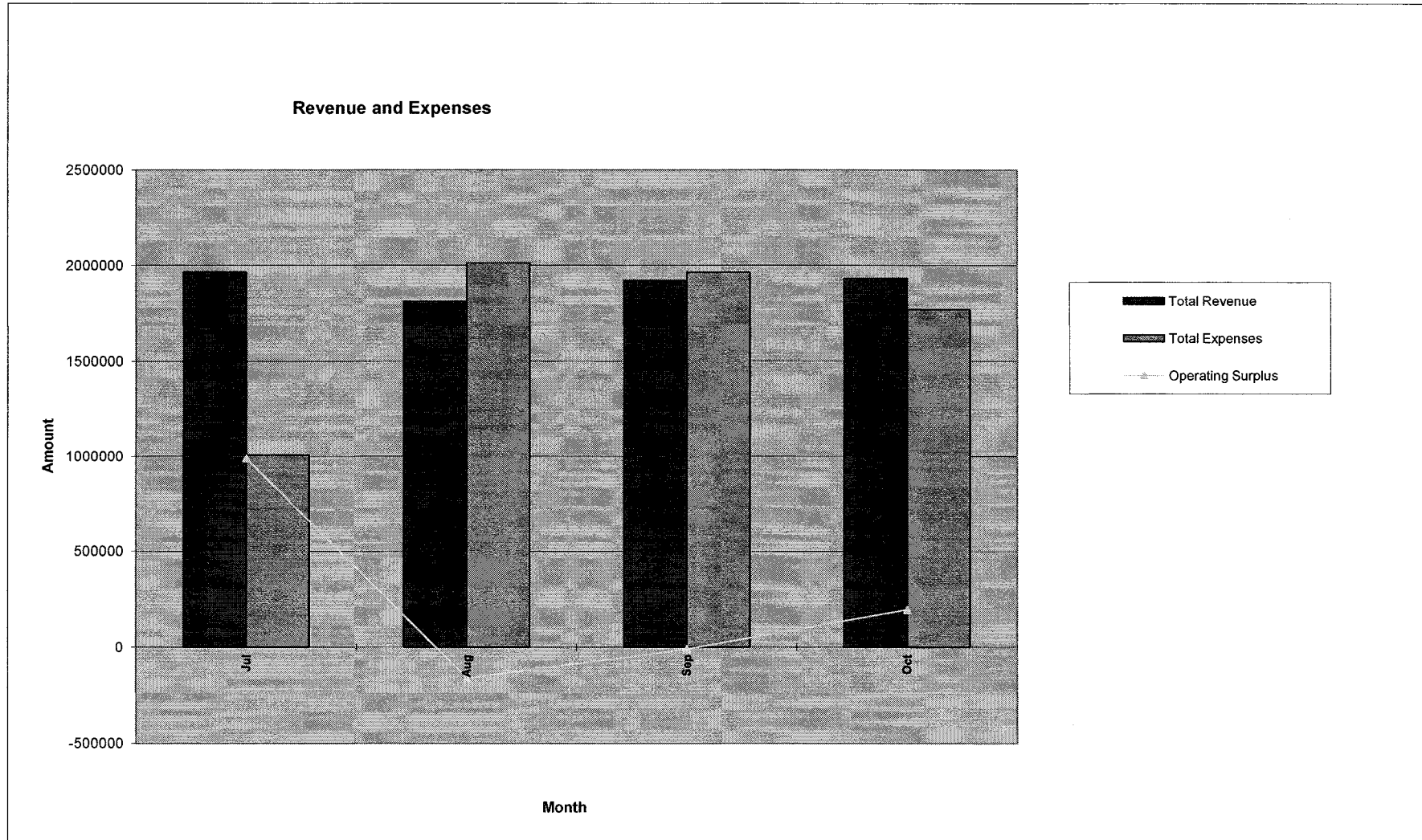
Financial Position as at 31 October 2011



MONTHLY REPORT
for October 2011

Appropriation: Departmental, IPR & Comcare
Secretariat/Office: ALL SECRETARIATS

	Month to Date	Year to Date			Notes	Analysis		
	Actual \$	Actual \$	Budget \$	Variance \$		Actual vs Budget %	Pro rata %	Full Year Budget \$
Revenues								
Revenue From Government	1,866,889	7,295,318	7,295,318	0		100%	33%	21,848,000
Other Revenue	65,434	310,870	265,037	45,833		117%	39%	795,111
Corporate Income	750	27,745	24,333	3,412		114%	42%	66,000
Total Revenue	1,933,073	7,633,933	7,584,688	49,245		101%	34%	22,709,111
Expenses								
Salaries and Allowances	1,381,770	5,508,387	5,999,709	491,321		92%	30%	18,180,174
Staff-Related Expenses	46,726	127,137	236,267	109,130		54%	27%	478,800
Travel	97,054	244,920	375,063	130,143		65%	22%	1,134,690
Office Requisites	54,442	223,073	336,578	113,504		66%	22%	1,009,733
Communications	9,601	43,491	95,360	51,869		46%	15%	286,080
Office Services	92,516	345,451	592,822	247,371		58%	19%	1,792,966
Catering and Incidental Expenses	74,394	214,974	267,897	52,923		80%	27%	803,690
Corporate Expenses	13,150	46,644	35,550	-11,094		131%	54%	86,650
Total Expenses	1,769,653	6,754,079	7,939,246	1,185,167		85%	28%	23,772,783
Recoveries	31,819	131,676	85,333	46,343		154%	51%	256,000
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	195,239	-1,011,531	-269,224	1,280,755				-807,672
Depreciation	97,828	387,742	0	387,742				0
Surplus/(Deficit) after Depreciation	97,411	623,789	-269,224	893,013				-807,672



The department is funded for capital expenditure. This funding is available to the department by way of an equity injection and is subject to the efficiency dividend.

Department's projected capital funding, 2011 to 2015

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Amount	\$1.4m	\$1.315m	\$1.328m	\$1.347m

The department's balance sheet as at 30 June 2011 remains strong with cash reserves totaling \$16.154m (\$2.237m of this relates to the IPR Special Account).

The department, along with the Department of the Senate, is commencing a furniture replacement project (departmental offices and Members' staff offices), commencing in 2011-12. This project will be resourced from direct capital appropriations and from cash reserves. The Appropriations and Administration Committee has been briefed on the project and has noted that consultations with members would commence.

Committee on Appropriations and Administration

For the first time, the House has established an Appropriations and Administration Committee to consider, among other matters, estimates of the funding required for the operation of the department each year (see p. 6). At the most recent meeting on 23 November, the Committee endorsed proceeding with funding proposals for the 2012-13 budget round. The department's New Policy Proposals have been submitted to you for signature.

A summary of the New Policy Proposals:

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Legislative drafting for PMB's	0	0.225	0	0	0	0.225
Committee Office staffing incl support for JCPAA for monitoring of PBO	0.310	0.428	0.111	0.114	0.118	1.081
Joint Committee on Cyber-Safety	0.282	0.295	0	0	0	0.577
Totals	0.592	0.948	0.111	0.114	0.118	1.883

Medium to long-term viability (3-10 years)

The department's medium and long term viability must be addressed in terms of sustainable on-going operations. The budget forecast for the years between 2011-12 and 2012-13 (highest level of activity in the parliamentary cycle) is extremely challenging – with the likelihood of substantial deficits becoming a reality. The department has a good record of achieving internal efficiencies over the past ten years (for example, the staffing of committee secretariats is discussed at p. 57). In addition, during 2009-10 the department discontinued the Members' printing service, reduced committee advertising costs, decreased the number of delegations and official visits (thereby reducing expenses), and finally substantially reduced travel expenditure in the committee secretariats. However, given the disconnect between rising input costs and the Department of Finance and Deregulation's funding model, it is now questionable whether further efficiencies to the extent necessary can be achieved over the next ten years without some sacrifice to quality in service delivery standards. The parliamentary reform agenda has also placed pressure on the department's finances.

In the past the government has considered the Parliament as a whole (including DPS, the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives as one portfolio) when considering funding for the Parliament. Going forward it now appears that the three parliamentary departments are all facing the same tight funding situation.

The department has focused on tying any significant new service requirements (for additional services to Members or a change to the current range of committee activities for example) to funding bids submitted to government. The department will continue to focus on internal efficiencies while ensuring that service standards are maintained.

Internal audit, risk management and fraud control

KPMG has for many years provided internal audit services to the department. In July, the department commenced a tendering process for the Internal audit Services Contract. The department has engaged Oakton Services Pty Ltd as the internal audit firm for the next three years. The department's Audit Committee meets quarterly and pursuant to its charter, the Chair, Clerk Assistant (Table), provides an annual report on the activities of the committee to the Clerk. Naturally a Speaker would be informed of any particular problems. Committee members are the Clerk Assistant (Committees), Clerk Assistant (Table), the Serjeant-at-Arms and an independent member, Ms Barbara Davis. Representatives of the ANAO and internal audit team attending meetings as observers.

The department's business and fraud risk assessments and control plans were updated in 2011 with the assistance of KPMG.

Cooperation and coordination across the Parliament

While there are two constitutionally distinct Chambers that comprise the Parliament, and three parliamentary departments to support them, there should be cooperation and coordination between the departments. Cooperation and coordination is achieved in a number of ways.

Coordinating meetings

In the past, the Presiding Officers have met regularly (once a fortnight, and more frequently if required) to discuss matters of common parliamentary concern.

In relation to many of the services provided jointly to Members and Senators you receive advice from joint advisory committees including the Joint House Committee, the Joint Library Committee and the Presiding Officers' Information Technology Advisory Group (POITAG) (see notes at p. 9).

At the departmental level, the heads of the three departments meet, as necessary, with one another and with the Parliamentary Service Commissioner. These meetings cover broader strategic issues that are of significance to each of the parliamentary departments.

Podger review and shared services arrangements

Following a review of the administration of the Parliament by a previous Parliamentary Service Commissioner, Mr Andrew Podger (the Podger review) the major outcome was the establishment in 2004 of an amalgamated joint service-provision department, the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS).

Since the establishment of DPS a number of issues have arisen in relation to effective cooperation and coordination between the parliamentary departments, in particular the extent to which the department is involved in DPS's planning and project management approval processes.

Following a review in 2008 by the then Parliamentary Service Commissioner into the implementation of the Podger Review, a working group from the three departments undertook a study into the areas within the three departments' corporate functions which would be suited to shared services arrangements.

At that time DPS approached the chamber departments seeking the agreement of one of these departments to undertake the payroll function. This department agreed to the proposal and since July 2010 has been successfully undertaking the payroll function for DPS.

Further areas of shared service may be agreed during the 43rd Parliament.

Parliamentary Budget Office

On 23 November 2011 the *Parliamentary Service Amendment (Parliamentary Budget Officer) Bill* passed the Senate, having already passed the House. The Bill, once assented to, will establish a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) and the position of Parliamentary Budget

Officer to provide Members and Senators with independent and non-partisan analysis of the budget cycle, fiscal policy and the financial implications of proposals. The Bill follows a commitment in the *Agreement for a Better Parliament (Attachment 7)* and a subsequent inquiry by a Joint Select Committee.

A working group of the three parliamentary departments is presently considering the logistics of establishing the PBO. Mr Elder is the department's representative and convener of the group.

Coordination across the parliamentary departments

There are now in place several senior executive forums which assist in the coordination of parliamentary administration across the three departments. The Senior Management Coordination Group (SMCG) has a role in coordinating corporate and related matters among the departments. The department is represented by the Serjeant-at-Arms, and the SMCG meets every other month. The Project Assessment Committee (PAC) has a role in improving the project approval process by including the interests of the Chamber departments in decisions to approve and prioritise major projects funded by the DPS. It was established to address the previous lack of involvement of the Chamber departments in the project approval process. The department is represented by the Serjeant-at-Arms, and the PAC meets in accordance with the requirements of the capital works program cycle. The Security Projects Program Board (SPPB) has a role in overseeing the security projects within the parliamentary precincts and enables the Chamber departments to contribute to decisions to approve and prioritise security projects. The department is represented by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, and the SPPB meets monthly.

5 International activities

Overview

The International and Community Relations Office (ICRO)¹ will provide you with advice and assistance in connection with:

- the planning and conduct of official incoming and outgoing delegations
- the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
- the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
- the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF)
- any other aspect of the Parliament's international activities.

The Director of ICRO is Mr Andres Lomp (ext. [REDACTED]). By agreement, staff of ICRO are employees of our department and staff of the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) are employees of the Senate. The basic administrative costs of the offices are shared between the two departments.

Official incoming and outgoing parliamentary delegations

There is an annual program of official incoming and outgoing parliamentary delegations.

The outgoing delegations program is developed by ICRO in close consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The incoming delegations program is coordinated by ICRO based on requests for visits from other parliaments, usually conveyed through diplomatic channels. There is a relationship between the two programs as they both rely heavily on invitations and related reciprocal hosting arrangements.

The proposed 2012 outgoing delegations program was approved by the Presiding Officers in October and has been forwarded to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs for their concurrence.

There are 150 positions for overseas travel available for official outgoing delegations over a three year cycle. Normally there are slightly higher numbers allocated in years 1 and 2 with a reduction in year 3 which is an election year. The Presiding Officers each have a separate allocation for overseas travel which is five positions each per financial year.

Typically there are around 11 official outgoing parliamentary delegations each year. When considering the outgoing program, the Presiding Officers also consider which delegations would be appropriately led by a Presiding Officer. With regard to official incoming delegations, there are typically around 12 each year and the Presiding Officers play a

¹ The International and Community Relations Office is an amalgamation of the Parliamentary Relations Office and the House of Representatives Liaison and Projects Office which operated in the previous Parliament.

significant role in the program through meeting with delegates, visits to both Chambers and official functions, including from time to time meetings and functions outside of Canberra.

Parliamentary organisations

ICRO provides the secretariat for the Commonwealth of Australia Branch of the CPA, the Australian Region of the CPA, and the Australian National Group of the IPU. It also supports Australian participation at the APPF. In the past, the Speaker has taken primary responsibility for the Parliament's participation in the APPF and the IPU, while the President has taken responsibility for participation in the CPA.

IPU

The IPU aims to promote personal contacts among parliamentarians. It also aims to unite them in common action to secure and maintain the full participation of their respective states in the firm establishment and development of democratic institutions, and in the advancement of international peace and cooperation, particularly by supporting the work of the United Nations. Established in 1889, the IPU is an international organisation composed of National Groups established in national legislatures. Currently 155 national Parliaments are members of the IPU. Nine regional parliamentary assemblies are associate members.

The Australian National Group was established in 1956. You and the President are the Joint Presidents, the Clerk of the Senate is the Honorary Secretary, and Mr Andrew Templeton of ICRO is the Executive Officer (ext. [REDACTED]).

The Association of Secretaries-General of Parliaments (ASGP) is a consultative body constituted under the IPU. Membership is open to those who provide parliamentary support services in national parliaments. The Clerks of both Houses and the Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Services are members of ASGP.

Parliamentary Groups

Parliamentary groups are formed under the auspices of the Australian National Group of the IPU. The aim of parliamentary groups is to foster and maintain friendship with, and understanding of, particular countries through links with national legislatures. The groups meet with members of visiting parliamentary delegations and other distinguished visitors of relevance to the groups, as well as with diplomatic representatives in Australia of the countries concerned. Members of the groups may also take the opportunity to meet with their counterparts when travelling overseas. It is normal practice that you and the President of the Senate are members of all groups. A total of 89 parliamentary groups have been established in this Parliament.

Separate to the national groups, the Presiding Officers agreed in 2008 to the establishment of an Australia-United Nations Parliamentary Group. This group is not formed under the auspices of the IPU but rather as a parliamentary group for international organisations. Any groups established under this category must be a recognised international organisation of which either the Australian government or Australian Parliament is a participating member.

CPA

The CPA provides the means for regular communication between members of Commonwealth Parliaments. It seeks to promote understanding and cooperation among countries, and the study of and respect for parliamentary institutions. The Association pursues these objectives through annual general conferences, regional conferences and seminars, the interchange of delegations, and through publications such as monographs and the Association's quarterly magazine *The Parliamentarian*.

You and the President are Joint Presidents of the Commonwealth of Australia CPA Branch, the Clerk of the House is the Honorary Secretary, and Ms Fiona Way of ICRO is the Executive Officer [REDACTED].

ICRO also provides the Regional Secretariat for the Australian Region of the CPA. The Regional Secretariat administers an Education Trust Fund that funds training and equipment for Pacific Island Parliaments that are members of the CPA. Twinning arrangements have also been established between Australian and Pacific Parliaments. CPA Australia, in association with the UNDP and with funding from AusAID, also manages a Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program which provides development assistance to Pacific Parliaments. The Director of ICRO, Mr Andres Lomp [REDACTED] is the Regional Secretary for the Australian Region of the CPA.

APPF

The APPF was established in Tokyo in 1993. Its objective is to promote greater regional identification and cooperation among national parliamentarians in the Asia-Pacific region, especially those from ASEAN, APEC group nations and the South Pacific Forum. The APPF seeks to further the advancement of peace, freedom, democracy and prosperity. Australia was a member of the Executive Committee (representing the Oceania Group) until mid 2011.

International conferences

APPF

The APPF annual meeting takes place each year and is usually held in January. The 20th Annual Meeting of the APPF is scheduled to be held in Tokyo from 7-13 January 2012. Approval for this delegation is usually sought in advance of the annual outgoing delegations program. In recent years the Speaker has usually led the delegation to the APPF. Ms Saffin MP is the leader of the delegation to the Tokyo meeting and Mr Forrest MP the deputy leader.

IPU

There will be two IPU Assemblies in 2012. The 126th Assembly and Related Meetings will be held in Kampala, Uganda from 31 March to 5 April and the 127th Assembly and Related Meetings will be held in Quebec from 21-26 October. The Speaker has often led the delegation to the IPU.

CPA

The 58th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference will be held in Sri Lanka from 7-15 September 2012. The President has usually led the delegation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (and would, as a Regional Representative, also attend the mid-year Executive Committee meeting—due in April 2012).

An Australian and Pacific Regional Conference is due to be held in 2012. The regional schedule of conferences and seminars is currently being reviewed by a regional working group and the venue and date of any conference in 2012 will be advised after the working group has concluded its review.

Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference

This is an annual meeting of the Presiding Officers and Clerks from Australia and the Pacific. It is not a CPA activity and has been attended by both Presiding Officers on many occasions. The President normally attends because there are a number of CPA related business meetings held in conjunction with the conference. The Presiding Officers are also members of the CPA regional management committee. The next conference is scheduled to be held in the Solomon Islands in the third week of July 2012.

Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers Conference

This is a biennial conference organised by a secretariat based in Canada and the meeting is normally attended by the Speaker. The 21st Conference will be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad from 7-12 January 2012.

There is an Executive Committee meeting held in the non-conference year, and Australia is currently on the Executive Committee. By agreement of the Presiding Officers, the Speaker is the Australian representative for 2010-2012.

Other programs

In addition to official incoming delegations ICRO arranges programs for other parliamentary visits. These are short non-hosted visits where, for instance, we arrange a one or two day visit to the Parliament and perhaps one function. This differs from official visits which generally are hosted by the Australian Parliament, last for up to six days and take in visits to States and Territories. Regular progress reports are provided in this regard. There are up to 30 parliamentary visits per year and the degree of involvement by the Presiding Officers depends on the nature of the visit.

To foster closer relations with regional neighbours, the department has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the Parliaments of Cambodia, China, Indonesia and Vietnam aimed at promoting exchanges (visits and information) between our Parliaments. In June 2010 the Presiding Officers agreed to extend the MOU with China to be an MOU with the whole of the Australian Parliament; the expanded MOU was signed during a visit by a delegation from the National People's Congress in October this year. The

Presiding Officers agreed to extend the other MOUs to the whole of the Australian Parliament when the opportunity next arises.

The department also helps coordinate study visits to the Parliament by officials from overseas Parliaments. This includes an annual two-week Inter-Parliamentary Study Program for senior parliamentary officials from around 15 countries as well as shorter training placements. The next Inter-Parliamentary Study Program is planned for 5-15 March 2012. Usually the Presiding Officers host a function during the program.

ICRO will have a close working relationship with your office. Mr Lomp will be available to brief you or your staff on any matters whenever convenient.

6 Members' entitlements and services

Members' services

Members' salaries

As you would be aware the Remuneration Tribunal's determinative jurisdiction was extended to the determination of the base pay (annual allowance) of parliamentarians with the assent of the *Remuneration and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2011* (the ROLA Act). The Remuneration Tribunal is currently finalising a review of parliamentarians' base pay. The review was one of the recommendations of the *Belcher Review of Parliamentary Entitlements*.

On 1 July 2011, the base rate of pay for Members increased to \$140,910 per annum. The additional salaries of Ministers and office-holders are also linked as a percentage of the basic salary. For example, the additional percentage is 160% for the Prime Minister, 72.5% for Cabinet Ministers, 75% for the Leader of the House and Speaker and 16% for the chairs of larger committees. The current office-holder's allowance for the Speaker is \$105,690 pa.

The department pays Members' salaries and the additional salaries for parliamentary office holders. The chamber departments are also to assume responsibility for payment of additional salaries for Ministers. It is anticipated that this will occur from the December pay.

Members' survey

An annual survey of Members is undertaken by the department in May-June each year. The survey involves a sample of 30 randomly selected Members responding to questions about the quality of the full range of services provided by the department.

In the most recent June 2011 survey Members were overwhelmingly satisfied with the department's support in helping them fulfill their parliamentary duties. The overall result of the survey was that 99 per cent expressed high levels of satisfaction with the department's quality of service. See **Attachment 4** for detailed survey findings.

A brief on the department's response to the survey's findings was provided to the former Speaker earlier this year.

Bulletin

At least four times each year (typically in February, May, August and November) a bulletin containing information for Members is published by the department. The bulletin, called *House Update*, informs Members about administrative and procedural developments within the House. It is published through the Clerk's office.

Members' briefings

Each year the department arranges a series of briefings for Members, their staff and parliamentary staff. The House Briefings are held at lunchtime on Tuesdays and focus on items of likely procedural and administrative interest to Members, particularly new Members. Previous briefings have featured topics such as opportunities for private Members in the House and the budget process.

In the last Parliament, the idea of arranging guest presentations from prominent individuals or visiting international guests was implemented. The one presentation that took place was hosted by the Speaker and President as a 'Guest of Parliament' session to help inform Members, Senators and their staff of issues that may be of broader interest to them. This concept will be continued for suitable presentations.

Former Members' association

The Parliament funds the Association of Former Members of the Parliament of Australia (AFMPA) to a total amount of \$8,000 per annum, contributed to equally by the department and the Department of the Senate. The funding is to support the printing in-house and distribution of AFMPA's quarterly newsletter, *Federal Gallery*, and of transport associated with the annual receptions in Parliament House and Government House. The newsletter is desktop published and printed by the department's in-house printing service, with covers provided by the Department of the Senate. In addition to the specific financial contribution, the parliamentary departments provide other support in recognition of the role AFMPA plays in promoting the institution of Parliament.

Support services provided to AFMPA in Parliament House include an office, sitting room, and telephone and internet access. In addition, AFMPA uses committee rooms, including for their annual reunion in Budget week in May each year. At that time the Presiding Officers host a function, usually a cocktail reception, for the members of AFMPA as well as current Members and Senators. The organisation of this function alternates between the department and the Department of the Senate. In 2012 the House of Representatives will be organising the function.

Facilities

Accommodation and chamber seating

At the beginning of the 43rd Parliament the party whips and the Serjeant-at-Arms made recommendations to the Speaker about the allocation of rooms to new and returning Members for decision. These recommendations were made following discussions with the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office staff about the availability of particular rooms and the composition of the new Parliament.

A similar procedure applies for the allocation of backbench seating in the Chamber. The Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business propose the seating order on the front benches.

Review of accommodation in Parliament House

A comprehensive review of accommodation in Parliament House was undertaken in 2007. The review was triggered by pressures on accommodation in Parliament House, particularly for parliamentary secretaries in the House of Representatives wing, and the recognition that there would be a longer term requirement for additional accommodation and that consideration should be given to possible options. The architectural firm GHD was engaged by the three parliamentary departments to undertake the review. The review developed a short, medium and longer term plan for accommodation at Parliament House. The review and further information about it is available from the Serjeant-at-Arms, Robyn McClelland (ext. [REDACTED]).

Transport

The Transport Office, part of the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, is staffed only in sitting weeks. Transport Office staff assist Members with Comcar arrangements at Canberra Airport on Sunday afternoons in sitting weeks. The transport shuttle operates from outside the House of Representatives entrance during sitting weeks. A service level agreement covering details of the shuttle's administration has been signed by the department, the Department of the Senate and the Department of Finance and Deregulation. It specifies the hours of operation dependent on the hours of parliamentary sittings and prescribes that the cars are to be used for parliamentary purposes—but there is no definition of a parliamentary purpose.

The Transport Office is managed by Barry Gwyther, Assistant Serjeant-at-Arms [REDACTED], and sessional and other departmental staff provide a cost effective service. Outside of sitting times Members can make their transport bookings directly with the Comcar National Reservations Centre.

As Speaker, you still retain access to the transport shuttle. If the department provides you with a leased motor vehicle, the transport shuttle can only be used for direct travel between Parliament House, or your accommodation in Canberra, and Canberra airport. The shuttle can also be used for special circumstances, such as attending vice regal, Parliamentary, diplomatic or official functions (see *Procedural Rule No 5 of 2005 – Car Transport in Canberra*).

Newspapers

Members are provided with two major daily newspapers of their choice per sitting day. These newspapers are delivered to Members' suites by attendants each morning; however the availability of interstate newspapers is dependent upon the timeliness of interstate deliveries. A selection of the major daily newspapers is also provided for Members in the lobbies of the Chamber. Your office can be provided with a selection of the major dailies all year round if required.

Flags

In May 1997, Speaker Halverson introduced a program to provide to Members Australian flags which have hung at the entrance to the House of Representatives Chamber for presentation to eligible community groups. Under the program each Member has an entitlement to receive one flag per year. Two flags are available each sitting day. The seniority of Members is applied to resolve the priority for the allocation of flags on a given day if more than two Members have requested the flags. Each flag comes with a certificate signed by you. The usual practice is to deliver the flag and certificate to a Member's suite on the day after the sitting day on which the flag was flown.

Postage allowance

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office administers, on behalf of the Department of Finance and Deregulation, the quarterly postage allowance authority for Members' use at Parliament House. A quarterly allowance authority of \$450 can be collected from the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office on the first day of each quarter. It must be redeemed at the Parliament House Post Office. From 2011-12, Members have had the option of rolling the postage allowance into the printing and communications entitlement, and receive all of their entitlement directly from the Department of Finance and Deregulation.

Stationery and stores

The Stores Office, part of the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, is staffed on Thursdays in non-sitting weeks, Fridays in weeks preceding a sitting week, and each day in sitting weeks from 8.30 am until approximately 6.00 pm. At other times staff from the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office can assist Members with stores.

Messengerial attendants

House of Representatives messengerial attendants perform duties within the House of Representatives wing and support committee rooms administered by the department. They are responsible for the delivery and collection of mail to and from Members' suites, providing support services in the Chamber and committee rooms, supplying and moving furniture and courier services.

Parliamentary assistants

Since the pilot program in 2001, the parliamentary assistant program has developed into a very successful adjunct to the messengerial attendants service. Under the program high calibre university students in their second year of studies are employed on a sessional basis as attendant staff. With a focus on chamber duties, the program combines elements of professional education, workplace experience and community outreach activities for Canberra-based university students. A total of seven parliamentary assistants has been selected for 2012; three students from the 2011 intake are participating in a second year with the program together with four new students whom they are helping to train.

Information technology

Responsibilities

DPS is responsible for the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure and the support of Parliament-wide ICT systems and is also now responsible for electorate office IT. This department, through the Information Systems and Publishing Office, works cooperatively with DPS to ensure that ICT services to Members are satisfactory and also provides support for House of Representatives applications and projects. It provides the hardware and software in Members' offices and participates in parliamentary ICT strategic planning initiatives.

As you know, the Presiding Officers have recently decided to conduct a review of ICT within the Parliament. The review is to be conducted by Mr Michael Roche.

Equipment allocation

The standard allocation of IT equipment for Members in Parliament House is two desktop workstations, a laptop workstation, one laser printer and smart label printers. Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries have the standard allocation and receive additional equipment from the relevant executive department. The Leader of the Opposition and members of the Shadow Ministry, together with Office Holders, have additional equipment allocated by the department in accordance with the number of staff allocated for these roles.

Software

The current software platform for Members, *OneOffice*, provides essential business applications such as email, calendar, contacts (Outlook), internet access and the Microsoft Office 2007 suite (Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, Publisher). There are also a wide range of on-line parliamentary services such as parliamentary debates (ParlInfo), committee transcripts, Notice Papers, Votes and Proceedings, Votes Officers Minutes, parliamentarians address lists, on-line ordering system for tabled papers and AAP news. Many of these services can be found through the Senators' and Members' Services Portal (SMSP).

These services can be accessed not only from Parliament House, but remotely via broadband access from a laptop or through any internet enabled desktop computer. Remote access is available for Members and authorised staff.

The Microsoft Vista operating system is currently installed on PCs in the parliamentary departments. Preliminary discussions are underway to plan for upgrading the software on PCs for Members in Parliament House and the Electorate Offices.

Members have access to desktop publishing facilities and services in the Whips' offices. These services include colour printing and graphic scanning.

The Special Minister of State granted some extra software entitlements for electorate offices during the 41st Parliament. These packages (Dragon Dictate for voice recognition and Adobe Creative Suite for desktop and web publishing) are available only on request for Members' use in Parliament House.

Electronic mailboxes

To enable Members to conduct their parliamentary and electorate business, they may have access to a maximum of two electronic mailboxes for their internet email accounts. One account will be a personal account (i.e. not publicised) and the other will be the office account, and as such, may be available publicly.

Internet site

The Australian Parliament House (APH) website (www.aph.gov.au) is controlled ultimately by the Presiding Officers. It is managed co-operatively by the three parliamentary departments. DPS provides the infrastructure for the internet site and has responsibility for the general web management administration. The department is responsible for the content on all the web pages for the House of Representatives and those pages relating to inter-parliamentary relations.

The department's Information Systems and Publishing Office maintains home pages for Members on the internet, which contain contact information, and photograph and biographical information.

In February 2009, DPS commenced a project to upgrade the website. There have been considerable improvements to web technology and functionality since the original site was developed. Further, the hardware and software supporting the site have been ageing and need replacement. A board oversees the project, which comprises representatives of the Chamber departments and DPS. A new governance model is being discussed for the new website.

The project initially had a two-year schedule. Due to the scale of the project, and the requirement for further development of the template designs for a range of pages, the project has been delayed; however, the launch of the new site is expected soon (late 2011 / early 2012).

Printing

The Department of the House of Representatives has an in-house printing and scanning service which provides high speed digital printing, copying and scanning facilities along with some binding and finishing capabilities. The primary purpose of the in-house printing service is to provide timely production of documents for the House of Representatives Chamber and legislative documents. The in-house printing service manages the printing of committee reports, including printing of some reports in-house or obtaining quotes for external printing. They also print school certificates and first speech booklets for Members.

Staff from the department's print centre manage all aspects of the photocopier fleet. This is the 'Valet Service'. A regular maintenance program (daily during sitting weeks) of all devices has been implemented and contributed to negligible incidence of machine breakdown.

In addition to maintenance, the Valet Service provides training and support in use of the devices such as copiers, scanners and printers, to all users, including Members and their staff.

7 Committee services

Overview

Staffing structure of committees

The structure of committees currently administered by the department is at **Attachment 5**. Nineteen investigatory committees are supported by nine secretariats (eight secretariats supporting two committees and one supporting three committees). Linked secretariats supporting two committees were introduced in 1996. An internal review in 2001 found the system to be quite successful. This arrangement satisfied the requirements of the committees but showed occasional signs of strain. Over time, the proportion of secretariats serving two committees decreased and the proportion serving three committees grew.

In June 2010 the Standing Committee on Procedure released the report of its inquiry into the effectiveness of the House committee system. Amongst other things, the Committee recommended:

- an external review of staffing levels within the Committee Office;
- a reduction in the number of general purpose standing committees, and in the size of their membership (but with greater provision for supplementary members); and
- a greater role for general purpose standing committees in scrutiny of legislation.

These recommendations were subsequently reflected in the *Agreement for a Better Parliament (Attachment 7)* and the structure of the general purpose standing committees at the start of the 43rd Parliament.

The proposed review of Committee Office staffing levels was conducted during 2010-11 by HBA Consulting; the consultant's report, presented to the department in March this year, made four recommendations:

- that the model where one secretariat supports two committees be the standard;
- that an additional work group be established to allow this model to be implemented fully (an increase from eight to nine secretariat work groups);
- that in response to an increase in bill inquiries by House committees, additional resources be provided initially to support this work in 2011-12, and the level of resourcing then be reviewed; and
- that a specific budget allocation be established to allow committees to procure external expert advice to support the committee inquiry process, when required and requested.

The department supported these recommendations. Additional funding allocated to the department for 2011-12 and the three following years to support the Joint Committee on the National Broadband Network has allowed the first two recommendations to be largely implemented (one work group still supports three committees, and short-term joint select committees for specific inquiries have had to be supported by existing work groups). Implementation of the final recommendation is dependent on supplementary funding for the department in the next financial year.

Feedback from Members on the adequacy of committee support services is obtained formally through the annual survey of Members referred to elsewhere in this brief and informally through the Liaison Committee of Chairs and Deputy Chairs (see p. 59).

Flexible approaches are applied to meet the varying needs of different committees at different times. For example, a temporary employment register is used to supplement staffing on a short term needs basis, keeping within the overall budgetary framework across the committee office. Secondees from external agencies are also used where appropriate.

Information technology

Electronic management of committee documents

During the 41st and 42nd Parliaments, the department implemented CommDocs, which is an electronic distribution system for committee members to access committee documents (e.g. meeting notices, agendas, briefs and other papers). It provides quick, consistent and comprehensive access for each Member to information and documents of the committees to which he or she belongs. KPMG, the department's then internal auditors, conducted a security audit of CommDocs and found it provided equal or better security than other methods of document distribution.

During the 42nd Parliament, the Department of the Senate developed the Senate Committee Information Database (SCID). This allows stakeholders in committee inquiries to fill in their contact details and upload their submissions over the internet. It also assists in the compilation of submissions and transcripts of evidence when committees table reports.

During 2010-11 the departments began a trial to extend CommDocs to Senate-supported committees and extend SCID to House-supported committees. One committee supported by the department is trialling SCID for its inquiries, and further committees may be included as circumstances permit. If the trial is successful, the systems may in future be able to be integrated to avoid repetition of similar tasks involving submissions and other committee documents.

Electronic accessibility of committee reports and proceedings

During the 42nd Parliament, the Australian Human Rights Commission and disability groups made requests to the department about better standards of access to committee reports on the website. The most popular types of screen readers that vision impaired people use can only read HTML (basic website presentation), not pdf documents.

Before the start of this year, committee reports were converted to HTML manually. This work was labour intensive and resulted in delays in publishing the HTML version of a report, which prompted the department to seek alternative methods. A software program obtained from the Department of the Senate and modified to operate with our report template is now used to convert reports into HTML. This has greatly increased the efficiency of the process and the quality of the reports converted although a backlog of reports remains and is being addressed.

As an additional measure, the department has purchased two small hearing loops for public hearings. Members of the public with hearing aids can sit next to these devices and receive the DPS Broadcasting feed.

Oversight of committees

Liaison Committee of Chairs and Deputy Chairs

As in recent Parliaments, at the start of the 43rd Parliament the Speaker re-established an informal Liaison Committee of Chairs and Deputy Chairs of committees supported by the department. The committee, chaired by the Deputy Speaker, provides a useful forum for the exchange of ideas and information between Chairs and Deputy Chairs and for the airing of issues that affect all committees supported by the department. The committee met twice a year in the last Parliament, but in this Parliament is meeting more frequently (five times in 2010-11). Under the *Agreement for a Better Parliament*, the Liaison Committee has a role in considering committees' powers.

8 Community engagement

Introduction

To encourage community understanding of and interaction with the work of the House of Representatives, the department provides a range of community information programs and services. Many of these are coordinated through the International and Community Relations Office (ICRO)² with the involvement of other departmental areas. The Director, ICRO, is Mr Andres Lomp [REDACTED].

Products

Magazine—About the House

The *About the House* magazine is published up to four times a year (although the 2010 federal election meant that only one edition was produced during 2010-11). It includes news and features on the work of the House, particularly its committees, as well as sections devoted to legislation and issues Members are raising in the House. We estimate that between 60,000 and 70,000 Australians read the free magazine. Results from the most recent readers' survey show high levels of satisfaction with the content and style of the magazine, as well as a strong preference for a printed copy of the magazine.

Television—About the House and MPI

A 30 minute current affairs style television program, also called *About the House*, is produced and features segments on the work of the House, particularly its committees. It is broadcast on the Sky News channel on the first Friday of the month (2.30 pm) and is also broadcast on Australia's Public Affairs Channel (A-PAC). Segments of the program are available on the House's website.

In June 2010 the pilot of a second television program, called *MPI* (Matters of Public Importance), was produced and broadcast on A-PAC. The program reviews the past sitting fortnight in the House, including legislation presented, committee reports tabled, international visits to the Parliament, and other events around the Parliament. After favourable feedback on the pilot program from A-PAC, the program went into regular production from the start of the 43rd Parliament. Replays of the program are available on the House's website.

² The International and Community Relations Office is an amalgamation of the House of Representatives Liaison and Projects Office and the Parliamentary Relations Office which operated in the previous Parliament.

Electronic information services

Up to date information on committee work is made available through a news and features page at www.aph.gov.au/ath on the House's website. The webpage includes video news items and replays of Question Time. RSS feeds are also available from the page. In addition the media and the public can receive email alerts on the latest developments in relation to committees, including announcements of new inquiries, upcoming public hearings and report tablings. More than 3,200 individuals and organisations currently receive the email alerts, including more than 1,000 media outlets.

In February 2011 an 'About the House' Twitter news feed was introduced to highlight committee work and proceedings in the Chamber. By November 2011 the Twitter feed had attracted more than 4000 followers. An About the House Facebook page has also been introduced.

Media liaison

ICRO helps committees inform the media about their work. Media specialists employed in the office assist committees distribute information on their inquiries to the media.

Educational activities and materials

Seminars

We conduct an annual seminar program that helps to explain the operations of the House. The seminars are conducted on a fee paying basis and include general seminars on the House as well as more detailed seminars on the legislative, committee and budgetary processes of the House. Members are invited to be guest presenters at some of the seminars. While most seminars are held in Canberra and are generally attended by public servants, in recent years we have also conducted seminars in other centres. Full seminars and smaller presentations are also arranged for organisations around Australia at their request.

University lecture program

To boost contact between the Parliament and tertiary institutions, we coordinate a guest lecture program at various universities throughout Australia. At the request of university lecturers, the Speaker, the Clerk and others have visited universities to deliver lectures on the realities of working in today's House of Representatives. The lectures have proved extremely popular, with a range of universities participating in the program, including the University of Western Sydney, the University of Queensland, Charles Darwin University, Murdoch University and the University of Tasmania.

Australian National Internships Program (ANIP)

The program started in 1993 following a formal agreement between the Presiding Officers and the Vice Chancellor of the Australian National University (ANU).

The aim was to establish a program for students enrolled in Australian and foreign universities to undertake, as part of their studies, an internship in the Parliament doing applied policy work under the direction of a Member of Parliament or parliamentary staff. Students are enrolled at the ANU for the duration of their internship and obtain academic credit for the research report they prepare during the course.

Two courses are run each year, with up to 45 students in each semester's course. More than 1,000 students have completed the program. Most of the students are placed with Senators, or Members, or parliamentary committees, and some are also placed with the Australian Public Service, the ACT Public Service, the ACT Legislative Assembly, NGOs, and embassies.

The Program Director (Dr Neil Hamilton of the ANU) is responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the program and in particular for the selection of interns and their matching with supervisors. A steering committee, comprising a Member, a Senator, three parliamentary officers, the Program Director and representatives of the Vice-Chancellor of the ANU, advise the Program Director on matters of policy. The parliamentary members of the Steering Committee are Mr Ripoll MP and the Deputy President Senator Parry; the department's representative is the Director of the Chamber Research Office Ms Catherine Cornish. The steering committee has a formal role in approving the 'matching' of the study interests of interns with parliamentary supervisors (Members and Senators).

The ANU funds the program but some incidental expenditure is incurred by the parliamentary departments. This department and the Department of the Senate jointly host an orientation day for all participants (not just those hosted at Parliament House) at the beginning of the semester, with presentations by senior departmental staff. The Parliamentary Library also provides an orientation program.

In the lead up to each semester's intake of interns the Speaker and President jointly invite all Members of Parliament to make an offer to the program to host an intern. It is also usual for the Speaker and President to jointly host a reception for each intake of interns, with the venue alternating (the Speaker's suite in second semester and the President's suite in first semester).

In second semester 2011 the program had an intake of 26 students, 18 of whom were placed at Parliament House.

Further information on the program is available at <http://anip.anu.edu.au/>.

Community publications and resource material

Infosheets on the House of Representatives are produced by the Chamber Research Office and are available in printed copy and online from the House of Representatives website. A booklet on the Speaker is produced by the Chamber Research Office and gives an illustrated history of the office of the Speaker and describes current roles and duties.

We also have produced a history pack on the first 100 years of the House of Representatives. Called 'A House for the Nation', it includes a CD-ROM encyclopedia, a four episode documentary and a study guide to assist teachers and lecturers. The history pack is sold to the public.

Public Activities in Parliament House

2013 Open Day and 25th anniversary of the opening of Parliament House

An Open Day will be held at Parliament House in late 2013 (postponed from 2012, with the Presiding Officers' approval, to coincide with both the centenary of Canberra and the 25th anniversary of the opening of Parliament House). The House of Representatives will have the lead coordinating role for the organisation of the day. ICRO will coordinate the House of Representatives displays.

An interdepartmental steering committee has been formed to report to the Presiding Officers on possible activities to mark the 25th anniversary of the opening of Parliament House; Ms McClelland is the department's representative.

Each House has resolved that there be appropriate celebration of the centenary of the choice of the Griffin design for the national capital. The Presiding Officers have given in principle approval for the National Capital Authority to use the Presiding Officers' Exhibition Area from 9 May to 30 June 2012 for an exhibition to celebrate the centenary of the national capital design competition.

Public visitors during proceedings

Visitors to the building can observe proceedings of the House during sittings from the first floor galleries of the Chamber. During Question Time, or for other special occasions, it might be possible for public visitors to reserve seats in the galleries by making a booking with the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office. Some 100,000 visitors (not including school students, see p. 67) view proceedings from the galleries each year. In addition, Members have been permitted to make bookings with the Speaker's Office for up to two tickets in the Speaker's gallery during Question Time.

At other times, visitors are able to enter the galleries of the Chamber whenever the building is open to the public.

Public displays

In 2009 an interdepartmental working group made a series of recommendations about the management and use of public areas of the building. Work on implementing the recommendations is in progress; the public displays are likely to be considered further in the context of planning for the 25th anniversary of Parliament House.

Two House of Representatives touch screen kiosks are located in the public areas of Parliament House: 'A House for the Nation' kiosk which examines the first 100 years of the House and the 'Meet your MP' kiosk which provides information on the 150 Members of the House.

9 Parliamentary education

Parliamentary Education Office (PEO)

The Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) provides parliamentary education services to schools, teachers and students. More specifically, the functions of the PEO include:

- the development of an extensive range of web material and print publications to provide information on Parliament to teachers and students
- working closely with Senators and Members to support the delivery of parliamentary education services and materials to students, teachers and schools in their State or electorates
- the provision of experiential learning programs for school students visiting Parliament House or participating in outreach programs
- the publication of curriculum and teaching material, including electronically through the PEO website
- the conduct of professional development activities for teachers
- assistance to community groups in organising tailored programs for young people at Parliament House.

The PEO is seen as a valuable resource by Members of Parliament, especially Members of the House, in assisting them to inform students and teachers in their electorates about the parliamentary process. Wherever possible, both in Canberra and elsewhere, the PEO endeavours to involve a local Member or Senator in its educational programs, including school-based activities and those conducted at Parliament House. The PEO also conducts regular visits to Members' offices to promote new materials and publications. The financial and administrative arrangements for the PEO are the subject of a memorandum of understanding between the House and Senate departments. Both the House and Senate departments fund the office, which is staffed by the latter department. The department works in partnership with the PEO, for example, in relation to committees and publications, where there are mutual benefits. The two departments confer in the development of policy and all major PEO activities.

The Director of the PEO (Simon Harvey) is responsible to the Senate Clerk Assistant (Procedure) (Bronwyn Notzon) and is responsive to the Clerk Assistant (Table) in the department (Claressa Surtees), who represents the interests of the House in dealing with the PEO.

The Advisory Committee, chaired by the Deputy Speaker, oversees the operations of the PEO. Other than the Chair, membership in this Parliament has consisted of four Members and four Senators with party representation of four ALP and four coalition members. A further position on the Committee is available for minor party or independent representation; no nomination has been received.

School visits to Parliament House

More than 110,000 students visit Parliament House each year (114,598 in 2010-11) as part of the School Visits Program, which includes a formal education program. All bookings are administered by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office. The classroom programs are provided by the Parliamentary Education Office, which is managed by the Department of the Senate, and the guided tours of the Chambers and building are provided by Visitors Services, DPS.

Government Parliamentary and Civics Education Rebate (previously the Citizenship Visits Program – CVP)

For 17 years the Parliament provided a subsidy, under the Citizenship Visits Program, to final year primary students and secondary students who travelled more than 1000 kilometres to participate in education programs in Parliament House. On the initiative of the government, the CVP, which faced increasing demand from schools, ceased on 30 June 2006. It had been administered by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office. From 1 July 2006 the government established a new subsidy program, the Parliamentary and Civics Education Rebate (PACER), administered by the Department of Education, Science and Training, which includes the subsidies previously provided by the CVP. The Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms and senior staff of the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office represent the parliamentary departments on the PACER Advisory Committee, which meets every two months.

Attachment 1 – Corporate Plan 2010 - 2013

Message from the Clerk

This plan sets out a framework and key priorities within which the department's annual business plans will be developed and work progressed from 2010 to 2013.

The department has important responsibilities in supporting the Australian Parliament, in particular the House of Representatives and its committees and Members. As well as supporting day to day activities, the department is aware of its wider obligations. The development of this plan has been a good opportunity to look at longer-term responsibilities as well as those which must be discharged on a daily basis.

A key step in gathering ideas for the development of this plan was the annual planning day in 2010 in which a majority of staff participated. The ideas from the planning day, and from other sources, were picked up and refined to develop the final plan. Members were informed of the process and given the opportunity to contribute. Regard has also been had to the interests and plans of the Department of the Senate and the Department of Parliamentary Services so that a parliament-wide view could be taken.

The years 2010 to 2013 will offer many challenges for the House itself and for the department. I am confident that this plan provides a practical framework for the department's work and I commend it to you.

The context of our Work

Since 1901 our department's people have been serving the House of Representatives, the Speaker, Members, and the Australian Parliament with professional and impartial support. Over time we have worked consistently to improve the value of our advice and services, through cost and time efficiencies, technological improvements, and by expanding the nature of our services and our range of clients. We seek to do more than to serve the House and Parliament efficiently. We seek to strengthen the Parliament through the excellence of our work and behaviour.

Externally, our operating environment is increasingly complex. We face the same scrutiny and calls for change that apply across the public sector generally, as well as budgetary pressures that have an additional impact on us as a small department. As always, we will respond to challenges with confidence, drawing on our leadership and technical skills and our strong professional relationships.

Our leaders, our people and our systems have undergone change and renewal, but our values remain constant. In keeping with the Constitution's separate recognition of the House and the Senate within the Parliament, we will maintain our unique identity and culture as we build on our cooperative relationships with the other parliamentary departments to support the House and the Parliament.

The purpose of our work

To support the House of Representatives, and the wider Parliament, in the role of a representative and legislative body by providing advice and services of a high standard.

To achieve this purpose, we provide facilities, support, advice and information to ensure that:

- the Chamber and Main Committee operate effectively
- parliamentary committees operate effectively
- Members receive appropriate services to fulfil their parliamentary duties
- international and regional relationships with other Parliaments, parliamentary bodies and organisations are maintained
- the community understands, and interacts with, the work of the House of Representatives and the Australian Parliament.

The way we achieve these objectives and measures of performance are set out in our annual Portfolio Budget Statements and business and other plans, and progress is reported in our annual report.

The values we apply to our work

We uphold and promote the parliamentary service values and adhere to the Code of Conduct set out in the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999*.

In providing advice and services, and in our interactions with each other, we will show:

<i>Integrity and Impartiality</i>	by demonstrating high ethical standards and being unbiased and non-partisan;
<i>Professionalism</i>	by providing high quality advice and services, promptly, effectively and efficiently;
<i>Commitment to service</i>	by striving to meet as best we can the needs of the House, the Speaker, Members, the public and others and always seeking to improve; and
<i>Mutual respect</i>	by treating all people with fairness, respect and courtesy.

The way we work

We recognise that our future success depends on the effort we make to improve and sustain our knowledge, skills and motivation. We give our people autonomy to achieve the best results they can while encouraging them to share their knowledge with others. We enhance their prospects to learn and develop and we value them for their contribution and diversity.

In return, our people have made the department more efficient and effective through tested innovations. They have built a breadth of knowledge about the House and its related activities. Our people support and collaborate with each other, so that we achieve results with mutual respect and learning.

We are large enough to invest in training and rotate people internally to experience the range of the department's work. We are also small enough to build strong internal relationships that support our capacity to do our work.

Our priorities for 2010-13

Our priorities for the next three years seeks to build on our capacity to serve our clients, develop our people, sustain our capability and work collaboratively with each other and other key people and organisations

Service

We seek to strengthen our culture of service to our clients – the House of Representatives, its Members and committees, other parliamentary clients and the wider community.

We will encourage excellence in service provision and pursue improvements to services and greater efficiencies in their delivery.

We will do this by:

- providing targeted induction programs for new Members and tailoring our services to better respond to all Members as their needs change
- promoting public knowledge of the parliamentary process and the role of the Parliament, and ensuring that the community is aware of and encouraged to participate in committee activities
- fostering professional relationships with clients
- gathering feedback from Members and other clients, and being responsive to requirements
- seeking to use technology more efficiently and more creatively to deliver services
- monitoring developments in parliamentary and public administration and applying as appropriate
- nurturing a flexible, integrated and cohesive department while recognising individual talents and responsibilities.

People

We work together to ensure our people have the capability to provide high quality service and that the department is a good place to work.

We continue to enhance the capabilities and skills of our people to make our working environment better by:

- ensuring our culture complements our values

- managing talent well
- working co-operatively to achieve our goals and to recognise our achievements
- promoting a shared responsibility for leadership and mutual support, and encouraging people at all levels to demonstrate leadership
- being innovative and flexible to draw the best from all staff
- reviewing and adopting strategies that attract and retain capable staff and encourage a mix of mobility and experience
- continuing to support and encourage training and development, particularly in the parliamentary context, and continuing to develop our knowledge and skills in the application of parliamentary law, practice and procedure
- supporting and recognising adherence to our values and the Parliamentary Service Values
- adopting flexible strategies to support staff with varying workloads, sharing work experience through shadowing and fostering appropriate work life balance for people in all areas
- ensuring effective performance management through ongoing feedback, recognition of high performance and active management of underperformance.

Capability

We will ensure that our capability to support our clients and the parliamentary institution effectively continues by:

- identifying and seeking to obtain the resources needed to meet the requirements of the House into the future, based on the role of the House and the needs of our Members, opportunities for innovation and efficiency identified by our people, and enhanced measurement of departmental performance and capability
- effectively managing our finances within a sound framework
- supporting environmental sustainability in our work
- having in place and applying a comprehensive risk management framework
- nurturing the parliamentary institution to enhance the representative, legislative and scrutiny roles of the House
- adopting flexible strategies in response to the workload variations of the parliamentary cycle, and where possible promoting flexibility through consistency of practice
- strengthening communication and information-sharing across the department
- enhancing departmental records management, including integrating electronic document management systems into our daily work practices
- continuing to apply and develop information and communication technologies that improve our ability to meet the needs of our clients effectively and efficiently
- ensuring that our governance arrangements remain current, and that compliance with associated policies and practice is promoted and monitored

- ensuring that our business continuity strategies remain appropriate to known and emerging risks, and are understood and adhered to
- safeguarding the integrity of House and Committee records and documents for the benefit of future generations.

Collaboration

We will strengthen our collaboration, both in Australia and internationally, with parliamentary colleagues, other public sector agencies and organisations committed to the development of parliamentary institutions.

We will develop our services to Members of Parliament and the Australian community by:

- drawing on our relationships with each other to share knowledge and ideas across the department, to work together on projects of common interest and to pass on to colleagues the benefits of our tradition of professional support to the House
- exchanging ideas with our parliamentary colleagues in Australia and beyond, and contributing to research organisations, non-government bodies and other groups committed to the study and strengthening of Parliaments
- identifying and promoting opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration with other organisations, including on ICT, shared services and cross-agency service delivery where appropriate
- further developing our governance arrangements for such collaboration to ensure that it is sustainable and meets the needs of the House
- continuing to develop our information resources, and technology for their delivery, to enable the Australian community to be aware of and contribute to the work of the House.

Attachment 2 – The department's service charter

This Charter represents a commitment by staff in the Department of the House of Representatives to provide advice and services of the highest standard, cost effectively, to assist the House of Representatives in fulfilling its role as a representative and legislative body.

The advice and services we provide are non-partisan, focussing on the needs of the House of Representatives and the committees which it appoints rather than the political or electorate interests of Members.

We are committed to providing you with the best service possible, within the limit of available resources. We will do this in a manner consistent with the Parliamentary Service Values and the Parliamentary Service Code of Conduct. In particular we will show:

- *Integrity and Impartiality* – by demonstrating high ethical standards and being unbiased and non-partisan
- *Professionalism* – by providing high quality advice and services, promptly, effectively and efficiently
- *Commitment to service* – by striving to meet as best as we can the needs of the House, the Speaker, Members, the public and others and always seeking to improve
- *Mutual respect* – by treating all people with fairness, respect and courtesy.

General advice and services

We will:

- provide advice, information and services that are timely, accurate, clear and as complete as possible
- if we are unable to respond immediately to requests for advice, information or services, let you know what steps we are taking to provide a response and agree a timeframe with you or direct you to someone who may be able to help
- ensure that information on our website is up to date.

Chamber and Main Committee services

We will:

- ensure the following documents are available on the House of Representatives internet website within the timeframes indicated - government bills (within one hour of presentation), amendments to bills (within one hour of circulation), the Notice Paper (within two hours of House rise), the Votes and Proceedings (within two hours of House rise), the Daily Program (at least one hour before the House sitting)

- ensure that adequate copies of the following documents are available in the Chamber for the use of Members - government bills, amendments and other documents under discussion, the Notice Paper and the Daily Program
- ensure Members have access to current standing and sessional orders and publications explaining the procedures and practice of the House
- ensure that tabled documents are available for Members either via the on-line ordering system or, if stock is available, immediately upon tabling through the Table Office inquiry counter.

Community awareness services

We will:

- develop strategies, publications and products that promote community awareness and understanding of, and interaction with, the work of the House of Representatives
- respond to your requests for publications within one working day.

Committee services

We will:

- support the information gathering activities of committees by providing well informed and balanced research and analytical services and effective administrative support
- develop and implement strategies to promote public awareness of and participation in committee inquiries
- provide briefing papers for private meetings and for information gathering activities of committees (for example, public hearings, inspections or seminars) in a time frame that is acceptable to each committee, generally at least 2 days before a committee meeting and at least 3 days before an information gathering event
- provide report drafting services that result in clearly expressed, well structured, well informed and well argued draft reports that, in the first instance, express the views of the Committee Chair
- provide publication services that result in the timely printing, presentation and distribution of committee reports
- ensure timely placement on the House of Representatives website of submissions to committee inquiries, transcripts of evidence, committee reports and government responses to committee reports
- develop and implement strategies to ensure the effective promotion of the results of committee inquiries.

Interparliamentary relations

We will:

- ensure that programs of outgoing delegations reflect the interests of the delegates as far as possible and take into account Australia's interests and those of the Parliament
- ensure that delegates are debriefed following outgoing delegations and that delegation reports are presented to the Parliament in a timely manner
- provide opportunities for Members to meet with incoming parliamentary delegations in which Members have an interest.

Members' services

We will:

- ensure, subject to entitlements, that you and your staff have fully equipped and serviced offices in Parliament House, including IT equipment, televisions, stores and mail deliveries and collection, and access to appropriate printing facilities, to adequately carry out your parliamentary duties
- provide advice on your entitlements and processes relating to your salaries and entitlements, and implement relevant legislative and administrative decisions
- ensure the safety and accessibility of Parliament.

Assessing our performance

Our Charter is a starting point for us as we strive continuously to improve our service to you. It also represents a means by which you can assess our services.

We survey a sample of Members annually as to Members' satisfaction with our services, and we would welcome feedback on our services at any time.

General advice and services

Mr Bernard Wright, Clerk

Telephone: (02) 6277 [REDACTED]

Mr David Elder, Deputy Clerk

Telephone: (02) 6277 [REDACTED]

Chamber and Main Committee

Ms Claressa Surtees, Clerk Assistant (Table)

Telephone: (02) 6277 [REDACTED]

Committee services, interparliamentary relations and community awareness

Ms Joanne Towner, Clerk Assistant (Committees)

Telephone: (02) 6277 [REDACTED]

Members' services

Ms Robyn McClelland, Serjeant-at-Arms

Telephone: (02) 6277 [REDACTED]

Attachment 3 – Community service standards

To everyone interested in the Parliament.

The purpose of the Department of the House of Representatives is to provide cost effective advice and services of the highest standard to assist the House of Representatives in fulfilling its role as a representative and legislative body.

In supporting the House, the department has a commitment to assist everyone who visits the House or wants to know more about or contribute to the work of the Australian Parliament.

This Service Charter has been developed to inform you of the services that we provide to the community. It has evolved from broad consultation, including discussions with staff and members of the public.

We intend to report annually on our performance in relation to this Charter and would welcome any comments you have on the services we provide. We invite you to forward your comments to the Department of the House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600 or to Web.reps@aph.gov.au

Bernard Wright
Clerk of the House

Our Charter

This Charter reflects our commitment to assist everyone who visits the House or wants to know more about or contribute to the work of the Australian Parliament.

The advice and services that we provide are non-partisan, focusing on the work of the House of Representatives and the committees which it appoints - rather than the political or electorate interests of Members.

We are committed to providing you with the best service possible. We will do this in a manner consistent with the Parliamentary Service Values and the Parliamentary Service Code of Conduct.

Our key values

In providing you with information and services we will:

- demonstrate high ethical standards
- be professional, impartial and non-partisan
- be open, honest and helpful
- be responsive to your requests
- treat you with respect and fairness
- treat any complaints seriously and respond to them.

What we can do for you

Through our internet site at www.aph.gov.au/house or through contact with us, we can assist you with information about:

- the activities and procedures of the House
- the passage of legislation through both Houses
- lodging petitions
- the chamber galleries and making a booking to observe Question Time
- parliamentary committees and their inquiries
- participation in a parliamentary committee inquiry including advice on making a submission to an inquiry
- where parliamentary committee public hearings are being held
- access to documents, including committee reports, tabled in the Parliament
- community outreach initiatives such as seminars, displays and exhibitions
- parliamentary education activities including school visits
- contacting your local Member
- interparliamentary visits and conferences
- gaining access, including for the purposes of filming and photography, to the Parliament building and parliamentary precincts and the chamber galleries
- the guidelines for demonstrations in the parliamentary precincts.

Our service standards

We will ensure that the information available on our internet site (www.aph.gov.au/house) will be up-to-date and accurate. The latest news from the House will be available at www.aph.gov.au/house_news.

If you telephone us, we will:

- identify ourselves by name when answering the telephone
- respond to your calls quickly.

If the information that you request is not immediately available, we will tell you when you can expect it. If we are not able to meet your request, we undertake to refer you to the appropriate organisation or service.

If you write, fax or email us, we will:

- act on your requests for printed information within five working days
- reply to other written correspondence within 20 working days, sending an interim reply where a full response is not possible immediately
- in our reply, give you the name and contact details of someone who can provide further help, if needed.

How to contact us

Mailing address—

Department of the House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

*Fax number—*02 6277 8519

*Email address—*Web.reps@aph.gov.au

We welcome feedback on our performance so we can improve our standards of service. If you have any comments, including suggestions for improvement or complaints, please let us know. Contact details for all areas of the department are as follows:

Telephone numbers—

Clerk Assistant (Committees)—6277 [REDACTED] (committee reports, inquiries, submissions, public hearing venues, inter-parliamentary visits)

Clerk Assistant (Table)—6277 [REDACTED] (legislation, petitions, papers tabled in the House of Representatives, information about how the House operates))

Serjeant-at-Arms—6277 [REDACTED] (access to building, media policy, school visits program, security)

Attachment 4 – Members' survey results 2011

A Members' survey was initiated by the Department of the House of Representatives in May-June 2011 to identify levels of satisfaction with services provided by the department. This is the eighth year the survey has been conducted and the questions have been identical over the period with the exception of a question on the in-house printing service that was removed from the 2010 survey following the cessation of this service. This information is required for internal and external reporting purposes and as a benchmark for service provision.

A group of 30 Members were randomly selected for survey and given the opportunity to be interviewed by staff from the department. Members were assured of confidentiality in the survey. A total of 24 surveys (80 per cent) were completed and five Members were available for interview.

All participants in the survey were asked if they were satisfied overall with the services they received from the department. Members were unanimously highly satisfied with the department's support in helping them fulfil their parliamentary duties and complimented the professionalism and courtesy of staff. The responses to the other questions asked in the survey and during interviews are contained in the table below. The result is an overwhelming endorsement that the department is providing quality service, with a 98 per cent satisfaction rate, overall. The satisfaction rate last year was also 98 per cent.

The participants in the survey were also asked a question about their satisfaction level with the legislative drafting support they receive. Fourteen of the Members responding stated they were satisfied with the service, compared with 10 last year. The remainder stated they had not used the service.

In relation to suggestions for change, there was encouragement to continue and improve good service provision.

Table: Members' satisfaction levels with departmental services (figures in brackets are from the 2009 survey)

Service area	Extremely satisfied	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Not satisfied
Advice and services received from the Clerks at the Table in the Chamber and Main Committee	16 (7)	7 (9)	- (2)	— (—)
Advice and services received from other staff in relation to Chamber and Main Committee duties	15 (5)	7 (10)	1 (3)	— (—)
Quality and availability of procedural and statistical publications and support in obtaining such information	7(4)	13 (8)	3 (6)	— (—)
Procedural advice, research, analytical drafting and administrative support services in relation to committee enquiries and publication of the final report	11 (5)	7 (5)	3 (7)	— (—)
Rating of the House of Representatives magazine <i>About the House</i>	7 (1)	9 (9)	8 (6)	— (—)
Advice and support received in relation to overseas parliamentary delegation visits	5 (3)	3 (3)	1 (8)	— (—)
Services in relation to pay entitlements supplied by the department	6 (3)	8 (5)	7 (10)	3 (—)
Services provided by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office	12 (3)	7 (9)	2 (6)	2 (—)
Information on Members' home pages on the Parliament House internet site	7 (1)	5 (7)	11 (9)	— (—)

Note: Not every Member who completed the survey had used the full range of services.

Attachment 5 – Committees supported by the department

The Committee Office of the department supports nine general purpose standing committees, six joint standing committees, three joint statutory committees, and one joint select committee grouped into eight secretariats as follows:

Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs

Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit

Standing Committee on Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry

Joint Standing Committee on Migration

Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety

Standing Committee on Regional Australia

Standing Committee on Education and Employment

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters

Standing Committee on Economics

Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories

Joint Standing Committee on the National Broadband Network

Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and the Arts

Standing Committee on Infrastructure and Communications

Standing Committee on Health and Ageing

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Public Works

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security

Two former joint select committees (inquiring into the proposed Parliamentary Budget Office and the clean energy Bills) were also supported within this secretariat structure.

Six domestic standing committees and the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings were supported by other functional areas of the department.

Attachment 6 – Guidelines on provision of services to the Speaker

Provision of Services to Speaker of the House of Representatives

The Speaker is provided with facilities at public expense in order that parliamentary business may be conducted effectively. The use of these facilities should be in accordance with this principle. The basic rule is that official facilities should be used for official purposes. The distinction between official and personal conduct is not always clear (e.g.. in relation to the provision of hospitality/entertainment and use of car transport) but actions should be calculated to give the public value for its money and not allow any perception of misuse of the privileges which attach to the office of the Speaker.

Facilities and Services for the Speaker

The Speaker is provided with support primarily from two sources: Ministerial and Parliamentary Services within the Department of Finance and Deregulation and the Department of the House of Representatives. The division of responsibility for services is described below.

Department of Finance and Deregulation - Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Group

Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (MAPS) has responsibility for:

- payment of travelling allowance
- the provision of all travel within Australia by the Speaker, spouse or nominee and dependent children
- the cost of a private plated vehicle in the Speaker's electorate
- the cost of the Speaker's official overseas visits including personal staff and spouse (but excluding departmental staff and hospitality of a personal nature)
- electorate office accommodation, furniture, equipment, stationery and office requisites for the Speaker and electorate staff
- additional office accommodation in the capital city of the Speaker's home State or Territory and supply of standard furniture to that office
- the Speaker's information delivery service entitlement (formerly postage entitlement) as a Member
- communication entitlement as a Member (including mobile phones and residential telephone services and data line)
- computer and other training for electorate staff.

MAPS has offices in Canberra and the capital city of each State and the Northern Territory and approves requests for the services outlined above.

Department of the House of Representatives

The department is responsible for:

- payment of the Speaker's salary including the additional salary component for the office of Speaker and electorate allowance
- the provision of all travel within Australia of the Speaker's personal staff
- the costs of official cars, including any private plated vehicle in Canberra for the Speaker (NB the Speaker can nominate approved drivers by name, including spouse and staff)
- the supply of furniture, equipment (including computer equipment), stationery and office requisites for the Speaker's office in Parliament House
- the supply of equipment (including computer equipment), stationery and office requisites (and any additional furniture items) to an office in the capital city of the Speaker's home State or Territory (note that the supply of furniture etc to an office in the capital city of the Speaker's home State and Territory should avoid unreasonable duplication of facilities available within Parliament House)
- additional equipment or office requisites at the Speaker's home essential for him/her to perform duties as Speaker
- postage for use in relation to the Speaker's duties
- the costs of additional official residential telephone, data and fax services and telephone charge cards for the Speaker
- official hospitality within Australia
- mobile telephones for the Speaker and the Speaker's personal staff
- membership fees of business organisations related to the Speaker's functional responsibilities
- the provision of semi-official residential telephone, data and fax services and telephone charge cards for senior staff nominated by the Speaker
- payment of conference and training fees for the Speaker's staff, as well as any membership of airline lounges.

Approval of requests for facilities and services

Requests for the provision of facilities and services that are the responsibility of the Department of the House of Representatives should be directed to the Serjeant-at-Arms in the first instance.

Official hospitality

As noted above, the department provides official hospitality to the Speaker within Australia. Such hospitality can be provided to persons or groups with whom the Speaker needs to meet in connection with his/her official parliamentary duties. It may also be necessary for the Speaker to offer to return hospitality that has been provided to him/her by these persons or groups.

Official hospitality and representation activities are areas of higher risk in terms of perceptions of misuse and may be subject to extensive external scrutiny because they involve the use of public money. Official hospitality must be approved in advance by the Senior Adviser to the Speaker, or, for hospitality including the Senior Adviser, the Speaker.

In considering whether to approve hospitality an important consideration is whether the arrangements would survive critical public scrutiny. This requires that hospitality be at the appropriate minimum standard, expense be kept to a minimum and details such as the cost, purpose, date, venue and description of those attending be recorded: if the hospitality does not facilitate the Parliament's official business it should not be approved. The department can advise, contact the Serjeant-at-Arms.

Department of the House of Representatives
November 2011

Attachment 7 – Agreement for a Better Parliament: Parliamentary Reform (6 September 2010)

Preamble

There are 150 local MPs that have recently been elected by the communities of Australia to the House of Representatives. This document is a combined effort to increase the authority and opportunities for participation for all MPs, regardless of their political party or their status of office.

The principles behind this document are twofold; to confirm 150 local MPs (and by extension their communities) as the foundation blocks of our Australian system of democracy, and increasing the authority of the Parliament in its relationship with the Executive.

For these improvements to work, it will take a commitment by all MPs to respect the cultural change that these changes bring. While the community demands a 'feisty' and 'testing' parliamentary floor, there will be a need for recognition by all to allow more MPs to be involved in various roles and debates, to allow more community issues to be tested through private Members voting, and to allow a Speaker (in particular) to rule with a firm hand as debate tests the boundaries of the Standing Orders on the floor.

The Executive will also need to show a commitment to the cultural change that this moment brings, and will need to be more flexible, more consultative, and more engaged with all MPs if these new arrangements are to work.

This document has been produced through engagement with many people, including former Speakers and Clerks, MPs, party "elders", and members of the community. This broad engagement has been done in an endeavour to achieve improvements that are sustainable beyond the current three year-term, and improvements that work for all. All are thanked for their considered involvement.

1. Enhancing the participation of all Members in the management of the House of Representatives

An expanded Selection Committee will be established, including aligned and non-aligned Members.

The Committee will be chaired by the Speaker.

All Members will receive the same rights for the purposes of facilitating their full participation in all processes of the House. For the purposes of Standing Order 41A, Question Time and participation in all other debates, all Members interests would be guaranteed by the Selection Committee.

2. Independent Speaker

2.1 Independence

The role of the Speaker will be independent of government.

If the Speaker is drawn from a political party then the Deputy Speaker will be drawn from an alternate political party and both the Speaker and Deputy Speaker will:

- abstain from attending their respective party rooms
- when in the Chair, be paired for all divisions.

If the Speaker is non-aligned, then the same pairing arrangements will apply.

The Speaker and Deputy Speaker can participate in Private Members' Business but cannot vote.

Members of the Speakers Panel will be temporarily paired when occupying the chair during votes.

2.2 Power of the Speaker

The Speaker will rigorously enforce the Standing Orders of his or her own motion.

3. Acknowledgement of Country

At the beginning of each sitting day, prior to prayers, the Speaker will make an acknowledgement of country.

4. Question Time

4.1 Time Limits for questions and answers

Questions during Question Time be limited to forty five seconds and answers to four minutes.

It is noted that a Member may ask leave of the House for an extension of time.

4.2 Supplementary question

The Leader of the Opposition or their delegate has the option of asking one supplementary question during each Question Time.

4.3 Duration of Question Time

Question Time will conclude no later than 3.30pm, enabling 20 questions each day in the normal course of events.

4.4 Questions

The Speaker shall give due regard to Standing Order 100 dealing with the material that questions may contain but not in such a way that would inhibit the ability of the opposition to hold the government to account.

4.5 "Relevance" Standing Order

The Standing Orders be amended so that answers must be "directly relevant to the question", with the Speaker to lead on enforcement of the relevance test.

The government and opposition will support the Speaker in taking a strong stance on this issue.

4.6 Proportionate share

A proportionate share of the Questions be allocated to non-aligned Members, including the order in which those questions are asked during Question Time.

4.7 Points of Order

The Standing Orders be principally raised and enforced by the Speaker.

The point of order on relevance can only be once per question.

4.8 Notes

It is the preference in Question-Time for both questioners and Ministers to use best endeavours not to use notes. It is understood there are times when notes should be used to assist in providing the House with the best possible information in the most accurate and timely way possible. However, at all other times, the preference is no notes.

This will be reviewed at the end of the first session to see if further restrictions on use of notes in Question Time can and should be applied.

5. Matters of Public Importance

5.1 Length

The maximum length of discussion on Matters of Public Importance be extended to 1 hour and thirty minutes. That the proposer and the next speaker be allowed to speak for up to 15 minutes and that other speakers be allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes.

5.2 Greater prominence

The Matter of Public Importance debate will immediately follow Question Time.

5.3 Proportionate share

A proportionate share of Matters of Public Importance be allocated to all non-government Members.

6. Private Members Business and Private Members Bills

6.1 Voting on Private Members' Bills

The Speaker, the Leader of the House, and the Selection committee, will ensure time is allocated for votes on Private Members' Bills during Government Business time in the Main Chamber.

6.2 Priority given for Private Members Business on Mondays

The Standing Orders will be amended to provide for:

- a period of committee and delegation business and private Members' business to be given priority in the Chamber on Mondays from 12 noon – 1.45pm, beginning with Petitions Committee report and statement(s) for 10 minutes
- quorums and divisions called during the period of committee and delegation business and private Members' business being deferred until 5pm on Monday
- the Main Committee to regularly meet on Mondays from 10.30 am to 1.30 pm, commencing with a 30 minute period of three minute constituency statements as provided by standing order 193, followed by committee and delegation reports and private Members' business being given priority
- 90 second statements to take place from 1.45 pm each day, prior to Question Time, in the Main Chamber
- a period of committee and delegation business and private Members' business to be given priority in the Chamber from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm
- the adjournment to be proposed at 9.30 pm on Mondays, and the House adjourning at 10 pm.

7. Adjournment

The Adjournment Debate shall be one hour on Monday and Tuesdays, and 30 minutes on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

8. 90-Second Statements

15 minutes will be allocated prior to Question Time for Members to make 90 Second Statements on constituency issues.

9. Ministerial statements

9.1 Time limits

Ministerial statements and response be limited to 10 minutes, except in circumstances agreed to by the Speaker or for Prime Ministerial statements.

9.2 Proportionate opportunities to respond to ministerial statements

The Speaker will ensure that opportunities to respond are provided to non-government Members.

10. The committee system

10.1 Numbers of committees

The number of general purpose standing committees be reduced to nine, comprising standing committees on:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

- Economics
- Education and Employment
- Climate Change, Environment and the Arts
- Health and Ageing
- Infrastructure and communications
- Social Policy and Legal Affairs
- Agriculture, Resources, Fisheries and Forestry
- Regional Australia.

10.2 Committee membership

Membership of committees will ideally be seven. Committee membership will fully reflect membership of the House, including the crossbench.

The maximum number of supplementary members for each general purpose standing committee inquiry be increased to four; with supplementary members having full participatory rights, other than voting rights.

10.3 Powers of committees

The powers of Committees be referred immediately to the Committee of Chairs as soon as established to ensure the most authority possible for Committees within allocated resources.

10.4 Chair of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts and Audit

The Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts and Audit be drawn from a member of a non-government party or a non-aligned Member.

10.5 Pre-legislative scrutiny of Bills

All Bills to be introduced into the House be referred immediately to the Selection Committee.

All Bills regarded as controversial or requiring further consultation or debate be immediately referred to the relevant Standing or Joint Committee to allow a period of discussion and public consultation on introduction. One member objecting in the Selection Committee will be sufficient to declare a Bill controversial.

Non-controversial Bills will be authorised for immediate introduction into the House.

This mechanism will be reviewed to ensure it does not cause unnecessary delays to the House legislative processes, and is indeed a mechanism to speed up the legislative agenda.

10.6 Responses to committee reports

Within six months of a House or Joint committee report being presented in the House, a government response will be tabled in the House. If no such response has been received within six months of such a report being presented in the House, a statement signed by the

relevant Minister (or Minister representing the Minister) must be tabled stating the reasons why the response could not be prepared in time.

The Minister (or Minister representing the Minister) must also make themselves available to appear before the relevant Committee at the next reasonably available opportunity to answer questions on that statement.

Following this, issues of dispute between a Parliamentary Committee and an Executive will be referred to the Auditor-General for further follow-up, clarification, and attempted resolution.

A timely response to Committee Reports will be included as a Key Performance Indicator in the employment arrangements of Agency Heads.

The Clerks will ensure a report on the status of responses to Committee Reports is included in the Notice Paper on a monthly basis online.

10.7 Statements during Private Members Business by committee chairs

Standing orders will be amended to provide for committee Chairs to make short statements during private Members' business time, informing the House of new inquiries being undertaken by the committee.

11. Consideration of Bills

11.1 Speaking times

The time limit allocated for all Members speaking on Bills will be reduced from 20 to 15 minutes.

The Selection Committee is able to determine, where a Bill is not controversial, that time limits for speaking on that Bill be reduced to 5 or 10 minutes.

Where a large number of Members wish to speak on a particular Bill, the Selection Committee can, by agreement, place limits on speaking times to facilitate as many Members as possible speaking on the Bill.

The Speaker, with the Selection Committee, is to consider and potentially trial 5 minutes of questions (30 second question with two minute answers) at the end of all MP's speeches, so as to encourage "smarter debate".

11.2 Consideration in detail

The Leader of the House in consultation with the Selection Committee will ensure that;

- during Government Business time in the Main Chamber additional time will be allocated for the summing up of Appropriations and related Budget Bills by the Minister for Finance

- additional time is allocated for the Consideration in Detail process in the Main Committee.

12. Recommittal of votes

The Standing Orders be amended so that there may be a recommittal of a vote on the same sitting day when a Member is inadvertently absent following a successful suspension of standing orders after debate.

13. Appropriation Bills

The Senate resolution on appropriation bills which contain matters which should have been the subject of separate legislation is noted. To prevent this occurring, the parties and non-aligned Members agree to developing a mechanism to resolve this issue prior to the next appropriation bills being introduced.

14. Assent to legislation

A mechanism be established to ensure a commencement date be included in all legislation.

15. Sitting days

That more sitting weeks each year be considered depending on Government and Private Members Business.

16. Resources of the Parliament

16.1 Parliamentary Budget Office

A Parliamentary Budget Office be established, based in the Parliamentary Library, to provide independent costings, fiscal analysis and research to all Members of Parliament, especially non-government Members.

The structure, resourcing and protocols for such an Office be the subject of a decision by a special committee of the Parliament which is truly representative of the Parliament.

16.2 External review of staffing levels within the Department of the House of Representatives Committee Office

The Speaker will arrange for an external review of staffing levels within the Department of the House of Representatives Committee Office and the Parliamentary Library.

This will incorporate a work analysis to determine the nature and level of secretariat support necessary for the ongoing inquiry work of committees, to ensure that the House committee system is supported by an adequate number of appropriately qualified staff.

16.3 Establishment of a representative House Committee on Appropriations and Staffing

A House Committee on Appropriations and Staffing be established, chaired by the Speaker, to make recommendations to the House on:

- estimates of the funding required for the operation of the Department of the House of Representatives; such estimates, once agreed by the House, are to be conveyed by the Speaker to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation for consideration and approval
- proposals for changes to the administrative structure of, or service provision by, the Department of the House of Representatives
- administration and funding of security measures affecting the House
- any other matters of finance or services referred to it by the Speaker or the House
- the Liaison Committee of Chairs and Deputy Chairs have a more active role in monitoring the resources available to committees, with the Chair to report to the House Committee on Appropriations and Staffing on committee activities and resource levels.

16.4 Allocation of teleconferencing and videoconferencing facilities

The Leader of the House, with the Speaker will investigate the adequacy of teleconferencing and videoconferencing facilities available to committees; and consideration of any upgrades or additional facilities required to meet current and anticipated future demand from committees.

17. Pairing votes

17.1 Pairing arrangements for all Members

Additional mechanisms will be considered that responsibly deal with essential absences by Members from the House, including 'pairs'.

The government and opposition will guarantee a 'pair' to non-aligned Members providing there are reasonable grounds.

These arrangements may be similar to those that currently occur between the Whips in the Senate.

18. Parliamentary Integrity Commissioner

This commissioner would be supervised by the privileges committee from both House and Senate to provide advice, administration and reporting on parliamentary entitlements, investigate and make recommendations to the Privileges Committees on individual investigations, provide advice to parliamentarians on ethical issues and uphold the Parliamentary Code of Conduct and control and maintain the government's lobbyists register.

19. Establish a formal Code of Conduct for Members and Senators

A cross-party working group and inquiry process will be established to draft a code of conduct for members of the House and the Senate. Once established, this code will be overseen by the Privileges committee.

20. Register of lobbyists

Further enhancements to the Register of Lobbyists be examined, including to the online publication of the Register and to place the register under the supervision of the Parliamentary Integrity Commissioner.

21. Review mechanism

A mechanism will be established to review all standing order and other procedural changes in this agreement and will report following the first session of this Parliament.

22. Other "better government" improvements

It is expected, through the life of this Parliament, and with Private Members Bills now having the ability to be voted on, that there will be further steps taken to improve government in the following way;

- open and accountable government improvements
- further steps on improving democratic operation of the Parliament
- electoral funding improvements
- truth in political advertising improvements.

