



DEPARTMENT OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

# Annual Report

2020–21

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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### **Acknowledgment**

The Department of the House of Representatives acknowledges the Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continued connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to their Cultures, Country and Elders past, present and emerging.

### **Disclaimer**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication may contain names and images of deceased persons.

### **Use of the Coat of Arms**

The terms under which the Coat of Arms can be used are detailed on the website of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet at [www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/government/commonwealth-coat-arms-information-and-guidelines](http://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/government/commonwealth-coat-arms-information-and-guidelines).

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Front cover: Autumn leaves in the courtyard of Parliament House. Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.

Back cover: View of the front of Parliament House at sunrise. Image: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.

The department welcomes your comments on this report. To make a comment, or to request more information, please contact:

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15 October 2021

The Hon. Tony Smith MP  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Speaker

Pursuant to section 65 of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* and section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, I have pleasure in submitting to you, for presentation to the House, the annual report of the Department of the House of Representatives for the year ended 30 June 2021.

As required by section 10 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014, I certify that:

- the department has prepared fraud risk assessments and fraud control plans
- the department has in place appropriate mechanisms for fraud prevention, detection, investigation, recording and reporting mechanisms that meet the department's specific needs
- all reasonable measures have been taken to deal appropriately with fraud relating to the department.

Yours sincerely

Claessa Surtees  
Clerk of the House

# About this report

The Department of the House of Representatives supports the House of Representatives, and the wider parliament, in the role of a representative and legislative body.

This annual report details our activities during the 2020–21 financial year.

## Overviews

The overviews section includes a review by the Clerk of the House of Representatives, who is the department's chief executive and accountable authority. The departmental overview describes the department's purpose, role and functions, organisational structure, and outcome and program structure.

## Performance

The performance section includes the annual performance statement, which assesses the department's performance against measures and targets set out in its corporate plan. This section also includes a summary of financial performance, including the entity resource statement, and reports on the main activities supported during the year for each program area.

## Management and accountability

The management and accountability section describes the department's approach to corporate governance, details of external scrutiny of the department's operations, the management of its people and assets, its obligations under various laws, and the management of financial resources.

## Financial statements

The financial statements section includes an independent auditor's report, a statement by the Clerk and Chief Finance Officer, and financial statements showing how the department spent the money allocated to it by the parliament.

## Appendixes

The appendixes give detailed information about the department's work in supporting the House, the parliament, committees and visitors. The appendixes also include a contact directory, and a list of mandatory requirements for annual reports and where each component can be found throughout this report.

## Abbreviations and acronyms, and index

Finally, to aid in navigating and interpreting the report, there is a list of abbreviations and acronyms, and an index.

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# Our department – a snapshot

## Our staff



## Our community

 **10,728**  
YouTube subscribers

 **2,326**  
Newsletter subscribers

 **8,682**  
Facebook followers

 **48,958**  
Twitter followers

## The House – we supported

 **597 hours**  
of the House sitting over  
**67 sitting days**

 **232 hours**  
of meetings held in the  
**Federation Chamber**

 **360 divisions**  
conducted in the House

 **184 bills introduced**  
and  
**153 bills assented to**

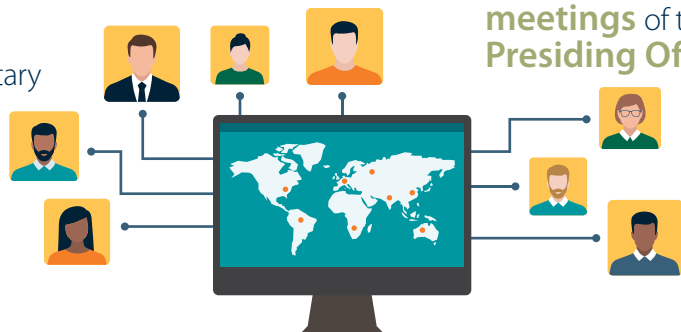
 **27 members**  
participating by  
**video link**  
a total of  
**204 times**

 **701 meetings**  
of  
**30 committees**  
which presented  
**98 reports**

 **628 petitions**  
presented with  
**1,218,579**  
signatories

## International engagement – we supported

**16 virtual**  
inter-parliamentary  
events with  
**Australian  
Parliament  
delegations**



**29 virtual**  
meetings of the  
Presiding Officers







# Part 1

## Overviews

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# Clerk's review

## Overview

The year has been dominated by sustained disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I wrote last year that the department needed to be prepared for the possibility of new events and that we might need to act in ways that had not been anticipated. As the pandemic evolved this year, the department rose to meet many challenges.

At times, the ever-changing COVID-19 situation placed a significant workload on staff of the department. Our staff worked admirably this year during periods of significant change and uncertainty, and I am confident the House of Representatives was well supported by the department in discharging its legislative and representative functions.

The pandemic influenced the operations of the House. The sitting fortnight scheduled to commence on 4 August did not go ahead, and throughout the year, many parliamentarians were at times unable to attend sittings for reasons related to the pandemic. The response to these impacts was procedural and technological innovation, developed and expertly facilitated by our staff and parliamentary service colleagues.

From 24 August, members (and senators) were able to contribute to certain Chamber proceedings remotely, by official video link, following agreement to adopt new parliamentary rules and procedures. From 9 November, the opportunity to participate by video link in certain Federation Chamber proceedings was also made available to members.

The health and safety of departmental staff and members was a major focus during the year. Measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission were put in place and constantly reviewed, with departmental officers consulting with senior health officials to ensure the measures reflected the latest advice. Special measures based on this advice were implemented in the chambers and committee rooms. Masks were part of the dress code for our staff working in the chambers and committee rooms for much of the year.

Our responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and other work health and safety matters were reviewed by Comcare this year. I am pleased to note that in relation to our actions to ensure the safety of staff during the pandemic, Comcare found we met all compliance requirements and demonstrated a positive commitment to the management of COVID-19 risks in the workplace.

## Parliament's work continued

Special seating arrangements were put in place in the chambers for members and there was a heavy reliance at times on informal pairing arrangements for divisions. The number of support staff present in the chambers was reduced, and there were additional cleaning and hygiene protocols. The Presiding Officers strongly recommended that masks be worn in the circulation areas of Parliament House and where physical distancing may be difficult or not possible.

The success of the parliament's response to the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen in the level of activity sustained throughout the year. The House sat for 31 days in the second half of 2020, and a further 36 days in the first half of 2021. Despite the cancellation of the first sitting fortnight in August 2020, there were more sitting days than at any time since the 2014–15 reporting period. The Federation Chamber met 63 times and for 232 hours this year, a similarly impressive result. After many committee inquiries were paused in the last reporting period, inquiry activity recommenced at levels typical for this stage of the parliamentary cycle.

Two new members were sworn in during the year, following by-elections for the electorates of Eden-Monaro and Groom. In both cases, the newly elected member was from the same political party as the former member and the composition of the House remained unchanged.

However, the composition of the House did change from 23 February, when the member for Hughes resigned from the Liberal Party, stating his intention to sit as an independent member for the remainder of the parliament. Following this change, the House comprised seven independent and minor party members on the crossbench, 76 government members and 68 opposition members.

The year was also notable for the presentation of two federal budgets. The government's 2020–21 Budget was postponed from May to October 2020 due to pandemic uncertainties, and the 2021–22 Budget was introduced, as usual, on the second Tuesday in May 2021.

While usual in terms of timing, Budget day 2021 was a rare occasion during the year when, for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, all 151 members could be accommodated together in the Chamber at one time. It was a rare day also because the Prime Minister introduced an address to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, in relation to the death of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

## Our staff and the parliamentary service

Our staff are central to the department's success, and their health and wellbeing is our highest priority. During the year, much of our internal conversations and training were focused on mental health awareness and building resilience. This year once more has emphasised the need for the department to be adaptable, and the resilience of our staff has been demonstrated every day.

The year also saw stronger risk management and significant progress in succession planning for critical roles, important initiatives brought into sharper relief by the pandemic.

In collaboration with the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), this year we provided laptops to all staff. This change greatly facilitated remote working, with significant improvements for virtual meetings. Our staff have embraced the greater flexibility offered by Office 365 and Microsoft Teams, and we have transitioned more of our ICT systems to the cloud environment.

At the outset of the pandemic last year, the department quickly learnt to work differently, and this positive attitude to change continued throughout this year. We utilised a variety of teleconferencing and videoconferencing solutions so that our staff could come together

– as individual teams, as program areas or as the entire department. We also rapidly developed the capability to deliver seminars and internal training online. This enabled us to continue to hold information sessions for members, educational seminars for interested parties, and our own highly regarded in-house procedural training.

There was significant change in Executive personnel this year, with the retirement of Catherine Cornish, Deputy Clerk, after many years of commendable service to the parliament. Her contributions in parliamentary knowledge-sharing and capacity-building supported staff and members alike, in this parliament, in the Pacific and around the globe.

Peter Banson was appointed Deputy Clerk, having recently undertaken the role of Clerk Assistant (Table) and, prior to that, senior roles in the Speaker's, Serjeant-at-Arms' and Committee offices. Other changes to the Executive saw the appointments of several experienced senior staff – Russell Chafer as Clerk Assistant (Committees), Peggy Danaee as Clerk Assistant (Procedure) and Glenn Worthington as Clerk Assistant (Table).

I thank the leaders of the other three parliamentary departments for their collegiality and goodwill in our shared mission to provide expert support to the parliament: Richard Pye, Clerk of the Senate, Rob Stefanic, Secretary of DPS and Stein Helgeby, Parliamentary Budget Officer.



*Clerk of the House, Ms Claressa Surtees, and Deputy Clerk, Mr Peter Banson. Image: Tracey Nearmy, Auspic/DPS.*

## Looking ahead

The COVID-19 pandemic, with its attendant uncertainties and the potential for swirling and rapid spread throughout the community, will remain a dominant influence for the future. Despite the promise of a safer outlook due to increasing vaccinations across Australia and the world, the challenge for the department remains the need to be fully operational while providing a safe working environment within a pandemic overlay. By its very nature, parliament is the central forum for debate and decisions on national issues. As a workplace parliament is unique, with people travelling from across the country to engage in these debates and make decisions. We recognise that the operations of parliament are therefore particularly vulnerable to the consequences of COVID-19, and our department's response remains critical to the parliament's continued and safe operation. Our achievements in providing safe support during the reporting period provide confidence that the department can continue its success and meet new challenges.

External reviews into the working environment at Parliament House brought our health and wellbeing further into focus this year. The outcomes of the report of the Review of the Parliamentary Workplace: Responding to Serious Incidents (the Foster review) and the anticipated report of the Australian Human Rights Commission on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces are expected to become operative next year. While several aspects of the reviews are more concerned with parliamentarians and their staff, the department fully engaged with these reviews, and we will use any findings to further strengthen our safe and respectful workplace culture.

The department's priority continues to be supporting the work of the House for the remainder of the 46th Parliament, and the year ahead will include an element of planning around the election anticipated before the House is due to expire on 1 July 2022. While the House is dissolved, our priorities will shift to managing a range of processes associated with the departure of retiring and non-retained members, the arrival of returning and new members, and planning for the opening and resumption of a new parliament.

The first item of business for every parliament is the election of a new Speaker. The current Speaker, the Hon Tony Smith MP, has announced that he will not be seeking re-election, bringing to an end 20 years of parliamentary service, with over six years as Speaker. I thank him for his leadership and support of me and the department in his time as Speaker. A change in the speakership is an event of particular significance for the department, and preparations to support the new Speaker and familiarise them with their role and functions will be an important priority in the year ahead.

I look forward to continuing to work in collaboration with all parliamentary colleagues to build on the strengths of the department and ensure it continues to thrive, support the House and parliament, and meet challenges of the future.

Claressa Surtees

Clerk of the House

# Departmental overview

The department's purpose as set out in its *Corporate Plan 2020–21* is:

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

## Role and functions

The *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* provides for a non-partisan parliamentary service to serve the Australian Parliament. The Department of the House of Representatives is established by and operates under the Act, together with three other parliamentary departments: the Department of the Senate, the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) and the Parliamentary Budget Office.

During 2020–21 the department met the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and provided the highest standard of support for the work of the House of Representatives, its members and committees, and some joint committees (comprising members of the House and the Senate).

The department strengthened its services to increase public knowledge and awareness of the work of the House and the Australian Parliament, and to encourage interaction. Despite restrictions to interstate and international travel throughout much of the year, the department continued to assist the House and the parliament in maintaining institutional relationships with state, territory and international counterparts.

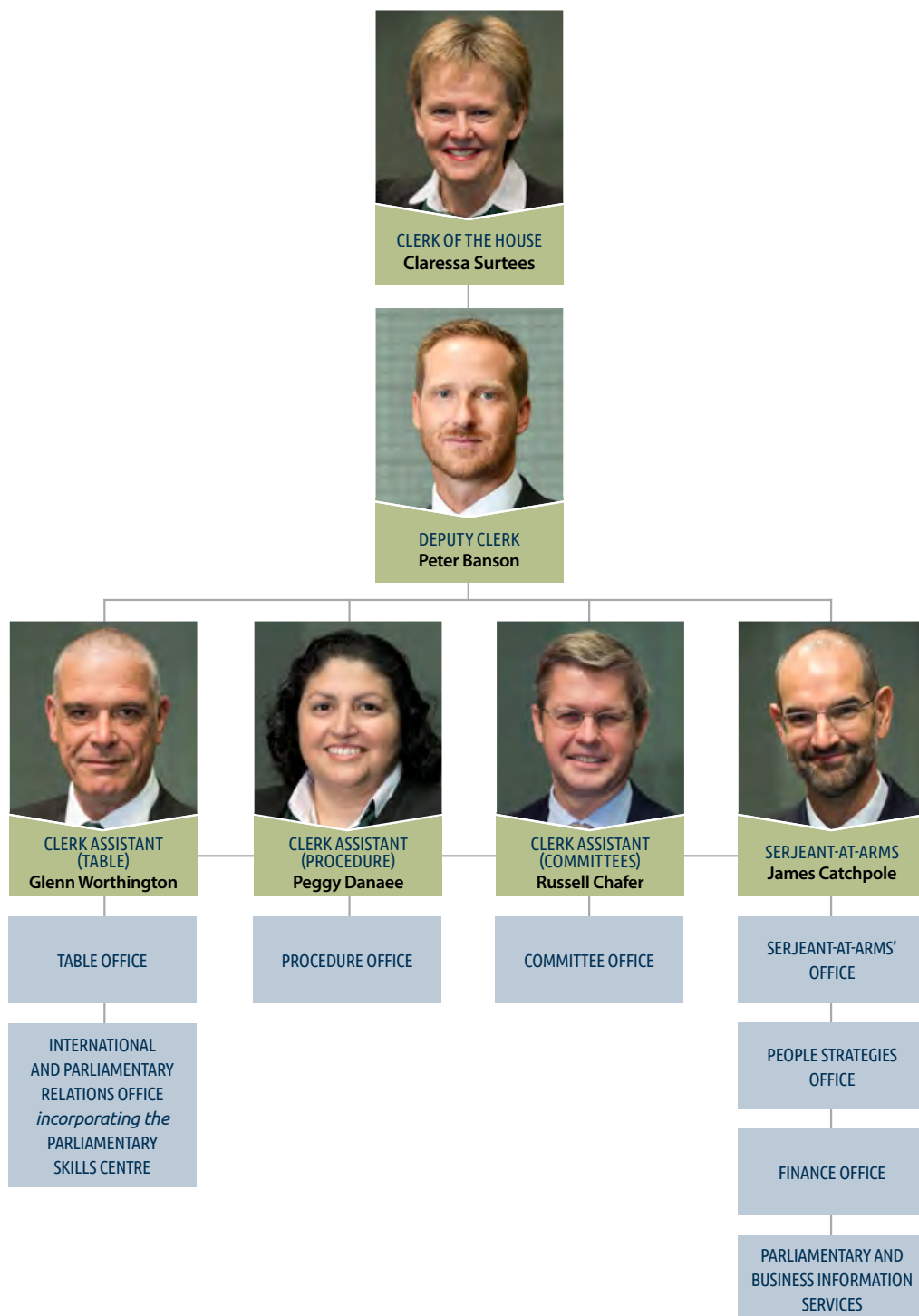
## Departmental structure

The department is managed by its Executive: the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Clerk Assistant (Table), Clerk Assistant (Procedure), Clerk Assistant (Committees) and Serjeant-at-Arms.

There were no changes to the department's structure during the year; however, new appointments were made to the positions of Deputy Clerk, Clerk Assistant (Table), Clerk Assistant (Procedure) and Clerk Assistant (Committees).

Figure 1 shows the departmental structure as at 30 June 2021.

Figure 1: Departmental structure as at 30 June 2021





## Roles and responsibilities of the Executive

### **Clerk**

The Clerk is the most senior official of the department. She is the principal adviser to the Speaker of the House and its members, and a steward of the parliamentary institutions. The Clerk is responsible for leading some 180 departmental staff members, who provide administrative and procedural advice and secretariat and other services to the House and parliamentary committees and support the parliament's international and domestic engagement. With the heads of the other three parliamentary departments, the Clerk provides leadership of the parliamentary service.

### **Deputy Clerk**

The Deputy Clerk is the second most senior official of the department. The Deputy Clerk is responsible for advising and assisting members, their staff and departmental staff on matters of parliamentary practice and law, and for overseeing the drafting of private members' bills and amendments. The Deputy Clerk assists the Clerk in managing the department, and performs the duties of Clerk during the Clerk's absence.

### **Clerk Assistant (Table)**

The Clerk Assistant (Table) is responsible for the Table Office, which provides programming, procedural and legislative support to the Chamber and Federation Chamber of the House. The Clerk Assistant (Table) is also responsible for the areas of the department that support the parliament's program of international delegations and parliamentary strengthening.

### **Clerk Assistant (Procedure)**

The Clerk Assistant (Procedure) is responsible for the Procedure Office, which provides procedural research, publications and services that explain the work of the House and its institutional role. The Clerk Assistant (Procedure) also contributes to the House's parliamentary strengthening activities related to parliamentary procedure.

### **Clerk Assistant (Committees)**

The Clerk Assistant (Committees) is responsible for the Committee Office, which provides support services to House committees and to some joint committees. Services include procedural, research, analytical, drafting and administrative support.

### **Serjeant-at-Arms**

The Serjeant-at-Arms is responsible for the corporate areas of the department, which provide support and services to members and departmental staff. The Serjeant-at-Arms has a key role in managing ceremonial, access and security matters relating to the House.

## Outcome and program structure

The department's outcome and program structure for the year is set out in the *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*.

The department has one outcome:

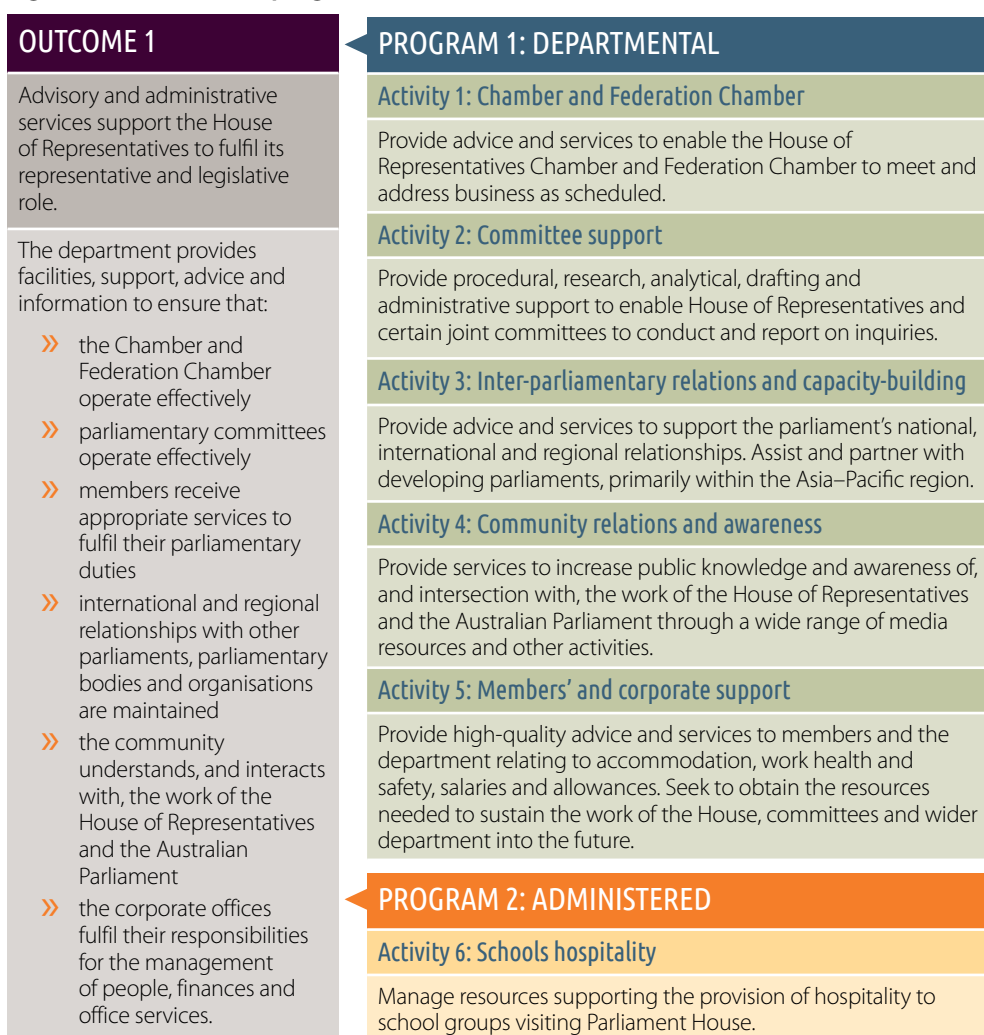
Advisory and administrative services support the House of Representatives to fulfil its representative and legislative role.

The department has two programs:

- » Program 1: Departmental – supports five activities
- » Program 2: Administered – supports one activity.

Figure 2 shows the department's outcome and program structure, and the activities under each program.

**Figure 2: Outcome and program structure, 2020–21**







# Part 2

## Performance

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# Annual performance statement

## Introductory statement

I, as the accountable authority of the Department of the House of Representatives, present the department's 2020–21 annual performance statement, as required under section 39(1) (a) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). In my opinion, this annual performance statement accurately reflects the performance of the department and complies with section 39(2) of the PGPA Act.

**Claressa Surtees, Clerk of the House**

## Purpose

The department's purpose, as set out in its *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, is:

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

## Data sources

The results and analysis presented in this annual performance statement are based on data from several sources. These include an annual survey of members of the House of Representatives, interviews with a cohort of members, analytics relating to departmental social media and publications, evaluations from external stakeholders, and internal records and reporting.

### **Members' survey**

In May 2021 all members were invited to complete a questionnaire, intended to gauge their views on, and satisfaction with, the services provided by the department. Members were advised that their responses could be anonymous, and would be de-identified before publication. The survey was available online and in hard copy, and closed on 30 June 2021.

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

- » the quality and timeliness of chamber procedural support and advisory services
- » the quality and timeliness of advice, and the standard of report drafting for parliamentary committees
- » support for their House of Representatives office accommodation
- » support for their salary payments
- » support for transport coordination in Canberra during sitting weeks.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were no international delegations during the reporting period. Members who were interviewed were instead asked for their feedback on any international parliamentary engagement activities they had participated in during the year.

Members were able to provide comments in response to each question. At the end of the survey, members were invited to comment on the effect of COVID-19 on services, and on any aspect of the services provided by the department.

Forty-two members completed the survey. This represents a response rate of 28% of the 151 members.

### ***Members' interviews***

To complement the members' survey, the Clerk wrote to two groups of members inviting them to participate in an in-depth face-to-face or telephone interview with a senior clerk of the department. The members invited were those who had announced they would not be seeking re-election, and those for whom the 46th Parliament is their first term. The members were advised that the department was conducting the interviews to receive feedback on the level and quality of its advice, information and support, and to gain insight into service provision.

Aside from general reflections on their time as parliamentarians and suggestions for possible areas of parliamentary reform, matters covered in the interviews were:

- » the quality of the advice and support provided for their work in the Chamber and Federation Chamber
- » the quality, availability and usefulness of procedural publications and resources
- » the quality and usefulness of advice and support received in relation to work on parliamentary committees, including the quality of report drafting
- » support received from the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office in relation to office accommodation in Parliament House, and services such as transport, stationery, salaries and allowances
- » impressions of the parliament's interactions with other national parliaments or parliamentary bodies, and satisfaction with opportunities and support for any virtual parliamentary engagement activities, where relevant
- » community perceptions of the parliament and parliamentarians
- » hospitality provided to visiting school groups
- » any other support or services that would assist members in their parliamentary work.

The members were advised that their responses would be compiled into a summary report on satisfaction levels and areas for improvement or new initiatives, and that individual responses would remain confidential. Interviews with 10 members were conducted between May and July 2021.

### Other data sources

In addition to the members' survey and interviews, feedback on the services provided by the department is sought from the Presiding Officers through interviews with their chiefs of staff and advisers. Formal feedback is also received from participants in the department's seminar programs. A further data source is analytics relating to contact with the department's social media and publications. Internal chamber support service standards, internal records and exception reporting are also drawn on for reporting on the department's performance.

### Activity information

The department monitors its work output by collecting information on specific activities throughout the year. No targets are set for outputs, as most are dependent on factors outside the direct control of the department, particularly the parliamentary cycle.

Comparisons with data from previous years provide a longitudinal perspective and an indication of the extent to which various outputs are affected by the parliamentary cycle.

This year saw a rise in activity to more regular levels following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. Sittings of the House, meetings of the Federation Chamber, and legislative and committee activity all increased, at times supported by videoconferencing and teleconferencing solutions. Not all of the activity information is entirely typical of the midpoint of the parliamentary cycle, but it demonstrates that the parliament and the department continued to function effectively throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Commentary

The department's performance framework continues to mature. The department's purpose statement and performance measures are presented in summary in the department's *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, and in more detail in the department's *Corporate Plan 2020–21*.

The department is committed to considering its performance from the perspective of its key client groups. The department's purpose statement indicates that the department's support for the House of Representatives as a representative and legislative body is primarily delivered through the provision of advice and services. As recipients of the advice and services, members are the department's principal clients. Quantitative and qualitative data, gathered from members via the members' survey and via interviews with the selected cohort of members, provides crucial performance information. This data is supplemented by information gathered through feedback provided by the Speaker's Office and President's Office.

## Results and analysis

### Activity 1: Chamber and Federation Chamber

#### Performance measures and targets

##### Criterion 1

Level of satisfaction among surveyed members with the quality and timeliness of chamber support, procedural and statistical publications, analysis and advisory services.

**Target:** 90% satisfied.

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 14; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target met.

All but one respondent to the survey (98% of responses) indicated satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of chamber procedural support and advisory services, and all respondents indicated satisfaction with the quality and availability of procedural and statistical publications, and the support available to obtain these. Comments made about procedural support included, 'excellent, helpful, polite, professional', 'the standard of procedural support from all offices is very high' and 'support arrangements in the Chamber are always very good'.

Feedback received during interviews with members was consistent with the survey results. The responsiveness of departmental staff was noted by several members, and others expressed appreciation for the timeliness and professionalism of procedural advice and support provided by Clerks-at-the-Table. The timeliness and quality of drafting support for bills, amendments and motions were also commended. Members also commented positively in relation to chamber arrangements during COVID-19, including the timely and effective establishment of video link facilities in the Chamber and Federation Chamber.

One member suggested an online learning module on parliamentary practice and procedure would be helpful. They noted that when members are newly elected they are busy building their profiles in the community and do not have the time or focus to absorb the important aspects of parliamentary procedure for their work in the Chamber and Federation Chamber.

The quality of procedural publications and resources, including the Standing Orders and *House of Representatives Practice*, was described by various members as 'very good' and 'useful', even if only used when members had a particular question. The availability of procedural publications both digitally and in hard copy continue to be important. These resources were seen to be particularly useful to members earlier in their parliamentary careers, and some members noted the importance of continued access to verbal advice from clerks. Procedural resources for members of the Speaker's panel were also valued and relied on.

Some members also offered suggestions for new procedural publications and initiatives, including training provided to members at various times during their parliamentary careers.



## Criterion 2

Chamber support service standards met for sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber and processing of bills, votes, messages and other chamber documents with a high degree of accuracy and within timeframes.

**Target:** 100%.

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 14; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target met.

Chamber support service standards were met. Processing of proposed legislation and other business was completed within agreed timeframes and no significant errors were identified.

## Activity information

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 14; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
Number of sittings of the House	60	42	62	67
Number of meetings of the Federation Chamber	59	41	54	63
Number of bills introduced	222	155	248	184

a. Election year.

## Analysis

In 2020–21 the department continued to provide a high standard of support to the Chamber and Federation Chamber. The activity information set out in the table above indicates activity levels consistent with the midpoint of the parliamentary cycle. The additional precautions to manage risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic ensured that the Chamber and Federation Chamber were able to operate safely. The House sat for five days more than in 2019–20 and seven days more than in 2017–18, which was the midpoint of the 45th Parliament. The Federation Chamber met on nine more days and for 25% more hours than last year, continuing the recent trend of a relatively high number of Federation Chamber meetings as a proportion of the number of House sittings.

All targets set against the performance measures for the House of Representatives Chamber and Federation Chamber support, as set out in the *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, were met. The uncertainty imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout the year. Physical distancing requirements and restricted travel presented logistical and procedural challenges for the House of Representatives, members and parliamentary staff. Agreements for certain sitting periods enabled those members who could not attend parliament due to travel restrictions the opportunity to contribute remotely to debate. Revised seating arrangements and certain hygiene measures were also introduced.

Certain restrictions were lifted in March 2021, and the department will continue to adapt to the changing COVID-19 circumstances and provide high-quality services and advice to ensure the continued, safe operation of the House of Representatives Chamber and Federation Chamber.

## Activity 2: Committee support

### Performance measures and targets

#### Criterion 1

Level of satisfaction among surveyed committee members with the standard of administrative and procedural support provided.

**Target:** 90% satisfied.

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 15; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target met.

All but one respondent to this question in the members' survey (97% of respondents) indicated satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of advice and services to their committees. Comments made by members in the survey reinforced their satisfaction with the quality of administrative and procedural support provided to committees. Members who were interviewed similarly expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the support provided to parliamentary committees.

The challenges posed by COVID-19 to the operations of committees were also referred to by several members. Members suggested that some systems, such as audio-visual and videoconferencing facilities in committee rooms, need to be upgraded to fully support committee activities. Others endorsed the move to virtual meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic, and suggested that committees should continue to meet virtually after the pandemic subsides.

#### Criterion 2

Level of satisfaction among surveyed committee members with the standard of research and drafting support provided.

**Target:** 90% satisfied.

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 15; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target met.

Again, all but one respondent (97% of responses to this question) indicated satisfaction with the standard of research and drafting support provided to committees. Members referred positively to the professionalism of committee secretariat staff.

During interviews, members similarly commented on the high standard of briefing papers and report drafting.

## Activity information

Source: *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 15.

	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
Number of committee meetings <sup>b</sup>	693	511	571	620
Hours of meetings <sup>b,c</sup>	1,285	988	790	1,177
Number of committee reports <sup>b</sup>	73	85	55	61

a. Election year.

b. Excludes internal committees.

c. To the nearest hour.

## Analysis

The department quickly transitioned to remote working arrangements from March 2020; however, the support provided to parliamentary committees continued to be challenged by the changing landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic. While videoconferencing and teleconferencing solutions were used with success, travel restrictions and limits on the size of gatherings reduced the ability of committees to undertake their scheduled program of work.

Despite these challenges, there were 49 more committee meetings supported than last year (109 more than in 2018–19). While the number of committee reports presented is fewer than would be expected at this stage in the parliamentary cycle, this can be attributed to inquiries that were suspended or delayed in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. These inquiries were added to the usual number of new inquiries adopted in 2020–21, resulting in a busy program for all committees and a high workload for departmental staff.

Feedback gathered through the members' survey indicates that members continue to be highly satisfied with committee support services, including advice and report drafting, despite the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. All but one member (97% of respondents to this question) indicated satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of advice and services to committees, and with the standard of research and drafting.

The department continues to provide training and development opportunities to committee support staff, which will help to ensure that parliamentary committees continue to be well served by secretariats staffed by the department. Enhancements to the information systems supporting the core work of parliamentary committees is also a priority for the year ahead.

## Activity 3: Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building

### Performance measures and targets

#### Criteria 1 and 2

Level of satisfaction of Presiding Officers and delegates with arrangements for official incoming delegations.

Level of satisfaction of Presiding Officers and delegates with arrangements for outgoing delegations.

**Target:** 90% satisfied.

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 16; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target met.

While the COVID-19 pandemic halted official incoming and outgoing delegations, positive feedback was received from the Presiding Officers and their staff on the department's support for inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building activities during the year.

Interviews with the Speaker's Office indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the support provided in this area. It was reported that all international activities and engagements were very well organised, and all requests made by the Speaker or his office were met.

Comments also indicated very good support was provided to the Speaker for his role as President of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, as well as for other international videoconferences and teleconferences.

Comments from the President's Office indicated the President is very satisfied with the support provided for inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building. It was noted that although there had been no delegations during the year, the management of correspondence and various virtual meetings had been excellent. Departmental officers are regarded as being very helpful across all the necessary aspects of the parliament's international engagement.

Feedback was not sought from delegates given that no official incoming or outgoing delegations took place during the reporting period.

### Criterion 3

Level of satisfaction among participants with capacity-building activities.

**Target:** 90% satisfied.

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 16; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target met.

Satisfaction levels for capacity-building activities supported by the Parliamentary Skills Centre have previously been measured through an online survey of participants. Due to COVID-19, no capacity-building programs were conducted at Parliament House during the year, and formal feedback is not available.

Parliamentary staff supported two virtual capacity-building projects sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme, for the Vanuatu Parliament in December 2020 and Tongan Parliament in April 2021. The Parliamentary Skills Centre also facilitated a broad range of information-sharing requests and provision of equipment through the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships program.

Interviews with the Presiding Officers indicate they are satisfied with the support provided for capacity-building activities.

## Activity information

Source: *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 16.

	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
Number of delegations managed	59	56	32	Program suspended
Number and nature of parliamentary capacity-building activities	24	28	14	24
» Occasions equipment supplied to Pacific parliaments	3	4	1	6
» Staff attachments and study visits	12	20	10	2 (virtual)
» Conferences, seminars and workshops	9	4	3	–
» Information-sharing requests facilitated				16
Number of virtual engagement activities				98
» Virtual meetings involving one or both Presiding Officers				29
» Virtual inter-parliamentary events/forums with Australian Parliament delegations				16
» Virtual events and webinars offered to parliamentarians				53

a. Election year.

## Analysis

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant effect on the inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building work of the parliament. All delegation travel ceased in March 2020 and remained suspended for the reporting period, and many capacity-building activities were either postponed or cancelled.

In response to this, the department shifted to providing opportunities for members to engage virtually with their international counterparts. Almost 100 virtual engagement activities were supported, including 29 virtual meetings involving the Speaker or President, reflecting the continued importance of Presiding Officer led diplomacy to the parliament's international program. Feedback from the offices of the Speaker and President indicate a high level of satisfaction with the support provided for this valuable work.

While parliamentary capacity-building activities were particularly impacted by travel restrictions, the parliament maintained its commitment to regional and international parliamentary cooperation. Virtual engagement in this space was focused on sharing information on procedures and practices, including parliamentary responses to the pandemic. Although there was no opportunity for face-to-face engagement during the year, the department coordinated the participation of parliamentary staff in two United Nations Development Programme virtual missions. These missions supported the annual budget processes for the parliaments of Tonga and Vanuatu.

The department also continued to provide secretariat support to the Australian Parliament's membership of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, including Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

## Activity 4: Community relations and awareness

### Performance measures and targets

#### Criterion 1

Community is aware of, and engages with, published information about legislative and other parliamentary processes.

**Target:** Interaction with the work of the House increasing over time (percentage change on prior year).

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 17; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target met.

Using subscription data and publication circulation data as the data sources, the number of engagements on the department's social media platforms was as follows:

- » **Facebook:** 8,682 followers (increase of 8.5%)
- » **Twitter:** 48,958 followers (increase of 3.6%)
- » **About the House newsletter:** 2,326 subscribers (increase of 2.6%)
- » **YouTube:** 10,728 subscribers (increase of 25%).

Posts to the department's Twitter page received over 4.4 million impressions during the year. The account's reputation as an authoritative source of parliamentary information continued to grow during year, with procedurally based tweets shared on major media platforms.

#### Criterion 2

Clients are satisfied with seminars.

**Target:** 90% of seminar participants are satisfied.

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 17; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target partially met.

As part of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the department commenced online delivery of seminars. Depending on the restrictions in place at the time, seminars were offered in person at Parliament House, virtually by webinar, or in a hybrid delivery format. As a result of the hybrid and webinar modes of delivery, the department's seminars are now available to a more geographically dispersed audience, presenting opportunities for the department to explore in future.

While drawn from a smaller sample of seminars than in previous years, feedback from participants was positive overall and achieved the target level of client satisfaction. Formal feedback from participants indicates 91% were satisfied with seminar content, level of detail, presenter, and audio-visual elements.

### Activity information

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 17.

	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
Community contacts with the department's publications				
» @AboutTheHouse Twitter account impressions	Over 3.2 million	Over 4.6 million	Over 5 million	Over 4.4 million
» Website hits <sup>b</sup>	331,870	482,804	884,238	957,894
Number of seminar programs conducted	10	11	7	3
Number of seminar participants	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	55 in person 59 virtually

a. Election year.

b. Defined as unique page views on the Chamber Documents page (including subpages) and the Powers, Practice and Procedure page (including subpages, with access to formal procedural publications including *House of Representatives Practice*, *Guide to Procedures*, *House of Representatives Standing Orders*, and *Infosheet* series, as well as *Live Minutes* providing draft minutes of Chamber and Federation Chamber proceedings in real time).

### Analysis

Ensuring that the wider community has access to information on the work of the House and its committees is an important activity for the department.

Contacts with the department's publications can vary depending on public interest in the parliament, as well as sittings-dependent output produced by the department in a given period. This year saw steady growth across the department's community outreach products. The number of subscriptions increased across all digital platforms, with the largest percentage increase to the department's YouTube account.

The number of impressions for the department's official @AboutTheHouse Twitter account decreased by approximately 12% from last year, to a level comparable with 2018–19. In comparison, interest in the information published to the parliament's website continued to grow, with website hits increasing by 8.3% over last year's already significant volume.

The department successfully developed the capability to deliver its seminar program virtually, and there continues to be strong demand for these seminars. The department will continue to refine its publications and products for members of the public, further develop its feedback mechanisms, actively monitor satisfaction levels, and continue to refine its offerings.

## Activity 5: Members' and corporate support

### Performance measures and targets

#### Criterion 1

Speaker's level of satisfaction with the overall quality of support services provided, including accommodation, office support, transport coordination, salary processing and other members' support services.

**Target:** Very satisfied.

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 18; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target met.

The data source is direct feedback from the Speaker's Office on the overall quality of non-chamber support services provided to the Speaker, the Speaker's Office and other members.

The Speaker's Office indicated that it continued to be very satisfied with the support services provided by the department to the Speaker, the Speaker's Office and members, including for COVID-19 risk mitigation.

#### Criterion 2

Level of satisfaction among members with the overall quality of non-chamber support services provided, including accommodation, office support, transport coordination, salary processing and other members' support services.

**Target:** 90% satisfied.

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 18; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target met.

The results of the members' survey indicate a high level of satisfaction for the non-chamber support services provided by the department. All respondents were satisfied with their accommodation, office support and salary payment services. All but one respondent (98%) were satisfied with their transport coordination during sitting weeks.

Comments made by members in the survey emphasise the high level of satisfaction with the non-chamber support provided to members, including 'terrific', 'nothing is too much trouble' and 'excellent'. One member stated they never had a problem with the 'behind the scenes support' provided by the department.

Several members noted they had limited interaction with staff responsible for salary payments, though one commented the staff were very helpful when help was needed with a superannuation matter.



## Activity information

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 18.

	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
Number of Parliament House accommodation and office support services	718	473	1,139	1,949
Number of transport coordination services provided to members	13,086	12,449	17,811	8,153

a. Election year.

## Analysis

All performance targets related to the delivery of services to members were exceeded. Feedback from the Speaker's Office and the results of the members' survey indicate very high levels of satisfaction with support services provided to members by this activity area. Some comments received during the survey and interviews relate to services provided by other agencies, including the Department of Finance and Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS). The department has forwarded this feedback to these agencies for their information. The department continues to work closely with members to assist them to have any matters promptly resolved.

## Activity 6: Schools hospitality

### Performance measures and targets

#### Criterion 1

Timely and accurate provision of advice to DPS about hospitality required by visiting school groups, in accordance with bookings.

**Target:** 100%.

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 19; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2020–21*, page 16.

**Result against the performance criterion:** Target met.

The data source is the number of students booked, combined with exception reporting from DPS and school groups. A total of 34,353 students toured Parliament House during the reporting period. Hospitality was requested and received by 22,023 students. There were no reports during the year of hospitality not being provided to a school group that had requested it.

## Activity information

**Source:** *Corporate Plan 2020–21*, page 19.

	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
Number of visiting school students booked	119,088	124,831	86,315	34,353

a. Election year.

## Analysis

The delivery of hospitality to schools at their request is a combined effort between the parliamentary departments. The department provides a booking service for school groups, and liaises with the Department of the Senate (which administers the Parliamentary Education Office) and with DPS (which provides tours for school groups as well as hospitality where this has been requested). Data about hospitality provision relies on exception reporting from DPS or school groups. In 2020–21 there were no reports of schools not receiving the hospitality they had requested.

The reduction in the number of visiting students with bookings made in the period reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the closure of Parliament House to the public in the early part of the period and the limited reintroduction of bookings in November 2020. Throughout the year the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office managed cancellations and re-bookings for schools as the COVID-19 situation continued to develop throughout the country.

### **Effect of COVID-19 on services provided to members**

As part of the members' survey this year, members were invited to provide additional feedback on the department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All comments received were highly positive about the department's response to the pandemic and the level of services and support that was provided. Some members noted the reduction in services in committee rooms in response to COVID-19 (no water provided). The department will continue to carefully review the services it provides against the risk management measures in place to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Summary of performance against purpose

The department's purpose is to support the House of Representatives, and the wider parliament, in the role of a representative and legislative body primarily by providing advice and services, and through engaging with the community and other parliaments.

The department is committed to the delivery of high standards of advice, service and support to the Speaker, members, parliamentary committees, other parliaments, and the public. While the COVID-19 pandemic affected the operations of the House of Representatives Chamber, Federation Chamber and committees to a certain extent, the department, together with the other parliamentary departments, continued to provide the support, services and advice that enabled the parliament to fulfil its role as a representative and legislative body.

Based on feedback from the Presiding Officers and members, as well as performance information from a range of data sources, the department has fully met all but one of the targets outlined in its corporate plan. One target, related to the satisfaction of seminar participants, was partially met.

Activity information for 2020–21 once again highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the department's operations. Some activities, such as international parliamentary delegations, transport coordination services and school visits, were severely limited by the pandemic and not fully within the control of the department. Where support or services could not be provided due to restrictions on travel and gathering sizes, the department moved to a virtual model to ensure this valuable engagement work could continue. The statistics do not adequately reflect the work carried out by departmental staff, particularly during times of significant uncertainty.

Other activities, including sittings of the Chamber, meetings of the Federation Chamber, and support provided to committees, saw a strong increase from last year. This level of activity is common during the midpoint of the parliamentary cycle, and was possible due to the significant new work that occurred in preparing to enable the parliament to continue to operate while ensuring the safety of members, departmental staff and others during the pandemic.

Strategic priorities for the department in 2021–22 include a continued focus on developing knowledge of parliamentary practice and procedure, replacing or enhancing several key information and communications technology (ICT) systems, implementing a revised work health and safety management system, and planning for the commencement of a new parliament and the arrival of returning and new members.

The department was pleased to see an increase on last year in the participation rate in the members' survey (from 19% to 28%). The department was also pleased to be able to reinstate formal interviews with members. These interviews provide valuable qualitative feedback on the department's performance, and complement the quantitative results received through the survey.

Overall, the department assesses that it has fulfilled its purpose to support the House of Representatives, and the wider parliament, in the role of a representative and legislative body.

# Financial performance

The work of the department is mainly funded by government appropriation, with a small amount of revenue generated from the sale of publications and from the department's seminar program. The department ended the 2020–21 financial year reporting a surplus of \$1.402 million (before depreciation). The department incurred total employee benefits of \$20.842 million, \$0.235 million lower than the budget estimate reported in the 2020–21 Portfolio Budget Statements. Employee benefits were \$0.050 million lower than those incurred in 2019–20 (\$20.892 million).

Supplier expenses decreased by \$1.176 million between 2019–20 (\$5.005 million) and 2020–21 (\$3.829 million). Expenditure in this area was \$1.383 million lower than was budgeted in the 2020–21 Portfolio Budget Statements estimates (\$5.212 million). Committee Office domestic travel in support of hearings, along with incoming and outgoing official international delegation programs, were greatly reduced because of COVID-19 travel restrictions. Associated costs relating to catering, venue hire, meals and incidentals were also significantly reduced during the period. The department's financial position has remained strong with appropriation receivable totalling \$20.584 million and cash and cash equivalents of \$1.468 million. In addition, the department has \$2.567 million on term deposit due to mature on 10 July 2021.

With the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the department identified a need to better support working-from-home arrangements for all staff in the event of further lockdowns and restriction of access to Parliament House. Accordingly, the department spent \$407,000 on the purchase of laptops using the existing departmental capital budget. As the parliamentary departments have an agreement that all ICT equipment will be centrally managed by DPS, the departments agreed to transfer the laptops to DPS through equity.

During the year, the department engaged a valuation specialist to perform a materiality assessment of its property, plant and equipment class. The independent valuer's report concluded that there was no material difference between fair value and the carrying value of the assets.

In June 2021, the department's arrangement with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to provide capacity-building support to the Parliament of Fiji terminated. At the termination of the agreement \$0.043 million of unspent funds were returned to DFAT.

The department's overall financial position continued to remain sound in 2020–21:

- » total assets increased by \$0.605 million from the prior year to \$30.178 million
- » total liabilities decreased by \$0.491 million to \$7.234 million.

Estimates for 2021–22 indicate that the department has sufficient resources to continue to support members, the House and committees.

## Entity resource statement 2020–21

	Actual available appropriations 2020–21 \$'000	Payments made 2020–21 \$'000	Balance remaining 2020–21 \$'000
	(a)	(b)	(a) - (b)
<b>Departmental<sup>1</sup></b>			
Annual appropriation <sup>2</sup>	49,708	24,802	24,906
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,708</b>	<b>24,802</b>	<b>24,906</b>
<b>Administered expenses</b>			
Outcome <sup>1</sup>	437	86	351
<b>Total</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>Total resourcing</b>	<b>50,145</b>	<b>24,888</b>	<b>25,257</b>
<b>Total resourcing and payments for the Department of the House of Representatives</b>	<b>50,145</b>	<b>24,888</b>	

1. Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No.1) 2020-2021, Supply (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2020-2021, prior year departmental appropriation and section 74 retained revenue receipts.

2. Includes an amount of \$0.639 million in 2020–21 for the departmental capital budget. For accounting purposes this amount has been designated as 'contributions by owners'.

### Third Party Drawdowns from and on behalf of other entities

	\$'000
Payments made on behalf of the Department of Finance (disclosed in the respective entity's Resource Statement)	<b>50,641</b>

# Chamber and Federation Chamber

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

During the reporting period we continued to:

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

Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 15); staff levels are shown in Table 12.

## Performance summary

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

The annual survey of members was supplemented this year by interviews with members who would not be seeking re-election, and those for whom the 46th Parliament is their first term. Feedback from members on the range and standard of the services provided was generally positive. This result was largely consistent with comments received during the reporting period about the procedural resources available online and in hard copy, and the briefings on parliamentary topics of interest to members and their staff. The annual performance statement on page 15 provides more detailed analysis of the results of the survey and interviews.

Statistics on sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber in 2020–21 and the four preceding years are shown in Table 1.

There were 67 sitting days in 2020–21, five more than in 2019–20 (8% more sitting days). In 2020–21, the House sat for 49 hours more than last year (9% more time), and the Federation Chamber met for 47 hours more than last year (25% more time). Legislative activity continued at a high rate: 184 bills were introduced, and 153 bills passed both Houses and received assent from the Governor-General.

Detailed information on the business of the Chamber and Federation Chamber is provided in Appendix 1 and in the department's publication *Work of the Session* (available on the Parliament of Australia website).

**Table 1: Performance summary, Chamber and Federation Chamber, 2016–17 to 2020–21**

Aspect of performance	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
<b>Number of sittings/meetings</b>					
Sittings of the House	64	60	42	62	67
Meetings of the Federation Chamber	59	59	41	54	63
<b>Hours of sittings/meetings</b>					
Sittings of the House <sup>b</sup>	570	548	371	548	597
Meetings of the Federation Chamber <sup>b</sup>	237	231	130	185	232

a. Election year.

b. Excludes suspensions and rounded to the nearest hour.

## Advice on practice and procedure

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

## Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have an impact on the work of the Chamber and Federation Chamber. Physical distancing requirements, room capacity restrictions and restrictions on travel resulted in logistical and procedural challenges for the House in carrying out its essential work as a legislative and representative body. As in 2019–20, regular advice addressing COVID-safe operations was provided to the Speaker and other key stakeholders to support the effective operation of the Chamber and Federation Chamber prior to each period of sittings.

As in 2019–20, formal agreements, pursuant to resolution, for members to contribute remotely to parliamentary proceedings were presented in the House on several occasions. The agreements allowed members who could not attend parliament because of travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to contribute remotely to debate and to ask or answer questions during Question Time via the official video facility. These agreements were limited to certain sitting periods.

The recording of members, by informal means of pairing, unable to attend divisions due to physical distancing and room capacity restrictions was discontinued in March 2021 as the easing of restrictions made it possible for all members to be physically present in the Chamber for divisions.



*Revised seating arrangements in the House of Representatives to comply with COVID-19 physical distancing requirements. Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.*

## Programming and coordination of business

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

- » offering programming and procedural advice to ministers, shadow ministers, party whips, other members, their staff and others
- » preparing and publishing, each sitting day:
  - » the *Notice Paper* – a document listing all unresolved business before the House and providing information about committee memberships and other matters



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

Table 2 shows the number of questions in writing to ministers and answers that were processed by the House in the five years from 2016–17 to 2020–21.

**Table 2: Questions in writing to ministers and answers to questions in writing, 2016–17 to 2020–21**

	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
Questions in writing <sup>b</sup>	761	987	250	388	227
Questions answered <sup>c</sup>	247	945	206	346	161

a. Election year.

b. Excludes questions withdrawn.

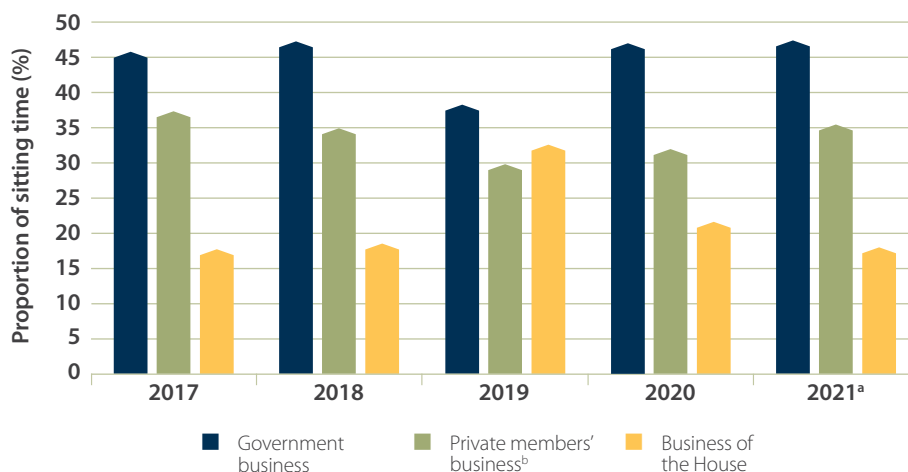
c. The responsibility for responding to questions in writing rests with the ministers to whom the questions are put.

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

- » government business (for example, government legislation)
- » private members' business (motions and bills proposed by private members)
- » business of the House (matters potentially involving all members; for example, Question Time, debate on committee reports, and matters of privilege).

Figure 3 shows a longitudinal view of the proportion of sitting time the House (Chamber and Federation Chamber inclusive) devoted to each of these three types of business.

**Figure 3: Government and private members' business and business of the House (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2017 to 2021 (calendar years)**



a. 2021 data is for January to June only.

b. Private members' business includes consideration of private members' motions and bills and other opportunities for private members, such as adjournment debates and discussion of matters of public importance.

## Processing and drafting of bills

### Processing legislation

Support for the legislative process in 2020–21 included our traditional responsibilities of:

- » receiving bills from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel and keeping them in custody under embargo before their introduction in the House
- » providing bills to ministers for introduction, and to all members in the Chamber after introduction
- » uploading to the Parliament of Australia website bills, explanatory memorandums and proposed amendments, and providing an over-the-counter service for access to hard copies of bills and associated material
- » processing all bills and amendments to bills:
  - » initiated in the House – from introduction to assent
  - » initiated in the Senate – from introduction in the House until passage by the House
- » preparing and delivering formal messages to the Senate; during 2020–21, we delivered 185 messages relating to the passage of bills (190 in 2019–20) and 23 other messages (39 in 2019–20)
- » preparing and issuing a Daily Bills List for each sitting day; the list provides cumulative information on the status of all bills before the parliament or assented to in the current calendar year.

Queries on the bills and legislation collection on the Parliament of Australia website totalled 1.4 million in 2020–21 (a decrease from 1.57 million in 2019–20), representing 6.6% of the 21.1 million queries made via searches through ParllInfo – the database that includes all library publications as well as Hansard, bills, chamber and committee documents, and the parliamentary handbook.

During the year, 184 bills were introduced (25.8% fewer than the 248 introduced in 2019–20). Of these, 168 were initiated in the House of Representatives and 16 were received from the Senate (compared with 229 and 19, respectively, last year).

The House passed 156 bills in 2020–21 (177 in 2019–20), an average of 2.3 bills for each sitting (compared with an average of 2.9 bills per sitting last year).

There was an increase in the number of amendments moved during the consideration in detail stage: 751 in 2020–21 compared with 139 in 2019–20. Of the 607 amendments that were passed, one was an amendment proposed by a non-aligned member.

The House amended 21 (13.5%) of the bills it passed, compared with eight (5%) in 2019–20. The department incorporated the amendments into the text of 19 of the bills and reprinted them (as third reading prints) before transmittal to the Senate. In one case, in relation to the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (International Production Orders) Bill 2020 which had 502 amendments, the bill was required to be transmitted urgently to the Senate for its consideration and, by agreement with Senate counterparts, a schedule of amendments was instead prepared and transmitted with the bill as originally introduced.



*The Treasurer, the Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, presenting the 2021–22 Budget on 11 May 2021. Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.*

The House agreed to Senate amendments, made amendments requested by the Senate, or did both, in relation to 25 House bills (19 in 2019–20). The House disagreed to Senate amendments to three bills, and agreed to some amendments and disagreed to others to one bill. For these four bills, the Senate did not insist on its amendments and agreement was reached by both Houses. At the end of the previous reporting period, the Treasury Laws Amendment (2020 Measures No. 2) Bill 2020 was still before the Senate; during the current reporting period the Senate did not further insist on its amendments, and the bill was passed by both Houses in identical form.

In total, 153 bills were finally passed by both Houses in identical form (the same number as last year), of which 140 were initiated in the House of Representatives and 13 were initiated in the Senate. After further processing by the Table Office, bills finally passed by both Houses in identical form were presented to the Governor-General for assent. Table 3 shows the number of bills introduced in the House and assented to in the five years from 2016–17 to 2020–21.

In total, during the reporting period the Table Office prepared 19 third reading prints (seven in 2019–20) and 140 assent prints (139 in 2019–20). All documents accurately reflected the decisions of both Houses.

**Table 3: Number of bills introduced in the House, and number of bills assented to, 2016–17 to 2020–21**

	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
Bills introduced	248	222	155	248	184
Bills assented to <sup>b</sup>	126	128	148	153	153

a. Election year.

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

### **Legislative drafting**

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

In 2020–21, 28 private members' bills were introduced (including two private senators' bills). Of the 751 amendments moved during consideration in detail, 145 were private members' amendments, one of which was agreed to. Table 4 provides chamber statistics for private members' bills and amendments for the past five years. The figures do not reflect all of the department's work in this area, as some material is drafted but is not introduced into the House.

Since 2010, the department has had an arrangement with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel for one of its senior drafters to be seconded to the department. That arrangement continues to be mutually beneficial. The seconded officer provides drafting advice to members and supports the drafting of private members' bills and amendments.

**Table 4: Private members' bills introduced and amendments moved (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2016–17 to 2020–21**

	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
Bills introduced	35	35	30	35	28
Second reading amendments moved	40	45	37	110	105
Consideration in detail amendments moved	115	86	95	107	145

a. Election year.

## Record of proceedings and House documents

### *Votes and Proceedings*

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

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

### *House Division Recording System*

The House Division Recording System has been in use since the final sitting week of the 45th Parliament. It allows tellers to record members' votes electronically on a tablet. The division result is published immediately on announcement by the Speaker in the *Live Minutes*, to Hansard and on display screens located in the Chamber. A webpage publishes the results of divisions in real time and provides a searchable and filterable repository of divisions recorded in the system. During the reporting period, the system recorded 360 divisions.

As part of this project, display screens have been installed in each of the public galleries of the Chamber. The screens will display information on the event that is currently in progress, explanations of the significance of the question that is being determined by the House, and the results of divisions once they have been announced by the Speaker.

### *Documents*

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

reviewed considering the online availability of documents and the declining demand for hard copies.

In 2020–21, a total of 3,115 documents were presented to the House, a slight decrease from the 3,290 presented last year.

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

### **Online Tabled Documents project**

With colleagues from the Department of the Senate and DPS, Table Office staff continued to support the Online Tabled Documents project, which will establish a system for the electronic receipt and storage of documents for tabling in the parliament, and their subsequent publication via the Parliament of Australia website. The system will streamline administrative handling of documents and, following presentation, make documents available online through a searchable database, providing an enhanced service for members and other interested parties. The project was expected to be completed in this reporting period; however, the pilot rollout has been delayed as a result of limited ICT developer resources.

## **Research**

The Procedure Office collects, analyses and disseminates procedural and statistical information on the work of the House. In 2020–21, the office:

- » maintained comprehensive procedural and statistical records
- » prepared advice for the Speaker and members on House practice and the operation of the standing orders
- » responded to requests for procedural and statistical information from various stakeholders including members, parliamentary staff and members of the public
- » produced a range of publications on House statistics, practice and procedure.

The office also supported the House Standing Committee on Procedure (see page 40).

There was continued demand for the office's publications, while information requests were received from a variety of internal and external clients throughout the year.

### **Publications**

The Procedure Office continued to produce a range of publications on the work of the House. Following each sitting fortnight, the Procedure Office published:

- » *House Review*, a plain-English analysis of significant events in the House
- » *Statistical Digest*, a statistical breakdown of the business conducted by the House
- » *Procedural Digest*, a technical record of the Speaker's rulings, precedents and other procedurally noteworthy items.

The office also published a range of other resources on the Parliament of Australia website, including:

- » *Last Week in the House*, listing key events in the previous sitting week
- » *Work of the Session* (also published in hard copy), providing comprehensive periodic information on the work of the House and its committees
- » the *Infosheet* series, comprising short guides on the workings of the House and parliament in an easy-to-read format.

In collaboration with the Australian National University, biographies of Speakers, Deputy Speakers and Clerks of the House since Federation have been prepared for the *Bibliographical Dictionary of the House of Representatives*, for publication online in 2021–22.

## Collaboration

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

The Procedure Office continued to work effectively with counterparts in the Department of the Senate, including through involvement with the Australian National Internships Program and the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program (see page 50).

### **Collaboration with other parliaments**

The department continued its tradition of knowledge-sharing with colleagues from other parliaments. This included participation in study programs, virtual delegation meetings and capacity-building work. The value of sharing experiences and ideas with other parliaments extends beyond familiar procedural aspects and embraces challenges in common arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Procedural training and resources

Building staff procedural capacity was a continued focus in 2020–21. An innovative suite of resources, first developed in 2018, continues to form the mainstay of procedural training. The ‘House main course’ tutorial program was delivered by the Procedure Office in collaboration with the Table Office, to a cohort of staff in July to November 2020, after a period of delay because of the pandemic. The course targets skills development for those staff currently working in (or interested in moving into) a chamber support role, and sessions are delivered in person to facilitate more interactive learning.

The series of lunchtime discussions, ‘A taste of procedure’, covering various aspects of parliamentary procedure, was again offered to all interested staff to attend either in person or by webinar.

The CATTalogue, comprising a series of educational videos on key House principles and procedures, was available to all staff through the department’s intranet. It is intended for those preparing to work in Clerk-at-the-Table roles and other staff interested in House procedure. It was expanded in 2020–21 and content was also adapted for members of the Speaker’s panel.

During the year, the department continued to support staff to develop expertise in parliamentary law, practice and procedure in the following ways:

- » debriefs following each sitting week or fortnight, focusing on matters of procedural interest (available to all staff in chamber support roles, and open to other staff when physical distancing requirements allowed)
- » induction and coaching for departmental staff who undertake duty as Clerks and Deputy Clerks in the Chamber and Federation Chamber
- » shadowing opportunities that enable staff to learn specialist skills such as preparing House procedures and the *Daily Program*, and processing bills and documents – once the trainee staff have sufficient experience, the use of shadowing allows chamber support staff to finish work earlier on some sitting nights, and provides a backup to enable business continuity in the event of staffing absences or turnover
- » participation in parliamentary conferences (this year delivered online)
- » participation in the Parliamentary Law, Practice and Procedure course currently offered online by the University of Tasmania under the auspices of the Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table (ANZACATT).

## Parliamentary committees

The department continued to provide effective secretariat and advisory support to five House committees and one joint committee dealing with the powers and procedures of the House. Committees supported by the Chamber and Federation Chamber activity area in 2020–21 were as follows:

- » standing committees
  - » Selection Committee
  - » Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration
  - » Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests
  - » Standing Committee on Procedure
  - » Standing Committee on Publications
- » joint committee
  - » Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings.

In 2020–21, those committees held 60 meetings and produced 23 reports. Details of meetings and reports are set out in Appendixes 2 and 3.

### **Selection Committee**

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

- » selecting and programming private members' business and committee and delegation business



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

The committee has 12 members: the Speaker (as chair), the chief whips of the three largest parties, four government members, three non-government members and one non-aligned member. The committee met 18 times during the reporting period and presented 18 reports.

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

The Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration considers estimates of the funding required for the operation of the department each year and matters relating to the provision of facilities in Parliament House affecting the House, its committees or its members, including ICT, the administration and funding of security measures and works in the parliamentary precincts. Together with the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations, Staffing and Security, the committee may consider estimates of the annual funding required for the operation of DPS.

The committee comprises nine members – the Speaker (as chair), four government members and four non-government/non-aligned members – and is supported by the Clerk, the Serjeant-at-Arms and other officers of the department as required. During the year the committee met seven times and presented three reports. The committee also made a submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee's inquiry into the operation and management of DPS.

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

The Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests met five times during the reporting period, and presented one report to the House. The report related to the registration and declaration of members' interests during 2020.

In accordance with the resolution of the House on the registration of members' interests, the department continued to support the online lodgement of registrable interests and notifications of alterations, which has resulted in a more efficient service.

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

The Standing Committee on Procedure inquires into and reports on the practices and procedures of the House and its committees. It usually meets once each sitting week. In 2020–21, the committee completed two inquiries: one into the practices and procedures relating to Question Time, and the other into the practices and procedures put in place by the House in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

The House Publications Committee considers documents presented to the House that are not covered by the resolutions of the House (of 28 March 2018) and Senate (of 8 February 2018) – or for which the House and Senate have not already made a determination – and recommends to the House whether they should be included in the Parliamentary Papers Series. The committee may confer with the Senate Publications Committee, forming the

Joint Committee on Publications. The House Publications Committee did not meet during the reporting period, and the Joint Committee on Publications met once.

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

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

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

## **Improving performance**

As discussed earlier, the chamber support areas provided tailored, responsive support to the Speaker, members and other stakeholders in the uncertain and changeable circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The department continues to leverage technology for improved performance in supporting the Chamber and Federation Chamber, including through the House Division Recording System, the Online Tabled Documents project and the Gallery Screens project.

Developing the procedural capacity of staff through both formal and informal means is a continuing priority for the department. Engagement with procedural development initiatives remained high throughout the year.

## **Outlook**

During the reporting period, the focus of the chamber support areas has been on continuing to deliver high-quality services to meet the needs of the Speaker, members and others, to assist the House in fulfilling its representative and legislative roles. The demand for procedural advice remained high, and additional support was provided to members in the unfamiliar circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Demand for advice and support is expected to remain high in the next year, as the practices of the House continue to respond as the pandemic evolves.

Opportunities presented this year by the migration to Windows 10 and Office 365 are being explored. Replacements to legacy ICT systems will be investigated, as will the digitisation of *Notice Papers* dating back to the first parliament.

The Procedure Office will continue to seek opportunities presented by enhanced technology to engage with stakeholders, including through improved presentation of statistical information. Procedural development activities for staff – including the tutorial program, lunchtime seminars and individual coaching – will continue to be offered in 2021–22 to ensure there is sufficient capability and expertise to meet future needs.

# Committee support

The Committee Office supports parliamentary committees in their investigatory work of examining policy and legislation, and of scrutinising the executive government. In 2020–21, the Committee Office comprised 10 secretariats that supported 14 House committees and 12 joint committees (see Table 5). Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 17); staff levels are shown in Table 12.

**Table 5: Committees of the 46th Parliament supported by the Committee Office**

House committees	Joint committees
Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources	Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit <sup>a</sup>
Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Standing Committee on Economics	Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training	Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy	Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia
Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport	Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs	Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth
Standing Committee on Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources	Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities	Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security <sup>a</sup>
Standing Committee on Petitions	Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works <sup>a</sup>
Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs	Joint Select Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme
Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue	Joint Select Committee on Road Safety
Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention	
Select Committee on Regional Australia	

a. Joint statutory committee.

Note: Five House internal committees (Selection, Appropriations and Administration, Privileges and Members' Interests, Procedure and Publications) and the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings are supported by other areas of the department, and are discussed under *Parliamentary committees* on pages 39 to 41.



*Members of the Select Committee on Regional Australia inspecting the AKD Softwoods facility in Tumut, New South Wales.  
Image: Department of the House of Representatives.*

## Committee Office activity

In 2020–21, the Committee Office's support for the diverse work of committees involved:

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

## Overview

In 2020–21, the Committee Office was challenged by the changing landscape of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions on movement and activity severely curtailed the ability of committees to schedule and undertake their program of work and travel.

At the start of the year almost all committee meetings were held by teleconference or videoconference. The meetings were enabled by a longstanding provision in the standing orders authorising such conferencing (provided that committee members and witnesses can speak to and hear each other at the same time regardless of location), which has provided great flexibility to committees to continue their important work during the pandemic despite the restrictions on travel.

As the year progressed and restrictions eased, committee meetings transitioned to more in-person meetings, although there continued to be high levels of virtual attendance by both members and witnesses. Public hearings were held in Parliament House where essential, although they were largely closed to members of the public. Staff managed hearings held in other locations in accordance with the local restrictions.

Public hearings continued to be broadcast on the Parliament of Australia website, as is the usual practice. A variety of communications solutions were used to ensure that witnesses and members could meet virtually wherever possible.

Some committee inquiries had been suspended or delayed in the first half of 2020, and these were added to the usual number of new inquiries, resulting in a busy program in 2020–21 for all committees and a high workload for departmental staff.

Despite the year's logistical challenges, the Committee Office was able to successfully support all committees within its remit. Tabling speeches of members reflected the professionalism of Committee Office staff, and informal positive feedback received from members throughout the year expressed their satisfaction with the level of support provided.

Committees conducted inquiries on a diverse range of topics, including the following:

- » Migration: In its inquiries into the working holiday maker and the skilled migration programs, the Joint Standing Committee on Migration conducted short-term, focused reviews. These inquiries required significant secretariat support to provide targeted recommendations to address current skills shortages.
- » Family violence: The family violence inquiry was a major undertaking for the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs. The committee received more than 300 submissions, and gathered over 90 hours of evidence from witnesses around the country (and overseas) via videoconference and teleconference. The committee's report, published in March 2021, made 88 recommendations to inform development of the government's next national plan to reduce violence against women and their children.
- » Feral and domestic cats in Australia: The Environment and Energy Committee completed its inquiry on the problem of feral and domestic cats in Australia. When

the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the committee from planned interstate travel, members instead took a short trip from Parliament House to the Mulligans Flat wildlife sanctuary in the Australian Capital Territory, to observe native animals protected by predator-proof fencing. The inquiry report, *Tackling the feral cat pandemic: a plan to save Australian wildlife*, presented in February 2021, attracted media and public interest.

- » Intelligence and security: The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security continued to have a high workload throughout 2020–21 with an increased number of bill inquiries and statutory reviews as well as the committee's ongoing oversight activities.
- » Mental health and suicide prevention: The Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention was established by the House of Representatives in December 2020. The committee began its work in February 2021 on resumption of parliament and presented an interim report on 15 April 2021, with a final report due on or before 1 November 2021. The secretariat has embraced remote access technologies and put in place contingency plans to ensure it can continue to successfully deliver public hearing programs.

As well as the technological complications of virtual meetings, staff faced a number of logistical, procedural and operational challenges in 2020–21, including the management of secure information.

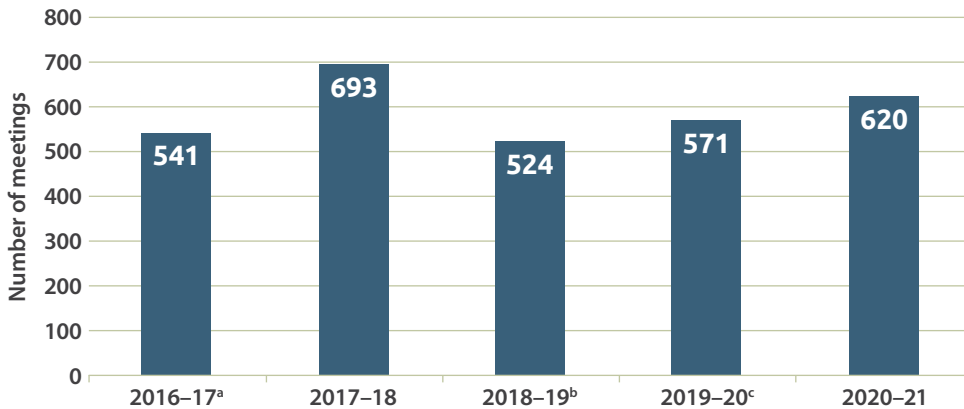
Over the reporting period, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security had an increased need for classified hearings resulting in more negotiations for use of the classified meeting shared facility in Parliament House. The secretariat continued discussions with the national intelligence community on the handling of classified information in a way that would safeguard national security information without affecting the work of the committee.

Unusually, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works needed to consider a classified document as part of its scrutiny work, which required logistical and other support to ensure staff had the appropriate clearance.

Committee activity increased during the reporting period compared with last year. Scrutiny committees supported by the Committee Office held 620 meetings, as outlined in Appendix 2. Appendix 3 lists inquiries active as at 30 June 2021 and reports presented during 2020–21.

Figures 4 and 5 present the number of committee meetings held and reports presented, supported by the Committee Office, over the past five years. These figures highlight the sustained workload of committees.

**Figure 4: Number of committee meetings supported by the Committee Office, 2016–17 to 2020–21**

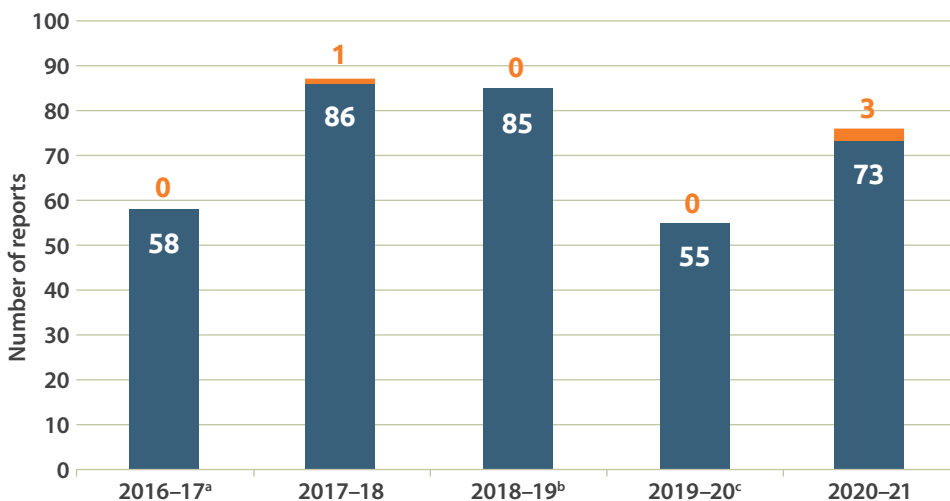


a. The 45th Parliament opened on 30 August 2016.

b. The 45th Parliament ended with the dissolution of the House on 11 April 2019.

c. The 46th Parliament opened on 2 July 2019.

**Figure 5: Number of reports presented by committees supported by the Committee Office, 2016–17 to 2020–21**



a. The 45th Parliament opened on 30 August 2016.

b. The 45th Parliament ended with the dissolution of the House on 11 April 2019.

c. The 46th Parliament opened on 2 July 2019.

## Petitions Committee

The Standing Committee on Petitions facilitates the receipt and progression of petitions through the House. The committee can also conduct inquiries and undertake activities on any matter relating to petitions and the petitions system. During the reporting period the committee completed a project to enhance the information available on the House's petitions webpages to make the process more accessible and easier to understand.

The committee continued to experience an increase in the number of petitions received. Table 6 shows the number of in-order petitions presented to the House, and the number of signatories, for the past five years. In 2020–21, a total of 628 petitions were presented, compared with 498 last year. The number of signatures in the past 12 months increased from 804,854 to 1,218,579. The committee also presented 14 reports summarising the petitions and ministerial responses being presented.

The largest petition in 2020–21 had 501,876 signatures, and asked the House to support a royal commission to ensure the strength and diversity of Australian news media. The number of signatures to this e-petition highlighted the need to balance the security of the petitioning process (to prevent fraudulent activity) against allowing the greatest possible accessibility for signatories. In December 2020, the committee decided to inquire into aspects of petitioning security and accessibility.

This inquiry received 13 submissions, including from the Hon Kevin Rudd AC, who had been the principal petitioner for the news media diversity petition. The report of the inquiry was presented in June 2021.

The committee made no recommendations, concluding that the current security requirements allowed for a sufficiently accessible petitioning system. However, the inquiry report clearly articulated the committee's considerations in designing the current petitioning process, and the checks and balances built into the system.

**Table 6: Petitions and signatories to petitions, 2016–17 to 2020–21**

	2016–17 <sup>a</sup>	2017–18	2018–19 <sup>a</sup>	2019–20	2020–21
Number of petitions presented	185	424	190	498	628
Number of signatories	235,751	371,491	199,084	804,854	1,218,579

a. Election year.

## Government responses to committee reports

The government is required by resolution of the House to respond to recommendations contained in a report by a House or joint committee within six months of the report's tabling. This resolution was adopted by the House on 29 September 2010.

During 2020–21, 33 reports presented by committees supported by the Committee Office contained recommendations that required a government response. Of these 33 reports:

- » government responses to two reports were received within the six-month timeframe
- » 18 reports have not received a response within the six-month timeframe
- » the six-month timeframe has not elapsed for the 13 remaining reports awaiting a response.

Nine responses to reports presented in previous financial years were also received.



## Information and communications technology

During 2020–21, the Committee Office worked with DPS on a transition to Office 365 and Windows 10, and the rollout of the departmental laptop fleet, to progress the department's ability to support remote access working. The new suite of ICT programs, including the introduction of Microsoft Teams, has assisted the Committee Office to work more collaboratively and with greater flexibility when working remotely.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, secretariats continued to work remotely, and parliamentary committees adapted to the use of videoconferencing and teleconferencing facilities when conducting proceedings. This included the integration of the department's Surface Hub technology, which allows the Committee Office to have more mobile videoconferencing facilities in Parliament House.

## Improving performance

The Committee Office undertook significant recruitment activity in the second half of 2020–21 to fill longstanding vacancies. Reviews of the following commenced in 2020–21, to be finalised in 2021–22:

- » training programs for new and existing staff
- » process for managing inquiry risk
- » business resumption plan
- » staff guidance documentation and operating manuals.

Ongoing training programs for new staff continued in 2020–21, with an emphasis on developing knowledge of committee procedure. Easing of COVID-19 restrictions at times saw the recommencement of informal new starter tutorials and Committee Office debriefs. This promotes interaction between our new staff and our more experienced staff members, and knowledge-sharing being a valued aspect of learning and development.

## Liaison Committee of Chairs and Deputy Chairs

The Clerk Assistant (Committees) supports the Liaison Committee of Chairs and Deputy Chairs (LCCDC). The LCCDC is an informal meeting of all chairs and deputy chairs of House-supported committees, and is chaired by the Deputy Speaker.

The LCCDC met in June 2021 and discussed areas of common concern across committees, and areas where greater consistency or more information may be valuable to chairs and deputy chairs. The LCCDC will continue to meet twice a year.

## Outlook

The Committee Office continues to support a substantial workload of inquiries, and the creation of additional select committees. The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to continue into the next financial year and beyond, although ameliorated by the adaptations made by committees to allow for virtual meetings amid ongoing restrictions. The high degree of uncertainty and changing work environment that has characterised this year is likely to continue.

Three key priorities for the Committee Office in the year ahead will be the professional development of its staff, improvements to the technology that supports the Committee Office's core business in supporting parliamentary committees, and preparations for new committees to be established in the 47th Parliament, following the next federal election.



*The Standing Committee on Economics holding a public hearing via videoconference during COVID-19 travel restrictions, 3 February 2021. Image: Tracey Nearmy, Auspic/DPS.*

# Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building

The Australian Parliament's international program supports engagement and cooperation with parliaments internationally, with a focus on parliamentary relations in the Asia-Pacific region.

The program's activities and projects in 2020–21 were coordinated by the International and Parliamentary Relations Office, which incorporates the Parliamentary Skills Centre and is jointly funded by the department and the Department of the Senate, with input from all four parliamentary departments. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 18); staff levels are shown in Table 12.

## Performance summary

Challenges for traditional methods of parliamentary engagement continued in 2020–21. Many inter-parliamentary forums were again postponed or cancelled in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and parliamentary capacity-building activities were similarly impacted.

In place of delegations, virtual engagement has provided a solution to maintaining and sustaining important inter-parliamentary connections, with 98 virtual events programmed over the course of the year.

## Parliamentary engagement

Presiding Officer led diplomacy remained a key element of the Australian Parliament's international program. The International and Parliamentary Relations Office provided advice, planning assistance and briefing coordination to support the Presiding Officers as they held virtual meetings with counterpart parliaments, established connections with newly elected international Presiding Officers, and led the Australian Parliament's involvement with international parliamentary organisations such as the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

In 2020–21, the Presiding Officers led various initiatives supported by the International and Parliamentary Relations Office; for example:

- » Presiding Officers held virtual meetings with counterparts in Israel, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Vanuatu and Vietnam.
- » The Speaker, as President of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, held 10 forum-related meetings with representatives from Canada, Fiji, Indonesia, Japan, Laos and Republic of Korea.
- » The President of the Senate, as one of Australia's regional representatives for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, represented the Australia Region in two four-day-long executive committee sessions with counterparts from across the Commonwealth, and led a separate parliament-to-parliament meeting with parliamentarians from the United Kingdom to discuss parliamentary responses to the pandemic.

Concurrently, Australian parliamentary delegations participated in seven virtual multilateral inter-parliamentary forums including the:

- » 41st Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Inter-Parliamentary Assembly in September 2020 (hosted from Hanoi, Vietnam)
- » 66th North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Parliamentary Assembly in November 2020 (hosted from Brussels, Belgium)
- » 6th Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia (MIKTA) Speakers' Consultations in December 2020 (hosted from Seoul, Republic of Korea)
- » 142nd Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly in May 2021 (hosted from Geneva, Switzerland).

## Parliamentary cooperation and capacity-building

Parliamentary capacity-building activities were particularly impacted by travel restrictions. The Australian Parliament maintained its commitment to regional and international parliamentary cooperation, sharing information on procedures and practices with a focus on parliamentary responses to the pandemic.

Although there was no opportunity for face-to-face engagement, the Parliamentary Skills Centre coordinated the participation of parliamentary staff from the Parliamentary Budget Office and Department of the Senate in two United Nations Development Programme virtual missions, supporting the annual budget processes for the parliaments of Tonga and Vanuatu.



*The Speaker, the Hon Tony Smith MP, participating in a virtual meeting between the Presiding Officers and the then Speaker of Parliament of Vanuatu, the Hon Gracia Shadrack, on 17 February 2021. Image: Department of the House of Representatives.*

The annual Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships Fund bid processes were also completed, with parliaments encouraged to submit applications to support their parliamentary responses to the pandemic. Bids from the Cook Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea and Tonga were

approved by the Australia Region Management Committee, with procurement of items for the Cook Islands, Niue and Tonga completed before the end of the financial year along with procurement on previously approved bids from Samoa and Tuvalu.

In June 2021, the long-running parliamentary capacity-building funding agreement with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade concluded, and negotiation of a new arrangement has been paused until 2022.

### Secretariat support

The International and Parliamentary Relations Office continued to provide secretariat support to the Australian Parliament's membership of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, including Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Collectively, these bodies hosted a significant volume of virtual events throughout the year and the International and Parliamentary Relations Office secretariat-related work substantially increased in comparison to preceding years. This was particularly evident for activities of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum. International and Parliamentary Relations Office staff coordinated and delivered 11 meetings for the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, and represented the Australia Region in 18 virtual proceedings at the Commonwealth level. In supporting the Speaker in his role as President of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, the International and Parliamentary Relations Office developed and launched an Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum President website (sourcing and creating the first online reference of over 500 forum resolutions) and facilitated engagement with the forum's executive committee.

### Improving performance

Switching to virtual engagement has required International and Parliamentary Relations Office staff to learn new systems and acquire new skills, and placed new priority on ICT equipment and resources. Acquisition of laptops and other ICT equipment provided significant capability improvements in the latter part of the reporting year, and the office has recently procured software that will improve hosting of virtual events and meetings in the short term and offer greater efficiency to delegation planning and conducting visits when travel becomes possible. Once fully implemented, the software will also offer an improved event coordination capability to whole-of-parliament events.

### Outlook

The global situation remains complex and uncertain, and resumption of delegation travel remains subject to the lifting of travel restrictions. Virtual engagement has assisted in maintaining inter-parliamentary relationships and is expected to continue as the basis of inter-parliamentary engagement until travel becomes possible.

# Community relations and awareness

The department promotes the work of the House through a range of activities aimed at different sectors of the community. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 21).

## Performance summary

During 2020–21 the department continued to use its communication channels to increase community engagement and awareness of the work of the House and committees. The department's seminar program experienced disruptions due to COVID-19 restrictions, but technological solutions enabled online participation through the delivery of webinars, ensuring that disruptions were minimised.

The department continued its work to support the school visits program and in providing support to the Parliamentary Education Office. The My First Speech competition was put on hold due to the pandemic and will resume once the easing of COVID-19 restrictions makes it possible. After a pause in intake due to the pandemic, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Internships component of the Australian National Internships Program resumed in the first half of 2021, with students undertaking placements with a member or senator.



*Parliament House during Canberra's Enlighten Festival in February 2021. Image: Tracey Nearmy, Auspic/DPS.*

## Media and publications

Social media remains an important engagement and information distribution tool for the department, with all channels increasing in audience in the reporting period.

The department's Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn accounts provide valuable information to the general public, and through these platforms the department continued to receive positive feedback. During the reporting period, the department's Facebook subscriber base increased by 8.5% (from 7,999 to 8,682 subscribers) and its Twitter following increased by 3.6% to 48,958 followers. The House's YouTube account, used for publishing replays of Question Time and an 'About the House' series of short videos, grew by 25% in the reporting period, and now has over 10,700 subscribers.

The department also produces the *About the House* newsletter, which aims to promote committee activity and provide information about the House and its procedures. The newsletter has over 2,300 subscribers, an increase of 2.6% on the previous reporting period.

The department continues to issue a large volume of media releases on behalf of committees, the Speaker and the Clerk of the House. In total, the department issued 271 media releases during the reporting period, an increase of 22% on last year's figure. During the reporting period, the 'About the House News' page and all its subpages received a total of over 182,000 unique page views – well over double that of the last reporting period. This increase may be explained by the surge in use of the internet to access information and services due to the pandemic.

## Seminars

The department's seminar program includes a series of seminars covering the parliament, the budget, the legislative process and the work of parliamentary committees. Additionally, customised seminars may be delivered to individual government departments on request. The program is designed to raise awareness of the work of the House, particularly among employees of government agencies. Delivery of the program continued to be disrupted during the reporting period due to COVID-19 restrictions. In the second half of 2020, one custom seminar was conducted off site for an external client and one standard seminar was offered exclusively as a webinar. In the first half of 2021, following an easing of restrictions, the program was able to be resumed with in-person attendees, although the department has retained the option of online participation. The hybrid delivery model means that the program is no longer practically restricted to a Canberra-based audience.

## My First Speech competition

The annual My First Speech competition – open to students in Years 10 to 12 who are asked to imagine themselves as a newly elected member of the House of Representatives and write a 3-minute speech on issues they are passionate about – was cancelled this reporting period due to COVID-19 restrictions.

## Australian National Internships Program

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Internships component of the Australian National Internships Program operates under an agreement between the Vice-Chancellor of the Australian National University and the Australian Parliament's Presiding Officers. It enables students from across Australia to undertake a placement with a member or senator as part of their formal course of study. The program was significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with no intake in the second half of 2020. However, the program was resumed in February 2021 with 27 students placed with a member or senator and one student placed with the Parliamentary Budget Office. A hybrid delivery model enabled some students to undertake part of the program online where appropriate.

The department worked with colleagues in the Department of the Senate to facilitate the program and deliver an orientation session for interns. The department continued to have a representative on the Australian National Internships Program's advisory board and parliamentary steering committee.

## Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program

Each year, a small number of Australian Defence Force representatives spend a week at Parliament House, hosted by a member or senator. Arrangements for participation by members and senators are made through the Minister for Defence Personnel in conjunction with the Department of Defence. Some modifications had to be made to the timing and format of the program because of the circumstances imposed by the pandemic, but the program was able to proceed and in November and December 2020 26 members of the Australian Defence Force were hosted by senators and members. The departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate collaborate to support the program and provide orientation seminars on the work of the chambers and committees.

## Parliamentary Education Office

Jointly funded by the Department of the Senate and the Department of the House of Representatives, the Parliamentary Education Office delivers parliamentary education services on behalf of the Australian Parliament to students, teachers and others across Australia. To date, more than 2.3 million students have expanded their knowledge of the Australian Parliament through participating in a Parliamentary Education Office program.

In addition to operational management by the Department of the Senate, the Parliamentary Education Office is guided by an advisory committee, comprising interested members and senators. The committee meets twice a year and reports to the Presiding Officers.

The full-time equivalent staffing level for the Parliamentary Education Office in 2020–21 was 11.1 (compared with 11.4 in 2019–20).

### **Education programs: on site, outreach and digital**

The Parliamentary Education Office is a leader in civics and citizenship education in Australia and delivers education programs for teachers and students on site at Parliament House, in classrooms across Australia and digitally through videoconferencing.



School visits to Parliament House were again significantly impacted in the reporting period due to travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. For schools able to visit Parliament House, all programs were conducted in a COVID-safe manner, and for schools unable to visit, a videoconferencing program was offered. In 2020–21, 28,742 students from 444 schools across Australia participated in on-site Parliamentary Education Office programs. These figures represent a 69% decrease on pre-pandemic 2018–19 student participation numbers, and a 53% decrease on 2019–20 participation numbers.

In 2020–21, the Parliamentary Education Office conducted outreach within a 250 km radius of Canberra. This allowed the program to be delivered amid changing travel restrictions, and also provided opportunities for schools that, despite geographical proximity, had not previously connected with the Parliamentary Education Office. During this period, the office delivered outreach to 483 participants from 13 schools in the Australian Capital Territory and regional New South Wales (electorates of Bean, Canberra, Eden-Monaro and Hume).

The number of students and teachers taking part in the videoconferencing program Parliamentary Insider increased significantly again this reporting period, with 9,075 participants – an increase of nearly 300% on 2019–20 participation rates and 700% on 2018–19 participation rates. The increase is partly attributable to the greater uptake of online programs and services because of the pandemic, and partly attributable to the Parliamentary Education Office continuing to establish a brand and presence as quality providers of digital education. In the reporting period, the Parliamentary Education Office also upgraded the existing videoconferencing studio and established a second studio, paving the way for the office to enhance its provision of digital education programs about the Australian Parliament.

### ***Content: online and print***

The Parliamentary Education Office website provides information about parliament and curriculum-aligned teaching resources for all Australian teachers and students. In 2020–21, the website attracted a total of 1.06 million users (representing 2.38 million unique page views).

The Parliamentary Education Office also produced and distributed a range of publications during the reporting period, including a new teaching booklet for teachers of politics and legal studies, and new classroom posters illustrating key aspects of our system of government such as the Australian Constitution.

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

The Parliamentary Education Office provides dedicated support to encourage and assist members and senators to engage with schools and students. Members and senators are offered a complimentary annual allocation of education and information materials for students, teachers and others in their communities. Members and senators can also request a tailored brochure, *Representing You*, to assist them when explaining their work as an elected representative. In 2020–21, 126 parliamentarians requested their allocation (compared with 150 last year). The unusual circumstances of lockdown and the reduced ability to visit schools may explain the slightly lower take up than in previous years.

### **Parliamentary Education Office outlook**

In the coming year, the Parliamentary Education Office will continue to follow all relevant health and other advice to safely deliver education programs for Australian teachers and students. An important part of this work will be to further enhance and promote videoconferencing programs and other services as a method to engage students and teachers who are unable to visit Canberra.

Through high-calibre digital and print content, the Parliamentary Education Office will continue to provide quality parliamentary education services for parliamentarians, teachers and students across the country.

## **Outlook**

The department will continue to adapt its community relations and awareness activities in response to COVID-19 restrictions.

The significant increase in website page views and the growth in the number of subscribers to the department's YouTube channel indicate a continued strong interest by the public in the work of the House of Representatives.

In the forward period, the department aims to refine and develop its communication channels and content delivery to best meet stakeholder expectations. We will continue to work with the other parliamentary departments to improve the Parliament of Australia website, and we will refine our website and social media channels through improved analytics and user feedback mechanisms.

The department will also continue to improve its capability to deliver seminars in virtual and hybrid formats and to promote the seminar program through its social media and other channels. The department is now well placed to ensure that its regular seminar program can be delivered despite any further disruptions caused by the pandemic.

# Members' and corporate support

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

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

Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 23).

## Performance summary

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

Arrangements to support the safe operation of the House and committees during the COVID-19 pandemic continued to be a significant area of focus. Seating in the Chamber, Federation Chamber and committee rooms was adjusted to meet physical distancing requirements. Revised seating plans were produced for the Chamber, typically daily, with microphones installed for use by those members not allocated seats on any given day. These measures enabled nearly all members to progressively take part in sittings while still maintaining safe numbers in the Chamber, particularly during divisions, quorums and Question Time. Hand sanitiser was placed at entrances and other locations in the Chamber, Federation Chamber and committee rooms, and chamber support staff engaged in frequent cleaning of surfaces during sittings.

To ensure a COVID-safe environment, several services for members continued to be suspended or reduced, such as mail runs, delivery of water and documents in the Chamber and Federation Chamber, and placement of stationery and water in committee rooms. To enable the media to cover proceedings while maintaining safe numbers in the Chamber and surrounds, special arrangements were put in place for the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery to access galleries normally reserved for visitors.

COVID-safe arrangements continued for departmental operations more generally, with signage placed in common areas to signify occupancy limits. An audit was undertaken of departmental accommodation to ensure that physical distancing requirements were met, and supply continued to all offices of hand sanitiser, soap dispensers and travel packs for relevant staff.

As room capacity numbers increased, from one person per four square metres of space to one person per two square metres, we introduced QR codes to register attendance at each space. This approach was applied to committee rooms and party rooms, and for those entering the chambers who were not part of a standard roster.

In December 2020, Comcare inspected the Chamber, Federation Chamber and committee rooms as well as departmental work areas to assess the COVID-19 related precautions. Comcare was satisfied with the preventative measures taken and the risk management approach.

The ongoing program of building works to update building systems and infrastructure continued throughout the year. The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office ensured work areas were advised of when they would be without power to reduce impacts on their operations.

## Media services

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office worked with the various media bureaus and the representative committee of the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery to ensure compliance with the rules for media-related activity in Parliament House and its precincts.

During the year, the Serjeant-at-Arms and Usher of the Black Rod and their delegates liaised closely with the press gallery to balance media access, security and parliamentary requirements on a daily basis and at major events, including the delivery of the Budget and Budget-in-Reply speeches.

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

During the year, the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office responded to 176 requests to film or photograph in the private areas of the building.

## Information for members

As part of the department's commitment to keep members and their staff informed about developments in the House, four editions of the members' bulletin *House Update* were published during the year. Three procedural briefing sessions were held during the year, on topics including the budget process and the parliament's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Informal drop-in centres, with a senior officer available to answer procedural and administrative queries, were offered to members every sitting Tuesday. An induction program was provided to a new member elected at a by-election.

New videos on aspects of parliamentary procedure were also developed in the period. These videos were added to the existing library available to members, their staff, and members of the Speaker's panel, on the House Connect members' intranet site.



*The swearing-in of the Member for Eden-Monaro, Ms Kristy McBain, on 24 August 2020, following a by-election. Image: Tracey Nearmy, Auspic/DPS.*

## Accommodation services

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

During the year, the office arranged 10 office relocations as a result of ministry and shadow ministry changes and the Leader of the Australian Greens being granted a larger suite. This number is significantly lower than the 40 relocations in 2019–20. The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office worked closely with the government and opposition whips to ensure that the relocations were completed quickly. Two major suite refurbishments were completed.

The office coordinated 408 requests to supply and move furniture (compared with 615 requests in 2019–20), as well as requests for routine and high-priority maintenance, as reported on below. All tasks were performed within agreed timeframes, to agreed standards, and to the satisfaction of senior office holders and individual members.

## Maintenance, access and transport services

Requests for maintenance, including routine and high-priority work, in members' suites and departmental offices are coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office. During the year, the office coordinated 528 high-priority requests, all of which were attended to promptly.

In addition, the office coordinated 102 routine requests for repairs or alterations to suites or common areas. The office takes a proactive approach by performing office shutdowns and inspections at the commencement of each long recess so that issues can be identified, reported and addressed while parliament is not sitting.

The office coordinated 909 requests for assistance with telephone faults, relocations and allocations of telephone numbers (compared with 584 requests in 2019–20). Faults reported were referred to telephone support in DPS within five minutes of receipt, and appropriate timeframes for resolution were agreed with the affected areas.

The office approved 1,444 requests by DPS and contractors working on behalf of DPS to access suites and general circulation areas for works related to general maintenance, services and projects. This represents a 43% increase on last year (1,011 requests).

The increase in access requests is the result of a large tranche of security projects, and works being undertaken in sitting weeks. Building systems are also reaching end-of-life, resulting in upgrade work to systems such as lighting and electrical distribution boards.

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office operates a Transport Office, which delivers a parliamentary shuttle service during sitting periods. The shuttle provides a readily available, secure car-with-driver service in Canberra for members. In 2020–21, the Transport Office managed 4,575 bookings from members, compared with 7,720 bookings in 2019–20 (figures exclude unbooked shuttle trips from the House of Representatives entrance). This represents a 40% decrease in bookings on last year, reflecting the reduced number of members present in Canberra due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a change to Sunday airport arrivals now being processed by COMCAR allocators.



*The Minister for Resources, Water and Northern Australia, the Hon Keith Pitt MP, wearing a mask in the Chamber.  
Image: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.*

## Parliament House security

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

The department is also represented on three other security-related consultative groups, all chaired by the Australian Federal Police. The Incident Planning and Response Committee is attended by representatives of the parliamentary departments and several external agencies. It meets before meetings of the Security Management Board in order to provide specialist advice to the board. The Joint Management Group is attended by representatives of the parliamentary departments, the Department of Finance and the Australian Federal Police. This group meets weekly to consider security-related matters and coordinate responses at the operational level. The third group, the Emergency Management Working Group, was also attended by representatives of the parliamentary departments, the Department of Finance and the Australian Federal Police. The primary role of the Emergency Management Working Group was to develop, coordinate and facilitate security exercises at Parliament House, as determined and scheduled by the Incident Planning and Response Committee. This group has since been subsumed into the Incident Planning and Response Committee.

## Security screening

Certain guests are exempt from security screening on entry to Parliament House. Approvals for any other exemptions are made jointly by the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod. Given the pandemic-related restrictions on travel and building entry no exemptions were approved in 2020–21.

## Information and communications technology

Under the parliamentary ICT service-delivery framework, most of the department's ICT capacity is provided by DPS. The framework is underpinned by a memorandum of understanding and service-level agreement between the parliamentary departments.

In support of this arrangement, the department continued to participate in a range of ICT advisory and management committees.

The Strategic ICT Group, which comprises senior parliamentary staff, provides strategic advice on ICT strategy, policy and risk. It considers the priorities for DPS capital expenditure on replacing or upgrading parliamentary business systems and closely monitors the service-level agreement. It met four times in the reporting period. The Serjeant-at-Arms is the department's representative on the committee.

The Serjeant-at-Arms also represents the department on the ICT Portfolio Board. This board makes key decisions to ensure the effective delivery of prioritised and funded ICT projects, including new ICT systems and enhancing existing applications.

With the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing, the department continued to work closely with DPS to ensure staff could access departmental ICT systems to work remotely in support of the parliament.

The department continued to support House of Representatives pages on the Parliament of Australia website, the consolidated intranet portal for senators and members and the departmental intranet site. There is an ongoing focus on updating content and improving user experience of intranet and Parliament of Australia webpages.

## Digital strategy

The vision and direction for the future delivery of digital services for the parliamentary departments is outlined in the Australian Parliament Digital Strategy 2019–2022. The strategy is a statement of intent which is intended to:

- » provide an overarching reference to guide all digital decision-making, particularly investment and architectural design
- » set enterprise ICT direction and priorities for the parliament that align with business needs
- » establish an agreed understanding of digital direction and priorities in support of the parliament's business.

The department is implementing a digital strategy to complement the Australian Parliament Digital Strategy 2019–2022. It is intended to bridge the gap between shared objectives and additional priorities and business needs of the department. The strategy will provide a framework to support a clear approach to a wide range of ICT challenges and opportunities.

## Parliamentary assistants program

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

Six students took part in the program in 2020–21: three were existing assistants (two from the Australian Capital Territory and one from Queensland), and three were new appointments (two from the Australian Capital Territory and one from Victoria). The new assistants are all studying at universities in Canberra.

## Members' salaries

All processing of members' salaries and entitlements by the People Strategies Office was in accordance with legislation and administrative decisions. In the 2021 members' survey, all respondents (100%) said that they were satisfied with support for salary payments (up from 95% last year).



## Outlook

In 2021–22, the department will continue to provide advice and services of a high standard to support the Speaker, members in Parliament House and the department. Priorities for the members' and corporate support program during the year include:

- » continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and ongoing support for special arrangements for sittings of the Chamber and Federation Chamber, meetings of parliamentary committees and general departmental operations
- » activity associated with the dissolution of the House and the opening of parliament, including the retirement of some members and reallocation of suites for new members.



*Condolence motion for the death of the Rt Hon John Douglas (Doug) Anthony AC CH, 4 February 2021.  
Image: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.*

# Schools hospitality

The department receives a special appropriation to provide modest hospitality to school groups visiting Parliament House. School visits are coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, working in partnership with the Parliamentary Education Office and the Visitor Engagement section of DPS. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 24).

## Performance summary

In 2020–21, 34,353 school students participated in educational tours of Parliament House, down from 86,315 in 2019–20 and 124,831 in 2018–19 (see Table 7). The reduction was due to the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although fewer students visited Parliament House during 2020–21, the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office continued to be busy managing cancellations and rescheduling bookings for school visits.

**Table 7: Students visiting Parliament House, by location and year, 2016–17 to 2020–21**

Year	ACT	NSW	NT	Qld	SA	Tas	Vic	WA	Other	Total
2016–17	2,783	65,653	686	15,828	5,610	1,683	19,971	5,440	–	117,654
2017–18	3,030	64,366	788	17,131	5,896	1,942	20,810	5,125	–	119,088
2018–19	2,904	69,333	715	17,766	6,340	1,784	21,054	4,935	–	124,831
2019–20	1,230	46,660	444	14,883	4,565	1,730	12,695	4,108	–	86,315
2020–21	2,443	24,963	0	1,241	681	2	5,017	6	–	34,353

All visiting students participated in a guided tour and visited both the House and Senate chambers; 64% (22,023) received hospitality and 83% (28,742) participated in the Parliamentary Education Office program (see pages 55 to 57 for more information on the activities of the Parliamentary Education Office).

## Outlook

Together, the parliamentary departments continue to manage school participation at Parliament House in line with COVID-safe practices. As at 30 June 2021, 109,055 students from 1,514 schools had been booked for the following 12 months, noting that these figures remain subject to change due to COVID-19 restrictions.





# Part 3

## Management and accountability

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# Corporate governance

The department is responsible for the provision of procedural, information and administrative services to members, the House and the broader parliament. As Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives, the Speaker's role is in some ways analogous to that of a minister of state in relation to an executive government department. The *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* restates the principles that the legislative arm of government is separate from the executive arm, and that staff employed under the Act are responsible to the Australian Parliament rather than to the government of the day. The Speaker oversees administration of the department and is accountable to the House in respect of that role. The Clerk, who is responsible under the Parliamentary Service Act for leading the department and its day-to-day management, reports to and advises the Speaker on departmental matters.

The department's corporate functions and staff provide critical support that enables the department to deliver programs and services. The department's corporate area is focused on providing quality and timely services, and on being responsive to the changing policy and operational needs of the department. This section discusses the department's governance structure and support services, which provide a framework to ensure accountability and the overall effectiveness of the department.

## Governance structure

### Legislation

The Australian parliamentary service, established by the Parliamentary Service Act, includes the Department of the House of Representatives as one of the four parliamentary departments. The Act also provides for the independence of the Clerk in that person's advisory functions; establishes an office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives; and confers responsibility for managing the department on the Clerk, under the Speaker.

The department's operations are governed by the Parliamentary Service Act and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). Other legislation, including the *Fair Work Act 2009*, also applies to the operations of the department. Together, these Acts set out the Clerk's formal responsibilities for managing the department.

## Executive and senior management

As at 30 June 2021, the department's Executive comprised the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and four Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 1 staff: the Clerk Assistant (Table), Clerk Assistant (Procedure), Clerk Assistant (Committees) and Serjeant-at-Arms. Each SES Band 1 officer is responsible for one or more of the department's offices (see Figure 1 on page 7). The roles and responsibilities of the Executive are described on page 8.

The senior management of the department comprises the Executive and managers at the Executive Band 2 level.

## Departmental management committees

### Executive

In 2020–21, the department's Executive held 11 formal meetings to consider and take decisions on a range of departmental management and administrative matters. Standing agenda items include finance, people strategies, work health and safety, and risk management. During the year the Executive also discussed:

- » COVID-19 responses and planning
- » arrangements to support staff working remotely, and plans to assist their transition back to working at Parliament House
- » the work health and safety management system
- » corporate planning, risk management and information management
- » the composition of the department's Audit and Risk Committee from 1 July 2021
- » information and communications technology (ICT) services rendered, projects and security
- » workforce action plans
- » planning for the introduction and implementation of e-invoicing
- » various departmental policies and strategies.

### Audit and Risk Committee

In recognition of its increased role in oversight of the department's risk management arrangements, in July 2020 the department's audit committee was formally renamed the Audit and Risk Committee. The committee provides independent assurance to the Clerk on the department's risk, control and compliance framework, and its external accountability responsibilities, with specific reference to the Clerk's position of accountable authority under the PGPA Act.

The committee's charter (available at [www.aph.gov.au/dhr/AuditCharter](http://www.aph.gov.au/dhr/AuditCharter)) was also updated during the year. Guided by this charter, the members of the Audit and Risk Committee play an essential role in ensuring the integrity and transparency of the department's reporting.

During the year the department recruited three new independent members to meet the requirements of Resource Management Guide 202. From 1 July 2021, a majority of members must not be officials of any Commonwealth entity. From that time, no officers of the department will be members of the committee. Mr Tim Courtney, who has served as an independent member since 2015, will also step down from his role.

### Chair

**Mr Paul Groenewegen** joined as chair of the department's Audit and Risk Committee in early 2018. Mr Groenewegen is an experienced executive and consultant with a background in fiscal management; governance practice; strategy development and implementation; compliance and risk activities; and government operations involving regulation and policy.

Mr Groenewegen's current and previous roles include governance and review work with government and industry organisations, executive roles with Defence Housing Australia, the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) and the Private Health Insurance Administration Council (PHIAC), and several financial management roles involving a range of functions from the oversight of whole-of-government payments through to the financial management of complex multi-program organisations. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Graduate Diploma of Applied Corporate Governance and is a certified practising accountant and graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

### **Independent members**

**Mr Tim Courtney** joined the committee as an independent member in 2015. Mr Courtney is a First Assistant Commissioner at the Australian Electoral Commission, a position he has held since 2014.

As head of the Capability Division he oversees the information technology, finance and business services, legal services, and funding and disclosure functions within the Australian Electoral Commission. In the lead-up to the 2016 federal election, Mr Courtney led the Senate Reform Program to implement the most comprehensive Senate voting reforms in 30 years, one of a number of major projects he has led. From 2010 to 2013, Mr Courtney was the Chief Information Officer for the Australian Electoral Commission and oversaw key advances in the use of technology by the agency, including the development of online enrolment services, electronic certified lists at polling places and the use of cloud services for the election results system.

Mr Courtney has held membership on a number of Commonwealth agency audit committees, and is a full member of the British Computer Society and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

**Mr Dermot Walsh** joined the committee as an independent member in 2015. He is the Chief Financial Officer/Company Secretary at Aboriginal Hostels Limited. Before this, Mr Walsh was Senior Assistant Ombudsman at the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman. He is an experienced executive and has had roles in both the Commonwealth and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) public services, in a diverse range of entities including the ACT Land Development Agency, the ACT Economic Development Directorate, Comcare, the National Gallery of Australia, the Defence Service Homes Insurance Scheme and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Mr Walsh has significant experience in government financial management, governance and risk management, human resource management, project management, ICT and program delivery. He has a Bachelor of Commerce degree, and is a certified practising accountant and member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

### **Members**

**Mr Peter Banson** was a member of the committee from 2017 up until his appointment as Deputy Clerk of the House of Representatives in February 2021.

Mr Banson has worked in the Department of the House of Representatives for 20 years in various roles including in the Procedure Office, Table Office and Speaker's Office and as a

committee secretary and Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms. He has a Bachelor of Science from the Australian National University and an Executive Master of Public Administration through the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

**Mr Russell Chafer** was appointed to the committee in March 2021. As the Clerk Assistant (Committees) in the Department of the House of Representatives, he is responsible for the committee support program of the department which provides a range of support services to House of Representatives committees and some joint committees.

Mr Chafer has worked for the department since 1993, in that time serving as secretary to several parliamentary committees as well as Director of the Clerk's Office, Director of the International and Parliamentary Relations Office and Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms. He also serves as the Reconciliation Action Plan Champion for the department.

**Mr Stuart Woodley** was a member of the committee from September 2019 until his resignation from the department in January 2021.

Mr Woodley worked in the department for eight years in various roles in the Committee Office, Clerk's and Speaker's offices, and Procedure Office. Before this he worked for the Attorney-General's Department, and as a solicitor in general practice. He has degrees in law and political science from the University of New England and an Executive Master of Public Administration through the Australia and New Zealand School of Government.

**Mr Glenn Worthington** was appointed to the committee in March 2021 and is the Clerk Assistant (Table) in the Department of the House of Representatives. He is responsible for the areas of the department that provide programming, procedural and legislative support to the Chamber and Federation Chamber of the House, as well as the parliament's international program. He acts as Clerk-at-the-Table of the House of Representatives.

Mr Worthington has worked in the Department of the House of Representatives since 2002 in many positions including as a director in the Table Office, committee secretary and Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms. He has degrees in political science from the University of Western Australia and Australian National University.

### **Observers**

The Serjeant-at-Arms, Mr James Catchpole – who manages the department's corporate functions – attends committee meetings as an adviser, together with representatives of the Australian National Audit Office, the department's internal audit team and the Chief Finance Officer.



## Audit and Risk Committee meeting attendance

**Table 8: Audit and Risk Committee meeting attendance, 2020–21**

Member	Sep 2020	Dec 2020	Mar 2021	Jun 2021
Paul Groenewegen (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Peter Banson (to February 2021)	✓	✓	N/A	N/A
Russell Chafer (from March 2021)	N/A	N/A	✓	✓
Tim Courtney	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dermot Walsh	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stuart Woodley (to January 2021)	✓	✓	N/A	N/A
Glenn Worthington (from March 2021)	N/A	N/A	✓	✓

### Audit Committee remuneration

In 2020–21, the chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Mr Paul Groenewegen, was paid \$13,078 for his services. No other committee members received remuneration for their work on the committee during the period.

## Other departmental committees

### Consultative Committee

The Consultative Committee is an important mechanism for communicating and consulting with staff on workplace issues. Chaired by the Deputy Clerk, the committee's membership includes three other representatives from the department's Executive, two elected staff representatives, and two union-nominated representatives. The committee met five times during 2020–21.

Standing agenda items for the meetings are:

- » implementation and monitoring of the enterprise agreement
- » proposals for change and developments affecting staff
- » reviews of implemented changes
- » work health and safety
- » reports on departmental activities.

Other matters discussed in the reporting period included:

- » the department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including arrangements for staff working from home
- » the revised work health and safety management system
- » the Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy and Guidelines, the Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy, and the Guidelines for Workplace Equity and Harassment Contact Officers, which had all been revised
- » other policies and guidelines, including the flexible work arrangements policy and guidelines, and the studies assistance policy
- » the establishment of co-design working groups to review staff engagement, culture and leadership, capability and staff wellbeing
- » support available for staff following the allegations raised in relation to the Parliament House workplace.

### ***Knowledge Management Steering Committee***

The Knowledge Management Steering Committee is a forum to discuss issues in information and knowledge management, and advocate for the sharing of departmental knowledge and skills. The committee has an advisory and monitoring role, and it may also make recommendations to the Executive for decision and undertake roles as requested by the Executive. The committee serves as the department's Information Governance Committee.

The committee is chaired by the Clerk Assistant (Table) and includes representatives from all areas of the department. The committee met once in the period and discussed the:

- » migration to Windows 10 and Office 365
- » access to and use of Microsoft Teams
- » planned migration of on-premise network shares to the cloud
- » remote access arrangements for staff working away from Parliament House
- » provision of laptops to all staff
- » procurement of Microsoft Surface Hubs for increased videoconferencing and collaboration capability
- » policy for access requests to records of parliamentary committees.

## Collaboration across parliamentary departments

### **Meetings of heads of parliamentary departments**

In 2020–21, the Clerk, the Clerk of the Senate, the Secretary of the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) and the Parliamentary Budget Officer held four formal meetings. The Clerk was chair of the group in the 2020 calendar year. Matters discussed during the period included:

- » business continuity and the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- » ICT governance arrangements and the delivery of ICT services by DPS
- » the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces
- » actions undertaken to implement the parliamentary reconciliation action plan.

The parliamentary departments continued to work together under the new *Strategic framework for the parliamentary service*, which was formally approved during the year. The framework emphasises the common goals of the parliamentary departments in serving, supporting and upholding the institutions of the parliament.

### **Parliamentary Administration Advisory Group**

In 2020–21, the Parliamentary Administration Advisory Group met four times to discuss matters of common interest across the parliamentary departments. Membership comprises the Serjeant-at-Arms, the Usher of the Black Rod, an assistant secretary of DPS and the Assistant Parliamentary Budget Officer from the Parliamentary Budget Office. The Serjeant-at-Arms chaired the group for the year 2020.

Matters discussed over the reporting period included:

- » shared and individual responses to the COVID-19 pandemic
- » arrangements to support members and senators participating in parliamentary proceedings from remote locations
- » general work health and safety matters
- » possible shared services arrangements for the parliamentary departments
- » proposed amendments to the Parliamentary Service Classification Rules
- » parliamentary precincts regulations.

### **Other inter-parliamentary department forums**

In 2020–21, the department was active in a number of other inter-parliamentary department forums that considered matters of common interest, particularly ICT and security. Departmental representatives participated in meetings of the following groups:

- » Joint Management Group – this group considers security-related matters. It is chaired by a senior representative from the Australian Federal Police, and the department is represented by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.

- » Incident Planning and Response Committee – this committee manages security and emergency incident planning and response operations. The committee is chaired by a senior representative from the Australian Federal Police, and the department is represented by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.
- » Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group – this group is the governing body responsible for the parliamentary service's *Reconciliation Action Plan 2019–2022*. The department is represented by its Reconciliation Action Plan Champion Mr Russell Chafer, the Clerk Assistant (Committees).
- » Emergency Management Working Group – this group develops, coordinates and facilitates security exercises at Parliament House. The group is chaired by a representative from the Australian Federal Police, and the department is represented by an Assistant Serjeant-at-Arms.
- » ICT Portfolio Board – this board makes the key decisions to ensure the effective delivery of prioritised and funded ICT projects. It is chaired by the DPS Chief Information Officer and the department is represented by the Serjeant-at-Arms.
- » Product Family Boards – these boards prioritise, approve and oversee ICT projects related to their areas of focus. The department is represented on all product family boards.
- » Strategic ICT Group – this group is the strategic ICT committee for the parliamentary departments. It provides strategic advice on priorities for ICT projects and initiatives, and considers issues relating to ICT strategy, policy and risk. It is chaired by the DPS Chief Information Officer and the department is represented by the Serjeant-at-Arms.
- » Service Delivery Working Group – this group is responsible for operational oversight of the *Memorandum of understanding (MoU) between parliamentary departments in relation to the provision of information and communications technology services*. It provides advice to the Strategic ICT Group, and the department is represented by the Director of Parliamentary and Business Information Services.
- » Information Security Working Group – this group is a forum to progress information security initiatives that require input from all parliamentary departments. The group is responsible for providing feedback and advice to the DPS Director of Cyber Security, to ensure a consistent and effective approach to information security across the parliamentary service. The department is represented by the Director of Parliamentary and Business Information Services.
- » Continuity Coordination Group – this group was established by DPS to coordinate that department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Serjeant-at-Arms was invited to attend meetings of the group to ensure consistency in coordination and communication.

## Departmental planning

The department recognises the importance of continuing to strengthen its corporate planning and performance reporting, to both comply with its statutory obligations and improve performance, transparency and accountability.

The corporate plan is the department's primary planning document. Meeting the relevant requirement under the PGPA Act, the department's *Corporate Plan 2020–21* was published in August 2020.

It covered 2020–21 and three forward years to 2023–24. The corporate plan sets out the department's purpose, the activities undertaken to achieve that purpose, and the measures for assessing the department's performance. It also describes the environment in which the department operates, planned capability initiatives, and the department's risk management and oversight systems.

The department fosters a collegiate approach to preparing the corporate plan, and some program areas and individual offices in the department develop their own business plans with a more operational focus, to complement the corporate plan.

The department seeks to embed the corporate plan through its comprehensive work performance management framework that applies to all staff, as well as through regular reporting sessions to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk and the broader department.

The Deputy Clerk, Serjeant-at-Arms and Clerks Assistant met formally with executive level staff several times during the period and led conversations about corporate and strategic issues. The outcomes of these conversations were included at two formal strategic planning meetings of the Executive. The strategic priorities derived were then shared with the department at the annual departmental conversations meeting, and with the Audit and Risk Committee at the annual briefing from the Clerk.



*A physically distanced departmental conversations meeting in the Great Hall at Parliament House, 3 November 2020. Image: Department of the House of Representatives.*

## Departmental accountability and reporting

The department's main formal external accountability mechanisms are the Portfolio Budget Statements and the annual report, prepared pursuant to section 65 of the Parliamentary Service Act. The annual report for 2019–20 provided an assessment of the department's performance against the targets set in the 2019–20 Portfolio Budget Statements and corporate plan, and presented the department's financial statements.

The department's Portfolio Budget Statements and annual report were made available to all members and published on the department's website. They were also published on the Commonwealth Transparency Portal.

## Managing risk

### Risk assessment and management

The department's approach to risk and management of risk is underpinned by its *Risk management policy and framework 2019–21* and *Risk management plan 2019–21*.

The risk management policy and framework details the department's commitment to embedding systematic risk management into governance, management and planning processes. It outlines the department's risk appetite and tolerance, and allocates responsibility for aspects of planning, mitigation, oversight and reporting to identified staff at various levels. The risk management plan identifies the key strategic risks for the department and the treatments to be applied, and is accompanied by separate operational risk management plans for specific business areas or subject matter.

The policy and plan are available to all staff via the departmental intranet. The department has a monitoring and reporting framework that requires regular reporting on risk and risk treatments to the Executive and to the Audit and Risk Committee. In April 2021, staff responsible for managing strategic risks met to review the key risk management documents, and updated versions of the risk management policy and framework and risk management plan were approved early in the 2021–22 reporting period.

The revised *Risk management policy and framework 2021–23* includes improvement suggestions from the Comcover risk management benchmarking program survey. The updated *Risk management plan 2021–23* incorporates lessons learnt from the department's experiences with the 2019–20 bushfires and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, including a greater focus on work health and safety risk.

### Comcover benchmarking

The Comcover risk management benchmarking program survey is now conducted biennially. The most recent survey was conducted in February and March 2021. It built on the results of the 2019 survey and assessed the maturity of the department's risk management, with five areas of focus:

- » risk governance
- » risk culture
- » risk capability

- » risk management framework and practices
- » organisational resilience and agility.

The department's maturity was assessed as 'embedded', which is the second highest maturity level, and is higher than the average maturity state of all survey participants and the department's peer group ('defined'). While this recognises the good work the department has done to further enhance its risk management practices, the survey results identified several areas for potential improvement, including risk culture and risk capability.

### **Business continuity**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the department faced multiple challenges to its normal operations, and business continuity continued to be a high priority during the year.

Physical distancing requirements, room capacity restrictions and travel restrictions required the department to create new capabilities, including supporting staff to work from home for extended periods and allowing members to participate in parliamentary proceedings from remote locations. The department's success in dealing with these challenges demonstrates its ability to adapt its operations to meet unexpected demands, a foundational capability of business continuity.

A departmental business continuity plan was in force throughout the reporting year, complemented by office-level business resumption plans. The business continuity plan is managed by the Serjeant-at-Arms and endorsed by the Clerk. The business continuity network, with representation from across the department, is responsible for business continuity governance and oversight.



*Departmental staff participating in an evacuation exercise at Parliament House. Image: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.*

During 2020–21, the business continuity plan was complemented by the establishment of an internal COVID-19 Coordination Group. The purpose of the group is to facilitate a coordinated response to COVID-19 matters. It is an advisory and consultative forum with all offices across the department represented, and it meets as required in response to evolving COVID-19 advice and circumstances.

The business continuity plan requires scenario-based exercises designed to test aspects of the department's business continuity capability, with a new exercise developed each year. During 2020–21, the department held two scenario-based exercises. The first involved the Table Office and the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office. The second focused on the Finance Office, People Strategies Office, and Parliamentary and Business Information Services teams. The exercises were facilitated and reviewed by the department's internal auditors, who concluded that all teams demonstrated their ability to effectively respond to a range of sudden disruptions, and made several recommendations that were accepted by the department.

### **Internal audit**

Internal audit services are provided to the department by BellchambersBarrett. A strategic internal audit plan is prepared for the department every three years, and an annual audit plan is prepared in consultation with senior management. The strategic internal audit plan 2018–21 addresses strategic, fraud and security risks identified in the department's various risk management plans, as well as emerging strategic and operational priorities identified by management.

During the reporting period, BellchambersBarrett conducted reviews of the following:

- » payroll services and processing
- » annual performance statement
- » strategic risk management plan and risk management policy and framework
- » fraud control plan and fraud risk assessment.

A review of the department's business continuity planning commenced in the reporting period, and will be completed in 2021–22. In partnership with the Department of the Senate, the department also began a joint review of the management of ICT capability, projects and risks.

During the year, the department also began planning to procure future internal audit services under the Department of Finance's new Management Advisory Services Panel.



## Preventing fraud

The department is committed to compliance with the provisions of section 10 of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule) relating to preventing, detecting and dealing with fraud.

The department's *Fraud Control Plan 2019–21* outlines strategies and processes for preventing and detecting fraud, and for investigating and reporting instances of fraud should they occur. All new staff are required to complete online training on financial management responsibilities and fraud control. The department's monitoring and reporting framework requires regular reporting to the Executive and the Audit and Risk Committee. No significant instances of fraud were identified or reported to the Speaker during the year.

The internal auditors prepared the department's *Fraud risk assessment 2019–21*. It provides details of the approach and methodology used in assessing fraud risks within the department. It also details a range of processes and activities in terms of their potential fraud risks, and the controls in place that prevent, detect or deter the risks.

In May 2021, senior officers responsible for managing the department's fraud risks met to review the key fraud management documents. The revised *Fraud Control Plan 2021–23* and *Fraud risk assessment 2021–23* are expected to be approved early in the 2021–22 reporting period.

## Ethical standards and behaviour

The Parliamentary Service Values and Code of Conduct, which are set out in the Parliamentary Service Act, provide staff with a framework for ethical conduct. The department promotes sound ethical behaviour.

During induction, all new staff are advised about what it means to work in a values-based environment, and how ethical standards apply to their day-to-day work.

## Statement of significant non-compliance with the finance law

The department did not identify any instances of significant non-compliance with the finance law during 2020–21. The finance law incorporates the PGPA Act, any rules and instruments created under the PGPA Act, and appropriation and supply Acts.

## Public interest disclosure

The Clerk, as the principal officer of the department for the purposes of the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013*, has established procedures and appointed authorised officers for facilitating and dealing with public interest disclosures relating to the department, in accordance with that Act.

During 2020–21, the department continued to ensure that information on public interest disclosure procedures was available to all staff. During the year, four authorised officers were approved to handle public interest disclosures.

## Privacy

Although not an entity to which the *Privacy Act 1988* applies, the department abides by the principles of the legislation in its dealings with employees and the handling of their records. It has adopted a departmental privacy policy that is consistent with the Act.

During 2020–21, the department was notified of one privacy complaint made to the Australian Information Commissioner. The department responded to the complaint, and no further action was taken by the Commissioner.

## Ecologically sustainable development and environmental reporting

DPS is responsible for managing Parliament House and the parliamentary precincts. That department reports in accordance with section 516A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* in its annual report, which is available from the Parliament of Australia website and Commonwealth Transparency Portal.

# External scrutiny

The department's operations are primarily administrative and are therefore not usually subject to formal external scrutiny.

## Judicial and administrative decisions

During 2020–21, no judicial decisions or decisions of administrative tribunals or the Australian Information Commissioner had, or are anticipated to have, a significant effect on the operations of the department.

## Reports on the operations of the department

In 2020–21, the Auditor-General did not present any reports directly relating to the administration of the department or its operations. The Australian National Audit Office provided an unqualified audit report on the department's 2020–21 financial statements.

In 2020–21, the Commonwealth Ombudsman did not issue any reports on the operations of the department. There were no capability reviews of the department released during the period.

The department continued to support the Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration's consideration of the department's funding requirements and budget position. During 2020–21, the committee met seven times and presented three reports:

- » *Report No 19: Budget estimates 2020–21*
- » *Report No 20: Annual report 2019–20*
- » *Report No 21: Budget estimates 2021–22.*

Due to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the budget cycle, the committee presented two reports on the department's budget estimates during the period. The committee also considered matters including the updated closed-circuit television code of practice and Parliament House access arrangements.

## Disability reporting mechanisms

Disability reporting now sits within the framework of the National Disability Strategy 2010–2020, which sets out a 10-year national policy to improve the lives of people with disability, promote participation and create a more inclusive society.

On 29 July 2020, a National Disability Strategy position paper was released for public consultation by the Department of Social Services. The results of these consultations will inform the development of a new National Disability Strategy for release in the second half of 2021.

Progress reports, as well as an independent review report, can be found at [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au).

## Freedom of information

The department is excluded from the application of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, under section 68A of the Parliamentary Service Act.

# Management of people

## Workforce profile

As at 30 June 2021, the department had 178 employees – 127 ongoing, 18 non-ongoing and 33 casual.

The department's workforce is 60.9% female, 39.1% are aged over 50 years, and 0.6% identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

## Employee statistics

Tables 9 to 13 show the department's employee statistics as at 30 June 2021 (and 30 June 2020 for comparison), including whether staff are in ongoing, non-ongoing or casual positions. The tables provide information on the substantive classification of staff, as well as their gender and geographical location.

**Table 9: Employment type by classification and gender, as at 30 June 2021**

Classification	Ongoing		Non-ongoing		Casual		Total		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
SES 2	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1
SES 1	4	1	–	–	–	–	4	1	5
EB 2	5	14	1	–	1	–	7	14	21
EB 1	18	23	1	4	–	–	19	27	46
PSL 6	5	18	–	2	–	–	5	20	25
PSL 5	1	3	1	–	–	–	2	3	5
PSL 4	5	24	7	1	1	–	13	25	38
PSL 3	3	2	–	–	–	2	3	4	7
PSL 2	–	–	–	1	16	13	16	14	30
PSL 1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>178</b>

The department had no staff recorded in the human resource management information system as indeterminate, intersex or unspecified. Figures exclude the Clerk of the House.

Table 10: Employment type by classification and gender, as at 30 June 2020

Classification	Ongoing		Non-ongoing		Casual		Total		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
SES 2	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	1
SES 1	4	–	–	–	–	–	4	–	4
EB 2	8	12	–	–	–	–	8	12	20
EB 1	17	23	1	3	–	–	18	26	44
PSL 6	6	22	–	3	–	–	6	25	31
PSL 5	1	4	–	1	–	–	1	5	6
PSL 4	6	20	2	4	1	–	9	24	33
PSL 3	3	2	–	–	–	2	3	4	7
PSL 2	1	–	–	1	19	11	20	12	32
PSL 1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>178</b>

The department had no staff recorded in the human resource management information system as indeterminate, intersex or unspecified. Figures exclude the Clerk of the House.

Table 11: Employment type by employment status, as at 30 June 2020 and 30 June 2021

Employment type	Full-time		Part-time		Casual		Total	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
Ongoing	113	113	17	14	–	–	130	127
Non-ongoing	14	16	1	2	–	–	15	18
Casual	–	–	–	–	33	33	33	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>178</b>

Figures exclude the Clerk of the House.

Table 12: Employment type by office and location, as at 30 June 2020 and 30 June 2021

	Ongoing		Non-ongoing		Casual		Total	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
<b>Office</b>								
Executive	9	11	–	–	–	–	9	11
Executive support / project staff	2	3	–	–	–	1	2	4
Table Office	12	10	–	–	1	–	13	10
Procedure Office	10	9	–	1	–	–	10	10
Committee Office	62	61	6	12	–	–	68	73
International and Parliamentary Relations Office	8	7	2	–	–	–	10	7
Parliamentary and Business Information Services Office	10	9	3	3	1	1	14	13
Finance Office	5	6	1	–	–	–	6	6
People Strategies Office	6	5	3	2	–	–	9	7
Serjeant-at-Arms' Office	7	7	–	–	31	31	38	38
<b>State or territory</b>								
Australian Capital Territory	131	128	15	18	33	33	179	178
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>179</b>

Figures include the Clerk of the House.

Table 13: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff, as at 30 June 2020 and 30 June 2021

Employment type	Staff numbers	
	2020	2021
Ongoing	1	1
Non-ongoing	–	–
Casual	–	–
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

## Employee engagement

### *Investors in People standard*

Investors in People is an international quality framework that benchmarks the effectiveness of leadership and management practices. The standard defines what is required to lead, support and manage people well with sustainable results. The department has held accreditation against the Investors in People standard since 2002, and was awarded 'Investors in People Silver' in 2018 against Investors in People's improved framework.

The achievement of the standard recognises the strong commitment of departmental employees to ensure the highest possible standards of service. As recommended in the latest accreditation report, the department has established a working group to identify and carry forward areas for future improvement.

One of the requirements for retaining accreditation is to be reassessed against the standard every three years by an independent assessor. As routine accreditation is due in the next period, the department as usual will consider the continuing relevance of the framework to the department.

### *Staff survey*

In June 2021, the department conducted its annual staff survey to measure employee sentiment, views about leadership and observations about the broader working environment.

The results of the survey are used to inform improvement initiatives and to further develop the culture of the department. Ideas and feedback from employees are an essential element when seeking to deliver sustainable change across the department and to sustain a high-performance culture.

The department has established three internal benchmarks based on the results of the survey. These benchmarks, or index scores, correspond to the total percentage of staff selecting 'strongly agree' and 'agree' in response to specific sets of questions. The three benchmarks are as follows:

- » The 'core elements' satisfaction index measures the extent to which the department provided the core elements needed to attract, focus and keep the most talented staff (satisfaction rate of 78% in 2021 and an average of 79.2% over the past five years).
- » The 'leadership' satisfaction index measures the level of satisfaction of staff with their managers against the department's leadership statement (satisfaction rate of 70.5% in 2021 and an average of 74.6% over the past five years).
- » The 'benefits' satisfaction index measures the level of staff satisfaction with pay and working conditions (satisfaction rate of 69.4% in 2021 and an average of 76.6% over the past five years).

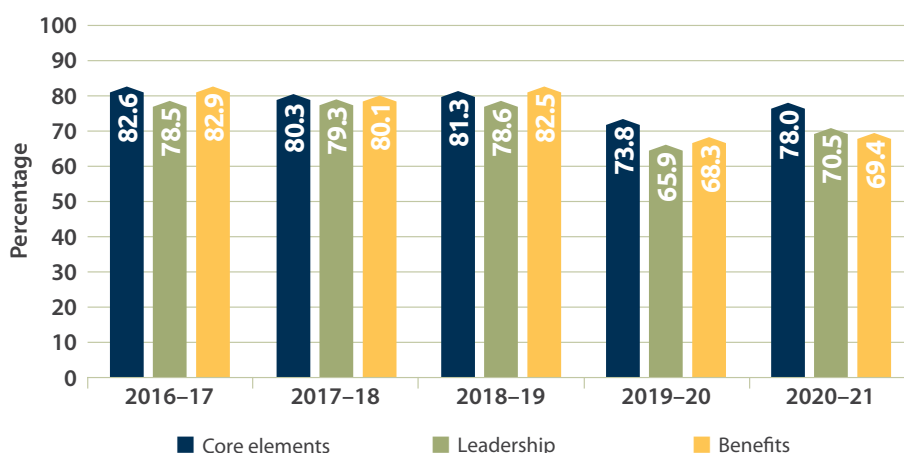
Figure 6 shows the performance of the satisfaction elements over the past five years.

In response to the survey undertaken in 2020, the department introduced four co-design working groups to give staff a further opportunity to make a practical contribution to conversations about the department's future, aligned with the issues of concern that were identified in the survey:

- » staff engagement
- » culture and leadership
- » building capability
- » staff wellbeing.

Each working group presented practical options to the Executive for consideration.

**Figure 6: Staff survey satisfaction elements, 2016–17 to 2020–21**



## People strategies: planning and delivery

### Recruitment

The department advertised to fill 16 ongoing vacancies during 2020–21 (compared with 14 in 2019–20), of which seven were filled by external applicants.

### Retention

In 2020–21, 13 ongoing and 27 non-ongoing staff left the department. The turnover rate was 10% for ongoing staff.

Exit interviews with staff leaving the department continued to be conducted by SES managers. Three such interviews were conducted during the year.

### Alumni

The department formed an alumni association of former staff in 2008. On 30 June 2021, it had 284 members. The association issued one newsletter during the year. There was no annual general meeting or reception for members during the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



### **Social Club**

The Department of the House of Representatives Social Club was limited in its ability to bring staff together in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, the club shifted its focus to activities that were COVID-safe, including outdoor morning teas, fortnightly book sales and raffles, small team celebrations for Christmas and coordinating charitable donations. During the financial year, the club raised over \$3,900 for various charities through its participation in Jeans for Genes Day, STEPtember, Walk for Autism and the Push-Up Challenge. The club also donated non-perishable items to the Canberra Basket Brigade's Christmas appeal to help those who are in need in the local community.



*The department's Social Club comes together for its annual general meeting, 30 July 2020. Image: Department of the House of Representatives.*

## Graduate placement program

Together with the Department of the Senate and the Parliamentary Budget Office, the department participates in and administers the Parliament of Australia Graduate Program. The purpose of the program is to expose graduates working in Australian public service departments and agencies to how their home department or agency interacts with the parliamentary departments in their support of the parliament.

The program offered placements of three to six months to graduates from government agency graduate programs. Graduates were enabled to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to make a significant contribution to the department and broader parliamentary service. The program continued to draw a high level of interest from graduates from a range of agencies. Ten graduates undertook placements in the department in 2020–21.

Feedback from graduates confirmed that the program is highly successful and that the objectives of the placements were met.



Graduate placement program members Michaela Gillard, Sharda Bhargava and Savannah Pingol. Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.

## Learning and development

In 2020–21, the department delivered a total of 54 face-to-face and virtual training and development sessions to employees, based around the core themes of health and safety, respectful relationships, workplace bullying and harassment prevention, management and leadership capability.

Table 14 shows the number of staff from each classification attending training, the total number of training days attended, and the average training days attended per person for 2020–21 (and the latter for 2019–20 also, for comparison).

**Table 14: Staff attendance at training courses**

Classification	Headcount	Training days attended	Average training days attended per person	
			2019–20	2020–21
Senior Executive Service	7	10.9	2.9	1.6
Executive Band 2	21	70.7	2.7	3.4
Executive Band 1	46	114.5	2.3	2.5
Parliamentary Service Level 6	25	49.6	1.9	2.0
Parliamentary Service Level 5	5	11	1.2	2.2
Parliamentary Service Level 4	38	80.3	1.4	2.1
Parliamentary Service Level 3	7	22.7	1.2	3.2
Parliamentary Service Level 2	30	17.2	1.6	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>376.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>2.2</b>

The Clerk of the House is included with the Senior Executive Service for the purposes of this table.

### **Studies assistance**

The department's study assistance scheme allows employees to complete relevant tertiary study to improve their professional skills and knowledge. Five employees accessed studies assistance during the year (compared with six in 2019–20). Collectively, financial assistance of \$6,713 was administered (compared with \$6,097 in 2019–20), along with a total of 29 days of study leave on full pay.

### **Performance assessment**

All eligible staff participated in the annual work performance assessment cycle, which was completed on 31 October 2020. The cycle involves setting individual work objectives, conducting performance assessments, preparing individual development plans and providing feedback to supervisors. Information from the individual development plans is used to formulate the training program for the next calendar year.

### **Diversity and inclusion**

The department is committed to actively building a diverse and inclusive workplace that promotes gender equality and harnesses the skills and experiences of people from all backgrounds.

During 2020–21, the department continued to build on its commitment to diversity and inclusion through various initiatives and developments. In December 2020, the Clerk launched the department's new Workplace Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2020–2022. The strategy seeks to ensure a positive work environment where diversity is celebrated and inclusion is a focus for all employees, and it sets out a framework for increasing workforce participation rates in different diversity groups.

Training continued to be provided to new staff in the prevention of discrimination, bullying and harassment, and all staff were required to attend a training update on these important aspects of workplace behaviour. A review of the policies and guidelines establishing this framework of appropriate behaviours was completed in 2020.

The department also continued to be involved with the Indigenous Australian Government Development Program, which offers graduates an opportunity to undertake a three-month placement in the department under our Indigenous Secondment Program. This is the fifth year of the Indigenous Secondment Program and it is a significant part of the department's commitment to providing opportunities for the career progression and professional development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. At the completion of the program, participants return to their home departments with valuable experiences of parliamentary operations.

In 2020–21, there were two graduates placed with the department through the Indigenous Secondment Program.

## Employment arrangements

The *Department of the House of Representatives Enterprise Agreement 2017–2020* came into effect on 6 December 2017 with a nominal expiry date of 29 November 2020. The agreement provides non-SES staff with competitive remuneration and employment conditions. The agreement continues to remain in operation and, following extensive consultation, staff voted in favour of the Clerk issuing a determination under section 24(1) of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* to give effect to salary increases in lieu of bargaining. The first salary increase (2%) under the determination was applied in May 2021, with further increases to be applied in November 2021 and 2022 (each at 2%). There is no provision in the agreement to remunerate staff based on performance. The Clerk did not make a determination under section 24(1) of the *Parliamentary Service Act* in 2020–21 to pay staff a monetary bonus.

Employment conditions for SES staff are set out in individual determinations made under subsection 24(1) of the *Parliamentary Service Act*. Many of these conditions are aligned with the department's enterprise agreement. Table 15 shows the numbers of staff employed under different employment instruments.

**Table 15: Employment arrangements for SES and non-SES staff, as at 30 June 2021**

Employment arrangement	SES	Non-SES	Total
Enterprise agreement	–	172	172
Individual flexibility arrangement	–	–	–
Australian workplace agreement	–	–	–
Common law contract	–	–	–
Determination under subsection 24(1) of the <i>Parliamentary Service Act 1999</i>	6	–	6

## Remuneration

Salary ranges under the 2017–20 enterprise agreement, as at the end of the reporting period, are summarised in Table 16.

**Table 16: Salary ranges of staff covered by the 2017–20 enterprise agreement, as at 30 June 2021**

Classification	Salary range	
	Minimum (\$)	Maximum (\$)
Executive Band 2	143,525	152,076
Executive Band 1	110,892	123,691
Parliamentary Service Level 6	89,367	101,425
Parliamentary Service Level 5	82,604	87,407
Parliamentary Service Level 4	73,029	79,011
Parliamentary Service Level 3	66,068	70,975
Parliamentary Service Level 2	58,716	64,111
Parliamentary Service Level 1	51,904	56,793

In 2020–21, departmental employee benefits totalled \$20.842 million (compared with \$20.892 million in 2019–20).

## Non-salary benefits

The department offers staff a range of additional non-remuneration benefits, including:

- » annual influenza vaccination
- » mental health and wellbeing support
- » mentoring and coaching programs
- » in-house capability development programs
- » access to a serious illness leave bank
- » study assistance to eligible employees
- » access to flexible working arrangements
- » contributions to relevant professional memberships.

## Executive remuneration

The PGPA Rule requires the reporting of executive remuneration information for specified officials of Commonwealth entities on an accrual basis. Tables 17 to 19 summarise the remuneration of key management personnel and senior executives. There are no other highly paid staff for whom remuneration details are required to be provided. During short absences of senior executive staff, parliamentary officers may be provided with an opportunity to act in the position of the absent senior executive staff. These short acting opportunities are not included in Tables 17 to 19.

**Table 17: Key management personnel, 2020–21**

Name	Position	Term as key management personnel
Claessa Surtees	Clerk	Full year
Catherine Cornish	Deputy Clerk	Part year – retired 29 March 2021
Peter Banson	Clerk Assistant (Table) / Deputy Clerk	Full year – appointed Deputy Clerk on 1 April 2021
Glenn Worthington	Clerk Assistant (Table)	Part year – appointed 18 March 2021
Jerome Brown	Clerk Assistant (Procedure)	Part year – resigned 11 December 2020
Peggy Danaee	Clerk Assistant (Procedure)	Part year – appointed 18 March 2021
Stuart Woodley	Clerk Assistant (Committees)	Part year – resigned 15 January 2021
Russell Chafer	Clerk Assistant (Committees)	Part year – appointed 18 March 2021
James Catchpole	Serjeant-at-Arms	Full year

In accordance with the PGPA Rule, information about the remuneration and benefits of key management personnel is set out in Table 18.

Table 18: Remuneration and benefits of key management personnel, 2020–21

Name	Position title	Short-term benefits			Post-employment benefits	Other long-term benefits		Termination benefits	Total remuneration
		Base salary (\$)	Bonuses (\$)	Other benefits and allowances (\$)	Superannuation contributions (\$)	Long-service leave (\$)	Other long-term benefits (\$)	(\$)	(\$)
Claessa Surtees	Clerk	384,206	–	16,012	56,705	9,490	–	–	466,413
Catherine Cornish	Deputy Clerk (until 29 March 2021)	176,167	–	19,874	32,322	4,437	–	–	232,800
Peter Banson	Clerk Assistant (Table) / Deputy Clerk	212,193	–	26,737	36,552	15,066	–	–	290,548
Jerome Brown	Clerk Assistant (Procedure) (until 11 December 2020)	91,445	–	11,883	16,245	2,216	–	–	121,789
Stuart Woodley	Clerk Assistant (Committees) (until 15 January 2021)	102,435	–	14,649	19,046	2,647	–	–	138,777
James Catchpole	Serjeant-at-Arms	203,457	–	26,737	35,385	4,829	–	–	270,408
Peggy Danaee	Clerk Assistant (Procedure) (from 18 March 2021)	96,284	–	7,683	12,462	20,748	–	–	137,177
Russell Chafer	Clerk Assistant (Committees) (from 18 March 2021)	90,493	–	7,683	13,546	6,403	–	–	118,125
Glenn Worthington	Clerk Assistant (Table) (from 18 March 2021)	86,213	–	7,683	11,743	6,584	–	–	112,223
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,442,893</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>138,941</b>	<b>234,006</b>	<b>72,420</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,888,260</b>

## Other senior executives

During the reporting period ended 30 June 2021, the department had one senior executive who did not meet the definition of key management personnel for part of the year (see Table 19).

**Table 19: Remuneration and benefits of senior executives, 2020–21**

Remuneration band (\$)	Number of senior executives	Short-term benefits			Post-employment benefits	Other long-term benefits		Termination benefits	Total remuneration
		Base salary (\$)	Bonuses (\$)	Other benefits and allowances (\$)		Long-service leave (\$)	Other long-term benefits (\$)		
0 – 220,000	1	94,933	–	14,854	20,307	(84,530)	–	–	45,564

## Other highly paid staff

During the reporting period ended 30 June 2021, the department did not have any highly paid staff who did not meet the definitions of key management personnel or senior executives; therefore, there is no reporting on other highly paid staff.

## Work health and safety

The department is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act), the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011* and the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*. During the reporting period, all reasonably practicable measures were taken to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees while at work, in line with the department's work health and safety policies.

The department aims to achieve high standards of work health and safety in its operations and to fulfil its duty of care by providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. There are a number of shared work health and safety risks across Parliament House that are the responsibility of all parliamentary departments. In 2020–21, to continue to meet its obligations under the WHS Act, the department:

- » engaged Deloitte Risk Advisory to assist with the continual development of the work health and safety management system, so there is a robust system in place to ensure workers are protected from safety risks across the spectrum of activities the department conducts and the shared workplace it operates in



- » actively engaged with Comcare in respect to COVID-19 inspections and other safety matters
- » provided work health and safety training and information to all staff, with a continued focus on mental health awareness training through the self-care workshop delivered by Lifeline for all staff
- » continued to promote flexibility-by-default working arrangements, including part-time, working from home, and flexible start and end times
- » enhanced positive early intervention outcomes that have supported injured or ill workers to achieve an early, safe and sustainable return to work
- » conducted workstation assessments with a strengthened approach to reasonable adjustment
- » provided a confidential counselling service through the employee assistance program
- » continued to promote a healthy lifestyle, including providing influenza vaccinations and healthy living reimbursements.

Three workers compensation claims were lodged during the reporting period.

During the year, there were no dangerous occurrences requiring notification under section 37 of the WHS Act, no investigations were carried out, and no directions or notices were received by the department under section 191 of the Act.

Following an anonymous complaint made in early 2021, Comcare reviewed the department's policies, procedures and controls for managing claims of bullying and harassment, including holding a meeting with the department's Workplace Equity and Harassment contact officers, and union and staff representatives. Comcare found that the 'Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking' (the department) had complied with its duties under the WHS Act and Regulations.

### ***Response to the COVID-19 pandemic***

The department continued to prioritise the wellbeing and support of staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health and other updates, based on advice from government agencies and authorities, including the Chief Medical Officer, and decisions of the Presiding Officers and the Clerk, were regularly communicated to staff. Information and resources were made available on the department's intranet. A COVID-19 Coordination Group was established as a responsive consultative forum, with all offices across the department represented.

Following advice from the Australian Public Service Commission to Commonwealth agencies to provide the greatest support possible to assist employees in receiving a COVID-19 vaccination, the Clerk approved a new category of leave to cover getting vaccinated and reasonable travel time.

Emphasis was placed on mental health and resilience throughout the year, with staff encouraged to make use of the department's employee assistance program, talk to

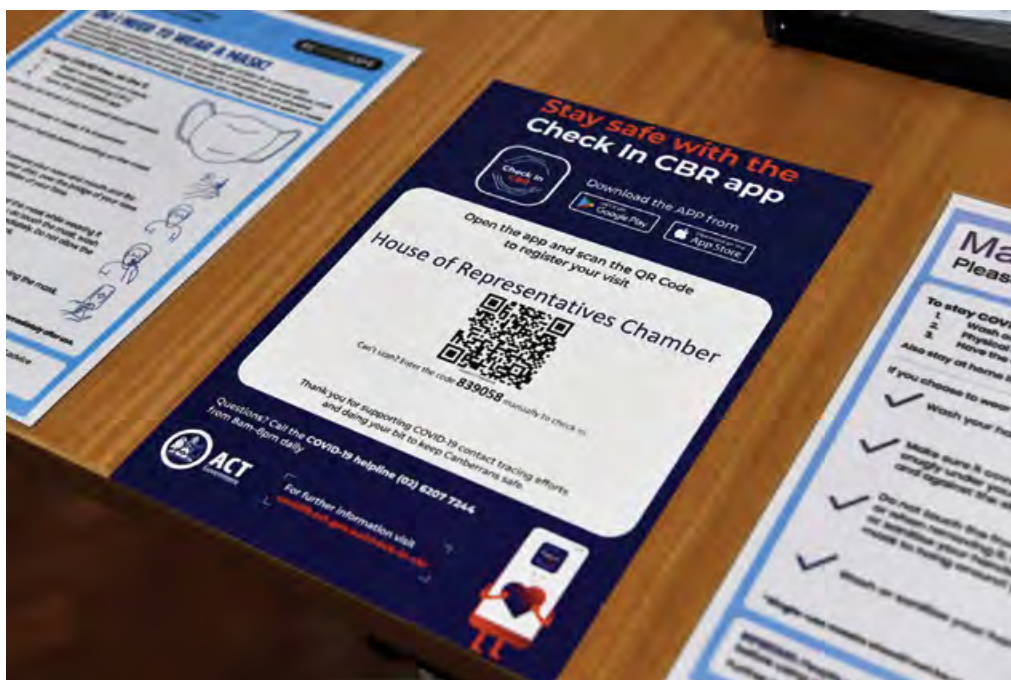
their managers or a senior manager about any concerns, and take up additional training opportunities.

Risk mitigation plans, templates and guidance for COVID-safe events at Parliament House and committee travel were developed, building on existing risk management practice, including the department's risk register.

After a sustained period of working from home in the previous year, and occasions again this year when staff were encouraged to work from home where possible as part of health precaution measures, there is a greater appreciation of the ability to work remotely. Some staff continued to work part of the week from home.

Remote working capability has been enhanced with the rollout of Windows 10 and Office 365. The department initiated issuing new laptops to all staff. With cameras and microphones the laptops support videoconferencing, Microsoft Teams and other online meetings. There were improvements in remote access to the parliamentary computing network provided by DPS. The department conducted a major review of its flexible working arrangements and introduced a new flexible working policy and guidelines in May 2021.

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office continued to work closely with the other parliamentary departments and health authorities to continually review COVID-19 arrangements and ensure that necessary measures were in place for the safety of all staff working at Parliament House.



One of the COVID-19 information and check-in stations located throughout Parliament House, providing masks, hand sanitiser and the Check In CBR QR code, May 2021. Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.

# Management of financial resources

## Asset management

The department's asset management strategy focuses on efficient asset utilisation and allows the department to identify underperforming assets. The department operates within a controlled environment at Parliament House and the risk of loss for the majority of assets is minimal.

The department adopts a 'break-fix' replacement policy for office machines and equipment. During the year asset purchases included TVs, fridges, tables, trolleys, and printing and binding equipment.

A review of the intangible assets category was conducted to verify assets in use. All software items were found to be in use. There was no indication that any departmental assets were impaired to any extent approaching materiality.

## Purchasing

The department has in place policies and procedures it considers appropriate to assist staff to comply with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules. The department encourages use of established panels and continues to access whole-of-Australian-Government contracts for the provision of travel and related services. Purchases of stationery and office supplies were made through the whole-of-Australian-Government contract with Winc.

During the reporting period the department entered into 36 contracts above the reporting threshold, 28 of which were reported on AusTender within the prescribed period. No other instances of non-compliance with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules have been identified.

## Reportable consultancy contracts

Consultants are engaged where the department lacks specialist expertise or when independent research, review or assessment is required. Consultants are typically engaged to investigate or diagnose a defined issue or problem; carry out defined reviews or evaluations; or provide independent advice, information or specialist solutions to assist in the department's decision-making.

Before engaging consultants, the department takes into account the skills and resources required for the task, the skills available internally, and the cost-effectiveness of engaging external expertise. The decision to engage a consultant is made in accordance with the PGPA Act and PGPA Rule, the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and relevant internal policies.

During 2020–21, one new consultancy contract was entered into, although no expenditure was made on this during the period. In addition, four ongoing consultancy contracts were active in 2020–21, involving total expenditure of \$0.064 million.

**Table 20: Reportable consultancy contracts, 2020–21**

Reportable consultancy contract	Number	Expenditure (\$)
New contracts entered into during the reporting period	1	–
Ongoing contracts entered into during a previous reporting period	4	63,656.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>63,656.74</b>

**Table 21: Organisations receiving a share of reportable consultancy contract expenditure, 2020–21**

Organisation	Proportion of 2020–21 total spend (%)	Expenditure (\$)
BellchambersBarrett Pty Ltd (32 600 351 648)	94	59,806.74
JLL Public Sector Valuations Pty Ltd (39 167 493 889)	6	3,850.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>63,656.74</b>

Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on contracts for consultancies. Information on the value of contracts and consultancies is available on the AusTender website at [www.tenders.gov.au](http://www.tenders.gov.au).

## Reportable non-consultancy contracts

During 2020–21, 35 new reportable non-consultancy contracts were entered into involving total expenditure of \$1.252 million. In addition, 27 ongoing non-consultancy contracts were active in 2020–21, involving total expenditure of \$0.504 million.

**Table 22: Reportable non-consultancy contracts, 2020–21**

Reportable non-consultancy contract	Number	Expenditure (\$)
New contracts entered into during the reporting period	35	1,251,623.52
Ongoing contracts entered into during a previous reporting period	24	499,764.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1,751,388.11</b>

**Table 23: Organisations receiving a share of reportable non-consultancy contract expenditure, 2020–21**

Organisation	Proportion of 2020–21 total spend (%)	Expenditure (\$)
Dell Australia Pty Limited (46 003 855 561)	24.98	438,537.00
Technology One Limited (84 010 487 180)	15.91	279,341.98
Yellow Edge Pty Ltd (25 099 253 255)	10.87	190,729.00
Data#3 Limited (31 010 545 267)	8.15	143,044.22
Fuji Xerox Australia Pty Ltd (63 000 341 819)	7.26	127,503.20
<b>Total of the largest shares</b>	<b>67.18</b>	<b>1,179,155.40</b>

Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on reportable non-consultancy contracts. Information on the value of reportable non-consultancy contracts is available on the AusTender website at [www.tenders.gov.au](http://www.tenders.gov.au).

## Competitive tendering and contracting

There were no instances during 2020–21 where contracts were let that did not provide for the Auditor-General to have access to the contractor's premises, or where the accountable authority exempted a contract from being published on the AusTender website.

## Procurement initiatives to support small business

The department supports small business participation in the Commonwealth Government procurement market. Small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) and small enterprise participation statistics are available on the Department of Finance's website at [www.finance.gov.au/procurement/statistics-on-commonwealth-purchasing-contracts](http://www.finance.gov.au/procurement/statistics-on-commonwealth-purchasing-contracts).

Consistent with paragraph 5.4 of the Commonwealth Procurement Rules, the department's procurement practices support SMEs by utilising the following practices:

- » the Commonwealth Contracting Suite for low-risk procurements valued under \$200,000
- » on-time payments made to SMEs by electronic funds transfer or by the use of payment cards.

## Advertising and market research

During 2020–21, the department did not conduct any advertising campaigns.

## Legal services expenditure

Schedule 1, Part 1, paragraph 11.1(ba) of the Legal Services Directions 2017 requires the department to publicly disclose its legal services expenditure. During 2020–21, external legal expenditure was \$46,566 (\$17,947 in 2019–20). The department did not incur any internal legal expenses during 2020–21 (also nil in 2019–20).



# Part 4

## Financial statements

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*The Hon Mark Dreyfus MP and Luch Joneski  
in the House of Representatives Chamber.*

*Image: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.*

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# Independent Auditor's Report



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

### To the Speaker of the House of Representatives

#### Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Department of the House of Representatives (the Entity) for the year ended 30 June 2021:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*; and
- (b) present fairly the financial position of the Entity as at 30 June 2021 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

The financial statements of the Entity, which I have audited, comprise the following as at 30 June 2021 and for the year then ended:

- Statement by the Clerk of the House and Chief Finance Officer;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Cash Flow Statement;
- Administered Schedule of Comprehensive Income;
- Administered Schedule of Assets and Liabilities;
- Administered Reconciliation Schedule;
- Administered Cash Flow Statement; and
- Notes to the financial statements, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

#### Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Entity in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements for financial statement audits conducted by the Auditor-General and his delegates. These include the relevant independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) to the extent that they are not in conflict with the *Auditor-General Act 1997*. I have also fulfilled my other responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

#### Accountable Authority's responsibility for the financial statements

As the Accountable Authority of the Entity, the Clerk of the House is responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the Act) for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the rules made under the Act. The Clerk of the House is also responsible for such internal control as the Clerk of the House determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Clerk of the House is responsible for assessing the ability of the Entity to continue as a going concern, taking into account whether the Entity's operations will cease as a result of an

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# Independent Auditor's Report

administrative restructure or for any other reason. The Clerk of the House is also responsible for disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the assessment indicates that it is not appropriate.

## **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control;
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Accountable Authority;
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Accountable Authority's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern; and
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Accountable Authority regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Australian National Audit Office



Mark Vial  
Acting Executive Director  
Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra  
12 October 2021

# Certification

## DEPARTMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATEMENT BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE AND CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 comply with subsection 42(2) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Department of the House of Representatives will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.



CLARESSA SURTEES  
Clerk of the House  
12 October 2021



KATE MOORE  
Chief Finance Officer  
12 October 2021

## Statement of comprehensive income

for the period ended 30 June 2021

		2021	2020	Original Budget
	Notes	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>				
<b>Expenses</b>				
Employee benefits	1A	20,842	20,892	21,077
Suppliers	1B	3,829	5,005	5,212
Depreciation and amortisation	4A	538	517	578
Write-down and impairment of assets	1C	13	-	-
Losses from asset sales	1D	2	2	-
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>25,224</b>	<b>26,416</b>	<b>26,867</b>
<b>Own-source income</b>				
<b>Own-source revenue</b>				
Sale of goods and rendering of services	2A	48	90	50
Interest	2B	38	52	75
Other revenue	2C	(33)	187	5
<b>Total own-source revenue</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>Gains</b>				
Resources received free of charge	2D	1,824	2,043	1,985
<b>Total gains</b>		<b>1,824</b>	<b>2,043</b>	<b>1,985</b>
<b>Total own-source income</b>		<b>1,877</b>	<b>2,372</b>	<b>2,115</b>
<b>Net cost of services</b>		<b>23,347</b>	<b>24,044</b>	<b>24,752</b>
Revenue from government	2E, 10	24,211	25,014	24,211
<b>Surplus/(deficit) on continuing operations</b>		<b>864</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>(541)</b>
<b>OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>				
<b>Items not subject to subsequent reclassification to net cost of services</b>				
Changes in asset revaluation surplus		-	-	-
<b>Total other comprehensive income</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss)</b>		<b>864</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>(541)</b>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Budget variance explanations are outlined in Note 17

# Statement of financial position

as at 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
<b>ASSETS</b>				
<b>Financial assets</b>				
Cash and cash equivalents	3A	1,468	2,855	2,855
Trade and other receivables	3B	20,796	21,255	21,254
Other investments	3C	2,567	-	-
<b>Total financial assets</b>		<b>24,831</b>	<b>24,110</b>	<b>24,109</b>
<b>Non-financial assets<sup>1</sup></b>				
Heritage and cultural	4A	454	454	454
Property, plant and equipment	4A	4,417	4,569	4,501
Computer software	4A	210	219	385
Inventories	4B	13	5	5
Other non-financial assets	4C	253	216	216
<b>Total non-financial assets</b>		<b>5,347</b>	<b>5,463</b>	<b>5,561</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>30,178</b>	<b>29,573</b>	<b>29,670</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
<b>Payables</b>				
Suppliers	5A	430	418	418
Other payables	5B	428	346	316
<b>Total payables</b>		<b>858</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>734</b>
<b>Interest bearing liabilities</b>				
Leases	6	3	27	28
<b>Total interest bearing liabilities</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Provisions</b>				
Employee provisions	7	6,373	6,934	6,964
<b>Total provisions</b>		<b>6,373</b>	<b>6,934</b>	<b>6,964</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>7,234</b>	<b>7,725</b>	<b>7,726</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>22,943</b>	<b>21,848</b>	<b>21,944</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>				
Contributed equity		(11,933)	(12,165)	(11,526)
Reserves		13,763	13,763	13,843
Retained earnings		21,114	20,250	19,627
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>22,944</b>	<b>21,848</b>	<b>21,944</b>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Budget variance explanations are outlined in Note 17

1. Right-of-use assets are included in property, plant and equipment.

## Statement of changes in equity

for the period ended 30 June 2021

	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
<b>CONTRIBUTED EQUITY</b>			
<b>Opening balance</b>			
Balance carried forward from previous period	(12,165)	(12,800)	(12,165)
<b>Transactions with owners</b>			
<b>Contributions by owners</b>			
Departmental capital budget	639	635	639
Transfer of assets to DPS	(407)	-	-
<b>Total transactions with owners</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>639</b>
<b>Closing balance as at 30 June</b>	<b>(11,933)</b>	<b>(12,165)</b>	<b>(11,526)</b>
<b>RETAINED EARNINGS</b>			
<b>Opening balance</b>			
Balance carried forward from previous period	20,250	19,200	20,169
Adjustment on initial application of AASB 15/ AASB 1058	-	80	-
<b>Adjusted opening balance</b>	<b>20,250</b>	<b>19,280</b>	<b>20,169</b>
<b>Comprehensive income</b>			
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	864	970	(541)
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>(541)</b>
<b>Closing balance as at 30 June</b>	<b>21,114</b>	<b>20,250</b>	<b>19,628</b>
<b>ASSET REVALUATION RESERVE</b>			
<b>Opening balance</b>			
Balance carried forward from previous period	13,763	13,763	13,843
<b>Comprehensive income</b>			
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Closing balance as at 30 June</b>	<b>13,763</b>	<b>13,763</b>	<b>13,843</b>

## Statement of changes in equity (continued)

for the period ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020	Original Budget
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>			
<b>Opening balance</b>			
Balance carried forward from previous period	21,848	20,163	21,847
Adjustment on initial application of AASB 15/ AASB 1058	-	80	-
<b>Adjusted opening balance</b>	<b>21,848</b>	<b>20,243</b>	<b>21,847</b>
<b>Comprehensive income</b>			
Surplus/(deficit) for the period	864	970	(541)
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>(541)</b>
<b>Transactions with owners</b>			
<b>Contributions by owners</b>			
Departmental capital budget	639	635	639
Transfer of assets to DPS	(407)	-	-
<b>Total transactions with owners</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>639</b>
<b>Closing balance as at 30 June</b>	<b>22,944</b>	<b>21,848</b>	<b>21,945</b>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Budget variance explanations are outlined in Note 17

## Cash flow statement

for the period ended 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>				
<b>Cash received</b>				
Appropriations		24,741	21,679	24,211
Sale of goods and rendering of services		6	221	50
Interest		38	52	75
Revenue from external sources		10	172	-
Net GST received		26	221	5
Other		4	3	5
<b>Total cash received</b>		<b>24,825</b>	<b>22,348</b>	<b>24,346</b>
<b>Cash used</b>				
Employees		21,353	19,676	21,077
Suppliers		2,066	3,413	3,227
Revenue repaid to external sources		43	-	-
Net GST paid		-	-	5
<b>Total cash used</b>		<b>23,462</b>	<b>23,089</b>	<b>24,309</b>
<b>Net cash from/(used by) operating activities</b>		<b>1,363</b>	<b>(741)</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>				
<b>Cash received</b>				
Proceeds from sales of property, plant and equipment		4	-	-
Investments		-	2,546	-
<b>Total cash received</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>2,546</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash used</b>				
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		715	134	639
Purchase of intangibles		87	35	-
Investments		2,567	-	-
<b>Total cash used</b>		<b>3,369</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>639</b>
<b>Net cash from/(used by) investing activities</b>		<b>(3,365)</b>	<b>2,377</b>	<b>(639)</b>
<b>FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>				
<b>Cash received</b>				
Contributed equity-departmental capital budget		639	635	639
<b>Total cash received</b>		<b>639</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>639</b>
<b>Cash used</b>				
Principal payments of lease liabilities		24	33	-
<b>Total cash used</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net cash from/(used by) financing activities</b>		<b>615</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>639</b>
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash held</b>		<b>(1,387)</b>	<b>2,238</b>	<b>37</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		2,855	617	2,855
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>	3A	<b>1,468</b>	<b>2,855</b>	<b>2,892</b>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.  
Budget variance explanations are outlined in Note 17

## Administered schedule of comprehensive income

for the period ended 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>				
<b>Expenses</b>				
Provision of hospitality services		100	216	323
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>323</b>
<b>Net (cost of)/contribution by services</b>		<b>(100)</b>	<b>(216)</b>	<b>(323)</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit)</b>		<b>(100)</b>	<b>(216)</b>	<b>(323)</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss)</b>		<b>(100)</b>	<b>(216)</b>	<b>(323)</b>

The above schedule should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.  
Budget variance explanations are outlined in Note 18



## Administered schedule of assets and liabilities

as at 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000	Original Budget \$'000
<b>ASSETS</b>				
<b>Financial assets</b>				
GST receivable		3	-	5
<b>Total financial assets</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total assets administered on behalf of Government</b>				
		<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
<b>Payables</b>				
Suppliers		15	1	7
Other payables		3	-	5
<b>Total payables</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Total liabilities administered on behalf of Government</b>				
		<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Net assets/(liabilities)</b>		<b>(15)</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(7)</b>

Administered assets and liabilities consist of trade creditors and/or accrued expenses and amounts owed to/from the Australian Taxation Office. All assets and liabilities are considered current and are expected to be recovered /settled within 12 months.

The above schedule should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Budget variance explanations are outlined in Note 18

## Administered reconciliation schedule

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Opening assets less liabilities as at 1 July</b>	(1)	(7)
<b>Net (cost of)/contribution by services</b>		
Expenses		
Payments to entities other than corporate Commonwealth entities	(100)	(216)
<b>Transfers (to)/from the Australian Government</b>		
Appropriation transfers from official public account	86	222
<b>Closing assets less liabilities as at 30 June</b>	<b>(15)</b>	<b>(1)</b>

The above schedule should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

### *Accounting policy*

#### **Administered Cash Transfers to and from the Official Public Account (OPA)**

Revenue collected by the entity for use by the Government rather than the entity is administered revenue. Collections are transferred to the Official Public Account (OPA) maintained by the Department of Finance. Cash is drawn from the OPA to make payments under parliamentary appropriation on behalf of the government. These transfers to and from the OPA are adjustments to the administered cash held by the department on behalf of government and reported as such in the administered cash flows and in the administered reconciliation schedule.

## Administered cash flow statement

for the period ended 30 June 2021

	Notes	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Cash received</b>			
Net GST received		3	21
<b>Total cash received</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Cash used</b>			
Suppliers		92	238
<b>Total cash used</b>		<b>92</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Net cash from/(used by) operating activities</b>		<b>(89)</b>	<b>(217)</b>
<b>Cash from official public account</b>			
Appropriations		86	222
GST appropriations		6	16
<b>Total cash from official public account</b>		<b>92</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>Cash to official public account</b>			
GST appropriations		(3)	(21)
<b>Total cash to official public account</b>		<b>89</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

This schedule should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

## Overview

### Objectives of the Department of the House of Representatives

The department is one of four parliamentary departments supporting the Australian Parliament. It is a not-for-profit entity. The department provides services to support the efficient conduct of the House of Representatives, its committees and certain joint committees as well as a range of services for members in Parliament House. The department also supports the parliament by providing advice and services to support the parliament's national, international and regional relationships and by assisting other parliaments, primarily within the Indo-Pacific region, by partnering in capacity-building activities.

The department is structured to meet one outcome:

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

The continued existence of the department in its present form is dependent on continuing appropriations by parliament for the department's administration and programs.

The department's activities contributing to this outcome are classified as either departmental or administered. Departmental activities involve the use of assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses controlled or incurred by the department in its own right. Administered activities involve the management or oversight by the department, on behalf of the parliament, of items controlled or incurred by the government.

#### Administered objectives

The department receives administered appropriation in order to support the parliament by:

- » providing a booking service for school groups visiting Parliament House
- » coordinating provision of hospitality for these groups.

### Basis of preparation of the financial report

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements and are required by section 42 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- a) *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015* (FRR); and
- b) Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations – Reduced Disclosure Requirements issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) that apply for the reporting period.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and in accordance with the historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the

results or the financial position. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars.

### New accounting standards

All new/revised/amending standards and/or interpretations that were issued prior to the sign-off date and are applicable to the current reporting period did not have a material effect on the entity's financial statements.

### Taxation

The department is exempt from all forms of taxation except fringe benefits tax (FBT) and the goods and services tax (GST).

#### Reporting of administered activities

Administered revenues, expenses, assets, liabilities and cash flows are disclosed in the administered schedules and related notes.

Except where otherwise stated below, administered items are accounted for on the same basis and using the same policies as for departmental items, including the application of Australian Accounting Standards.

### Events after the reporting period

#### *Departmental*

There have been no significant events after balance date that may have an impact on the department's operations.

#### **Administered**

There have been no significant events after balance date that may have an impact on the department's operations.

## Financial performance

This section analyses the financial performance of the Department of the House of Representatives for the year ended 30 June 2021.

### Note 1 Expenses

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>1A: Employee benefits</b>		
Wages and salaries	15,944	15,227
Superannuation		
Defined contribution plans	1,352	1,165
Defined benefit plans	1,602	1,670
Leave and other entitlements	1,944	2,830
<b>Total employee benefits</b>	<b>20,842</b>	<b>20,892</b>

Accounting policies for employee related expenses are contained in the people and relationships section. FBT paid was previously included in: *Goods and services supplied or rendered: Corporate expenses*. It is now included in *Employee benefits: Leave and other entitlements*. The comparative has been changed. 2021: \$248,289 (2020: \$258,818).

### 1B: Suppliers

#### Goods and services supplied or rendered

Staff-related services	850	605
Travel	73	628
Office services	2,779	3,555
Communication	77	169
Corporate expenses	3	5
<b>Total goods and services supplied or rendered</b>	<b>3,783</b>	<b>4,962</b>
Goods supplied	169	131
Services rendered	3,614	4,831
<b>Total goods and services supplied or rendered</b>	<b>3,783</b>	<b>4,962</b>

#### Other suppliers

Operating lease rentals	-	1
Workers' compensation expenses	46	42
<b>Total other suppliers</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Total suppliers</b>	<b>3,829</b>	<b>5,005</b>

## Note 1 Expenses (continued)

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>1C: Write-down and impairment of other assets</b>		
Impairment of property, plant and equipment	13	-
<b>Total write-down and impairment of assets</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>1D: Losses from asset sales</b>		
Losses arising from sale of non-financial assets	2	1
Losses arising from sale of right-of-use assets	-	1
<b>Total losses from asset sales</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

*Accounting policy***Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets**

The department has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of assets that have a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (less than \$10,000). The department recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

## Note 2 Own-source revenue and gains

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>2A: Revenue from contracts with customers</b>		
Sale of goods	16	11
Rendering of services	32	79
<b>Total revenue from contracts with customers</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Disaggregation of revenue from contracts with customers</b>		
Major product / service line:		
Services - seminars/conference	32	79
Goods - publications/gift shop	16	11
	<b>48</b>	<b>90</b>
Type of customer:		
Australian Government entities (related parties)	34	39
State and Territory Governments	-	25
Non-government entities	14	26
	<b>48</b>	<b>90</b>
Timing of transfer of goods and services:		
Over time	-	-
Point in time	48	90
	<b>48</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>2B: Interest</b>		
Deposits	38	52
<b>Total interest</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>2C: Other revenue</b>		
Royalties	9	36
Funding from external sources	-	126
Return of funding from external sources	(43)	-
Memberships	1	25
<b>Total other revenue</b>	<b>(33)</b>	<b>187</b>



## Note 2 Own-source revenue and gains (continued)

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>2D: Other gains</b>		
Resources received free of charge		
Remuneration of auditors	87	87
Rent of premises	1,733	1,953
Other gain—other financial income	4	3
<b>Total other gains</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>2,043</b>
<b>2E: Revenue from government</b>		
Appropriations		
Departmental appropriations	24,211	25,014
<b>Total revenue from government</b>	<b>24,211</b>	<b>25,014</b>

*Accounting policy*

The department receives revenue from appropriations, the rendering of services and the sale of goods.

Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when control has been transferred to the buyer. The department reviews contracts with customers to ascertain if the contract is in the scope of AASB 15 and if the performance obligations are required by an enforceable contract.

The department has assessed its revenues from seminars, conferences and gift shop and considers these are within the scope of AASB 15 as the performance obligations required by an enforceable contract are sufficiently specific.

The department has assessed its funding agreements with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and considers they are not sufficiently specific to determine when the obligation is satisfied. AASB 1058 applies.

The principal activities from which the department generates its revenue are:

- sale of merchandise and procedural materials based on customary business practices – revenue is recognised at point of time when payment is received and control passes to customer, i.e., upon shipment to customer.
- conducting seminars on parliamentary procedure and process – revenue is recognised at point of time when payment is received and the service is provided to the customer, i.e., upon holding each seminar.

### *Accounting policy (continued)*

The transaction price is the total amount of consideration to which the department expects to be entitled in exchange for transferring promised goods or services to a customer. The consideration promised in a contract with a customer may include fixed amounts, variable amounts, or both.

Receivables for goods and services, which generally have pay up-front payment terms, are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance amount. Collectability of debts is reviewed as at the end of the reporting period. Allowances are made when collectability of the debt is no longer probable.

### **Interest**

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest method.

### **Resources Received Free of Charge**

Resources received free of charge are recognised as gains when, and only when, a fair value can be reliably determined, and the services would have been purchased if they had not been donated. Use of those resources is recognised as an expense. Resources received free of charge are recorded as either revenue or gains depending on their nature.

### **Revenue from Government**

Amounts appropriated for departmental appropriations for the year (adjusted for any formal additions and reductions) are recognised as Revenue from Government when the department gains control of the appropriation, except for certain amounts that relate to activities that are reciprocal in nature, in which case revenue is recognised only when it has been earned. Appropriations receivable are recognised at their nominal amounts.

## Financial position

This section analyses the Department of the House of Representatives' assets used to conduct its operations and the operating liabilities incurred as a result.

Employee-related information is disclosed in the People and Relationships section.

### Note 3 Financial assets

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>3A: Cash and cash equivalents</b>		
Cash on hand or on deposit	1,468	2,855
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>1,468</b>	<b>2,855</b>
<b>3B: Trade and other receivables</b>		
<b>Goods and services receivables</b>		
Goods and services	144	72
<b>Total goods and services receivables</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Appropriations receivables</b>		
Appropriation receivable—existing programs	20,584	21,114
<b>Total appropriations receivables</b>	<b>20,584</b>	<b>21,114</b>
<b>Other receivables</b>		
Cash held by salary packaging providers	43	30
GST input credits receivable	25	39
<b>Total other receivables</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Total trade and other receivables (gross)</b>	<b>20,796</b>	<b>21,255</b>
<b>Less impairment allowance</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total trade and other receivables (net)</b>	<b>20,796</b>	<b>21,255</b>
<b>3C: Other investments</b>		
Deposits <sup>1</sup>	2,567	-
<b>Total other investments</b>	<b>2,567</b>	<b>-</b>

1. The department's term deposit of \$2,546,108 was reinvested on 10 July 2020 and is due to mature on 10 July 2021. The source of the deposit was the former Inter-parliamentary Relations Special Account which was subject to a sun-setting provision. The balance of the account was initially invested after the release of a new delegation from the Finance Minister in July 2017. Refer to Note 12A for further details.

## *Accounting policy*

### **Financial assets**

Cash is recognised at its nominal amount. Cash and cash equivalents include:

- a) cash on hand
- b) demand deposits in bank accounts with an original maturity of 3 months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and subject to insignificant risk of changes in value; and
- c) cash in special accounts.

Trade receivables are recognised where the department becomes party to a contract and has a legal right to receive cash. Loans and receivables are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period. Allowances are made when collectability of the debt is no longer probable. Trade receivables are derecognised on payment.

Appropriations receivable are appropriations controlled by the department but held in the Official Public Account. Appropriations receivable are recognised at their nominal amounts.

**Note 4 Non-Financial assets****4A: Reconciliation of the opening and closing balances of heritage and cultural, property, plant and equipment, and computer software**

	Heritage and cultural <sup>1</sup> \$'000	Property, plant and equipment \$'000	Computer software <sup>2</sup> \$'000	Total \$'000
<b>As at 1 July 2020</b>				
Gross book value	454	5,004	772	6,230
Work in progress	-	-	14	14
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	-	(435)	(567)	(1,002)
<b>Total as at 1 July 2020</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>4,569</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>5,242</b>
Carrying amount of right-of-use assets <sup>4</sup>	-	27	-	27
<b>Additions</b>				
Purchase <sup>3</sup>	-	715	87	802
Depreciation and amortisation	-	(431)	(83)	(514)
Depreciation on right-of-use assets	-	(24)	-	(24)
<b>Disposals</b>				
Sale or trade-in	-	(6)	-	(6)
Write-off	-	-	(80)	(80)
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	-	1	67	68
Transfer to DPS	-	(407)	-	(407)
Right-of-use assets (cost)	-	(12)	-	(12)
Right-of-use assets (accumulated depreciation)	-	12	-	12
<b>Total as at 30 June 2021</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>4,417</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>5,081</b>
<b>Total as at 30 June 2021 represented by</b>				
Gross book value	454	5,295	787	6,536
Work in progress	-	-	6	6
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	-	(878)	(583)	(1,461)
<b>Total as at 30 June 2021</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>4,417</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>5,081</b>
<b>Carrying amount of right-of-use assets<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

1. Other property, plant and equipment that met the definition of a heritage and cultural item were disclosed in the heritage and cultural asset class.

2. The carrying value of computer software includes purchased software of \$98,610, internally generated software of \$105,488 and \$5,887 of work in progress towards the implementation of purchased software.

3. \$7,535 of work in progress assets were completed and capitalised during the 2020-21 financial year.

4. The carrying amount of right-of-use assets is disclosed individually, however it is included in the property, plant & equipment total as at 30 June 2021.

**Revaluations of non-financial assets**

All revaluations were conducted in accordance with the revaluation policy stated at Note 15. On 30 April 2021 an independent valuer conducted a materiality review.

### *Accounting policy*

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken. Financial assets are initially measured at their fair value plus transaction costs where appropriate.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised as assets and income at their fair value at the date of acquisition, unless acquired as a consequence of restructuring of administrative arrangements. In the latter case, assets are initially recognised as contributions by owners at the amounts at which they were recognised in the transferor's accounts immediately prior to the restructuring.

### **Asset Recognition Threshold**

Purchases of property, plant and equipment are recognised initially at cost in the statement of financial position, except for purchases costing less than \$2,000, which are expensed in the year of acquisition (other than where these items form part of a group of similar assets that are significant in total).

The initial cost of an asset includes an estimate of the cost of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

### **Lease Right of Use (ROU) Assets**

Leased ROU assets are capitalised at the commencement date of the lease and comprise of the initial lease liability amount, initial direct costs incurred when entering into the lease less any lease incentives received (if applicable). These assets are accounted for by Commonwealth lessees as separate asset classes to corresponding assets owned outright but included in the same column as where the corresponding underlying assets would be presented if these items were owned.

On initial adoption of AASB 16 the Department adjusted the ROU assets at the date of initial application by the amount of any provision for onerous leases recognised immediately before the date of initial application. Lease ROU assets continue to be measured at cost after initial recognition in Commonwealth agency, General Government Sector (GGS) and Whole of Government financial statements.

### **Revaluations**

Following initial recognition at cost, property, plant and equipment (excluding ROU assets) are carried at fair value (or amount not materially different from fair value) less subsequent accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Valuations are conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure that the carrying amounts of assets did not differ materially from the assets' fair values as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depended upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

### *Accounting policy (continued)*

Revaluation adjustments are made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment is credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that the amount reversed a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised in the surplus/deficit. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets are recognised directly in the surplus/deficit except to the extent that these amounts reverse a previous revaluation increment for that class.

Any accumulated depreciation as at the revaluation date is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the asset restated to the revalued amount.

### **Depreciation**

Depreciable property, plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to the entity using, in all cases, the straight-line method of depreciation.

Depreciation rates (useful lives), residual values and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current and future, reporting periods, as appropriate.

Depreciation rates applying to each class of depreciable asset are based on the following useful lives:

	2021	2020
Property, plant and equipment	1 to 50 years	1 to 50 years

The entity has items of property, plant and equipment that are heritage and cultural assets that are not depreciated.

The depreciation rates for ROU assets are based on the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the ROU asset or the end of the lease term.

### **Impairment**

All assets were assessed for impairment at 30 June 2021. Where indications of impairment exist, the assets recoverable amount is estimated, and an impairment adjustment made if the assets recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount.

The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value less costs of disposal and its value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from the asset. Where the future economic benefit of an asset is not primarily dependent on the asset's ability to generate future cash flows, and the asset would be replaced if the entity were deprived of the asset, its value in use is taken to be its depreciated replacement cost.

### **Derecognition**

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no further future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal.

### *Accounting policy (continued)*

#### **Heritage and cultural assets**

The department has the following heritage and cultural assets with an aggregated fair value of \$454,000 (2020: \$454,000):

- » Mace—Garrard engraved silver
- » Dispatch Boxes (2), Rosewood with silver and enamel embossing
- » Yirrkala bark petition 14 Aug 1963, bark 59.1cm x 33.2cm
- » Yirrkala bark petition 28 Aug 1963, wood bark 49.1cm x 30cm
- » Yirrkala bark petition 8 Oct 1968, wood bark 59.1cm x 34cm
- » Rituals—Yirrkala people 1976, wood feathers 47.1cm x 24.2cm.

The department has classified these items as heritage and cultural assets as they are primarily used for purposes that relate to their heritage value and cultural significance.

Heritage and cultural assets have an indefinite useful life which is maintained through the department's adoption of appropriate curatorial and preservation activities. The department's heritage items are deemed part of the Parliament House Art Collection and are maintained in accordance with policies managed by the Department of Parliamentary Services. The Parliament's policy on the preservation of the Parliament House Art Collection can be found at:

[https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Department\\_of\\_Parliamentary\\_Services/policies](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Department_of_Parliamentary_Services/policies)

#### **Intangibles**

The entity's intangibles comprise internally developed software for internal use. These assets are carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses. Software is amortised on a straight-line basis over its anticipated useful life. The useful lives of the entity's software are 3 to 20 years (2020: 3 to 20 years).

All software assets were assessed for indications of impairment as at 30 June 2021.



## Note 4 Non-financial assets (continued)

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>4B: Inventories</b>		
<b>Inventories held for sale</b>		
Finished goods	13	5
<b>Total inventories held for sale</b>	<u>13</u>	<u>5</u>
<b>Total inventories</b>	<u>13</u>	<u>5</u>

During 2020-21, \$3,311 of inventory held for sale was recognised as an expense (2020: \$2,054).

\$28 of inventory was written off due to damage during 2020-21.

All inventories are expected to be sold or distributed in the next 12 months.

**4C: Other non-financial assets**

Prepayments	253	216
<b>Total other non-financial assets</b>	<u>253</u>	<u>216</u>

No indicators of impairment were found for other non-financial assets.

***Accounting policy***

Inventories held for sale are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Inventories held for distribution are valued at cost, adjusted for any loss of service potential.

Inventories acquired at no cost or nominal consideration are initially measured at current replacement cost at the date of acquisition.

## Note 5 Payables

	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
<b>5A: Suppliers</b>		
Trade creditors and accruals	430	418
<b>Total suppliers</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>418</b>
Settlement is usually made within 20 days.		
<b>5B: Other payables</b>		
Salaries and wages	294	234
Superannuation	55	44
Salary sacrifice payable	43	30
Unearned income	31	-
Input tax credit (GST) payment to the Australian Taxation Office	1	-
Other payables	4	38
<b>Total other payables</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>346</b>

## Note 6 Interest bearing liabilities

	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
<b>6: Leases</b>		
Lease liabilities	3	27
<b>Total leases</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Maturity analysis - contractual undiscounted cash flows</b>		
Within 1 year	3	24
Between 1 to 5 years	-	3
More than 5 years	-	-
<b>Total leases</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>

Total cash outflow for leases for the year ended 30 June 2021 was \$24,373.(2020: \$32,546).

The department in its capacity as a lessee has entered into a contractual arrangement with SG Fleet for the provision of motor vehicles. At 30 June 2021 there is one lease.

## People and relationships

This section describes a range of employment and post-employment benefits provided to our people and our relationships with other key people.

### Note 7 Employee provisions

	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
Leave	6,373	6,934
<b>Total employee provisions</b>	<b>6,373</b>	<b>6,934</b>
<b>Employee provisions expected to be settled</b>		
No more than 12 months	1,515	1,843
More than 12 months	4,858	5,091
<b>Total employee provisions</b>	<b>6,373</b>	<b>6,934</b>

#### *Accounting policy*

Liabilities for short-term employee benefits and termination benefits expected within 12 months of the end of the reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

Other long-term employee benefits are measured as net total of the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the end of the reporting period minus the fair value at the end of the reporting period of plan assets (if any) out of which the obligations are to be settled directly.

#### **Leave**

The liability for employee benefits includes provision for annual leave and long-service leave.

The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that will be applied at the time the leave is taken, including the entity's employer superannuation contribution rates and additional oncosts (annual leave and long-service leave) to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination. The liability for long-service leave has been determined with reference to the short-hand method outlined by the Australian Government Actuary as at 30 June 2021. The estimate of the present value of the liability takes into account attrition rates, increments within level and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

#### **Superannuation**

The department's staff are members of the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS), the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme (PSS), the PSS accumulation plan (PSSap) or other superannuation funds held outside the Australian Government.

***Accounting policy (continued)***

The CSS and PSS are defined benefit schemes for the Australian Government. The PSSap is a defined contribution scheme. The liability for defined benefits is recognised in the financial statements of the Australian Government and is settled by the Australian Government in due course. This liability is reported in the Department of Finance's administered schedules and notes.

The department makes employer contributions to the employee's defined benefit superannuation scheme at rates determined by an actuary to be sufficient to meet the current cost to the government. The entity accounts for the contributions as if these amounts were contributions to defined contribution plans. The liability for superannuation recognised as at 30 June represents outstanding contributions.

**Note 8 Key management personnel remuneration**

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
<b>Short-term employee benefits</b>		
Base salary	1,443	1,400
Other benefits and allowances	139	147
<b>Total short-term employee benefits</b>	<u>1,582</u>	<u>1,547</u>
<b>Post-employment benefits</b>		
Superannuation contribution	234	216
<b>Total post-employment benefits</b>	<u>234</u>	<u>216</u>
<b>Other long-term employee benefits</b>		
Long-service leave	72	225
<b>Total other long-term employee benefits</b>	<u>72</u>	<u>225</u>
<b>Total key management personnel remuneration expenses</b>	<u>1,888</u>	<u>1,988</u>

The total number of key management personnel that are included in the above table is 9. (2020: 7)

## Note 9 Related party disclosures

### Transactions with related parties

Given the breadth of government activities, related parties may transact with the government sector in the same capacity as ordinary citizens. Such transactions include the payment or refund of taxes, receipt of a Medicare rebate or higher education loans. These transactions are not considered to be related party transactions.

The department transacts with other Australian Government controlled entities consistent with normal day-to-day business operations provided under normal terms and conditions, including the payment of workers' compensation and insurance premiums, transactions between the other parliamentary departments and the Department of Finance. These are not considered individually significant to warrant separate disclosure as related party transactions. Refer to Note 7 Employee benefits for details on superannuation arrangements with the Commonwealth.

Giving consideration to relationships with related entities, and transactions entered into during the reporting period by the department, it has been determined that there are no related party transactions to be separately disclosed.

## Funding

This section identifies the Department of the House of Representatives funding structure.

### Annual appropriations for 2021

	Appropriation Act		PGPA Act		Total (current and prior years) \$'000	Variance <sup>2</sup> \$'000
	Annual appropriation <sup>1</sup> \$'000	Section 74 receipts \$'000	Annual appropriation <sup>1</sup> \$'000	Section 74 receipts \$'000		
<b>Departmental</b>						
Operating budget	24,211	890	25,101	(24,003)	1,098	
Capital budget	639	-	639	(799)	(160)	
<b>Total departmental</b>	<b>24,850</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>25,740</b>	<b>(24,802)</b>	<b>938</b>	
<b>Administered</b>						
Operating budget	323	-	323	(86)	237	
<b>Total administered</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>(86)</b>	<b>237</b>	

1. In 2020-21, there were no appropriations subject to quarantine and no reductions. The departmental and administered appropriations are automatically repeated three years after they are passed by parliament.

2. The departmental appropriation variance primarily relates to:

- a) operating budget—lower catering and incidental expenses, travel and office services for the year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- b) capital budget—some procurements of new equipment for the print room were delayed from 2019-20 and were completed or delivered in the 2020-21 financial year.

The administered appropriation variance relates to reduced school visits because of Parliament House being closed to the public for various times in the year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Note 10 Appropriations (continued)**

Annual appropriations for 2020		PGPA Act	Appropriation applied in 2020	Variance <sup>2</sup>
	Appropriation Act Annual appropriation <sup>1</sup> \$'000	Section 74 receipts \$'000	Total appropriation \$'000	(current and prior years) \$'000
<b>Departmental</b>				
Operating budget	25,014	3,902	28,916	(23,193)
Capital budget	635	-	635	(173)
<b>Total departmental</b>	<b>25,649</b>	<b>3,902</b>	<b>29,551</b>	<b>(23,366)</b>
<b>Administered</b>				
Operating budget	319	-	319	(222)
<b>Total administered</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>(222)</b>

1. In 2019–20, there were no appropriations subject to quarantine and no reductions. The departmental and administered appropriations are automatically repealed three years after they are passed by parliament.

2. The departmental variance primarily relates to:

- a) operating budget:
  - lower catering and incidental expenses; travel and office services from March to June 2020 due to the pandemic.
  - the department's term deposit of \$2,546,108.00 matured on 29 June 2020 and was not reinvested until July 2020. This amount was held in the department's bank account and not applied until reinvestment in July 2020.
- b) capital budget—a number of procurements of new equipment for the print room were delayed and not completed or delivered by 30 June 2020, it is anticipated these will be completed in the first half of 2020–21. In addition, the department had budgeted to pay for replacement of the Parliamentary Relations Office database, but this was subsequently identified to be funded through the Department of Parliamentary Services capital works plan.

The administered variance relates to reduced school visits due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown from March to June 2020.

**Note 11 Unspent annual appropriations ('recoverable GST exclusive')**

	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
<b>Departmental</b>		
<i>Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2018-19</i>	-	235
<i>Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2019-20</i>	72	15,455
<i>Supply (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2019-20</i>	-	5,423
<i>Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2020-21</i>	10,353	-
<i>Supply (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2020-21</i>	10,159	-
Cash at bank	1,468	2,855
<b>Total departmental</b>	<b>22,052</b>	<b>23,968</b>
<b>Administered</b>		
<i>Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2019-20</i>	28	114
<i>Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2020-21</i>	323	-
<b>Total administered</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>114</b>



## Note 12A Special appropriations ('recoverable GST exclusive')

	2021	2020
Authority	\$'000	\$'000
<i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013—section 58</i>	2,567	-
<b>Total special appropriations applied</b>	<b>2,567</b>	<b>-</b>

The *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Finance Minister to Accountable Authorities of Non-Corporate Commonwealth Entities) Delegation 2014* provides the department the delegation to invest relevant money in any authorised investment on behalf of the Commonwealth or to authorise the reinvestment upon maturity of the proceeds of an authorised investment. The delegation is made under section 58 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

Investments made in accordance with this delegation throughout the year were as follows:

PGPA Act investment powers that are delegated	Date	\$'000
Term deposit reinvested	10 July 2020	2,567
<b>Total applied</b>		<b>2,567</b>

2019-20 amount applied	Date	\$'000
Term deposit matured	29 June 2020	-
<b>Total applied</b>		<b>-</b>

The department's term deposit of \$2,546,108 was reinvested on 10 July 2020 for a period of 12 months at 1.5% interest payable on maturity. The source of the initial deposit was the former Inter-parliamentary Relations Special Account which was subject to a sun-setting provision. The balance of the account was initially invested after the release of a new delegation from the Finance Minister in July 2017. The balance of this account is disclosed in Note 3C and interest earned is recorded on an accrual basis in Note 2B.

### Note 12B Disclosures by agent in relation to special appropriations ('recoverable GST exclusive')

	Department of Finance (third party access)	
	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
Total receipts	50,641	50,794
Total payments	50,641	50,794

Throughout the financial year, the department made payments via special appropriations in accordance with third party access agreements with the Department of Finance. The agreement facilitates payments under the following Acts for the purposes described:

*Parliamentary Superannuation Act 2004*—For the purposes necessary to administer the special appropriation in section 18 of the Act.

*Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act*—For the purposes necessary to administer the special appropriation in section 66 of the Act.

*Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*—For the appropriation in section 59 of the Act.

### Note 13 Net cash appropriation arrangements

	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) - as per the Statement of Comprehensive Income</b>	<b>864</b>	970
Plus: depreciation/amortisation of assets funded through appropriations (departmental capital budget funding and/or equity injections) <sup>1</sup>	538	517
Plus: depreciation right-of-use assets <sup>2</sup>	24	33
Less: principal repayments - leased assets	24	33
<b>Net Cash Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)</b>	<b>1,402</b>	1,487

1. From 2010-11, the Government introduced net cash appropriation arrangements where revenue appropriations for depreciation/amortisation expenses of non-corporate Commonwealth entities were replaced with a separate capital budget provided through equity injections. Capital budgets are to be appropriated in the period when cash payment for capital expenditure is required.

No depreciation/amortisation amounts are excluded from this calculation.

2. The inclusion of depreciation/amortisation expenses related to ROU leased assets and the lease liability principal repayment amount reflects the impact of AASB 16 Leases, which does not directly reflect a change in appropriation arrangements.

No right-of-use assets or lease principal repayments are excluded from this calculation.

## Managing uncertainties

This section analyses how the Department of the House of Representatives manages financial risks within its operating environment.

### Note 14 Financial instruments

	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
<b>Categories of financial instruments</b>		
<b>Financial assets at amortised cost</b>		
Term deposit	2,567	-
Cash and cash equivalents	1,468	2,855
Trade and other receivables	187	102
<b>Total financial assets at amortised cost</b>	<b>4,222</b>	<b>2,957</b>
<b>Total financial assets</b>	<b>4,222</b>	<b>2,957</b>
<b>Financial liabilities</b>		
<b>Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost</b>		
Suppliers	430	418
Other payables	31	-
<b>Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>418</b>
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>418</b>

### *Accounting policy*

#### **Financial assets**

In accordance with AASB 9 *Financial Instruments*, the department classifies its financial assets in the following categories:

- a) financial assets at fair value through profit or loss
- b) financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income and
- c) financial assets measured at amortised cost.

The classification depends on both the department's business model for managing the financial assets and contractual cash flow characteristics at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised when the entity becomes a party to the contract and, as a consequence, has a legal right to receive or a legal obligation to pay cash and derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire or are transferred upon trade date.

Comparatives have not been restated on initial application.

### *Accounting policy (continued)*

#### **Financial assets at amortised cost**

Financial assets included in this category need to meet two criteria:

1. the financial asset is held in order to collect the contractual cash flows and
2. the cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest (SPPI) on the principal outstanding amount.

Amortised cost is determined using the effective interest method.

#### **Effective interest method**

Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis for financial assets that are recognised at amortised cost.

#### **Impairment of financial assets**

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period based on expected credit losses, using the general approach which measures the loss allowance based on an amount equal to lifetime expected credit losses where risk has significantly increased, or an amount equal to 12-month expected credit losses if risk has not increased.

The simplified approach for trade, contract and lease receivables is used. This approach always measures the loss allowance as the amount equal to the lifetime expected credit losses.

A write-off constitutes a derecognition event where the write-off directly reduces the gross carrying amount of the financial asset.

#### **Financial liabilities at amortised cost**

Supplier and other payables are recognised at amortised cost and consist of trade creditors, accruals and unearned income. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

## Note 15 Fair value

	Fair value measurements at the end of the reporting period	
	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
<b>Non-financial assets<sup>1</sup></b>		
Property, plant and equipment <sup>2</sup>	4,414	4,542
Heritage and cultural <sup>2</sup>	454	454

1. The department's assets are held for operational purposes and not held for the purposes of deriving profit. The current use of all non-financial assets is considered their highest and best use.

2. The department did not measure any non-financial assets at fair value on a non-recurring basis as at 30 June 2021.

### *Accounting policy*

The department tests the procedures of the valuation model as an asset materiality review at least once every 12 months (with a formal revaluation undertaken once every three years). If a particular asset class experiences significant and volatile changes in fair value (i.e. where indicators suggest that the value of the class has changed materially since the previous reporting period), that class is subject to specific valuation in the reporting period, where practicable, regardless of the timing of the last specific valuation.

## Other information

### Note 16 Aggregate assets and liabilities

	2021 \$'000	2020 \$'000
<b>Assets expected to be recovered in:</b>		
<b>No more than 12 months</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,468	2,855
Trade and other receivables	20,796	21,255
Other Investments	2,567	-
Inventories	13	5
Other non-financial assets	253	240
<b>Total no more than 12 months</b>	<b>25,097</b>	<b>24,355</b>
<b>More than 12 months</b>		
Heritage and cultural	454	430
Property, plant and equipment	4,417	4,569
Computer software	210	219
<b>Total more than 12 months</b>	<b>5,081</b>	<b>5,218</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>30,178</b>	<b>29,573</b>
<b>Liabilities expected to be settled in:</b>		
<b>No more than 12 months</b>		
Suppliers	430	418
Other payables	428	346
Leases	3	24
Employee provisions	1,515	1,843
<b>Total no more than 12 months</b>	<b>2,376</b>	<b>2,631</b>
<b>More than 12 months</b>		
Leases	-	3
Employee provisions	4,858	5,091
<b>Total more than 12 months</b>	<b>4,858</b>	<b>5,094</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>7,234</b>	<b>7,725</b>

## Major budget variances

This section provides explanations for major budget variances between the department's budget and actual results for the year ended 30 June 2021.

### Note 17 Departmental budget variances commentary

Explanations of major variances	Affected statements and line items
<b>COVID-19 pandemic</b>	
<p>The 2020-21 original budget estimates produced in October 2020 were forecast on the basis that pandemic restrictions were easing in Australia and travel and other normal operations would progressively increase throughout the remainder of the financial year. This did not occur to the degree forecast. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the department's financial statements in the following ways:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» International delegations, both incoming and outgoing did not recommence. This resulted in reductions in travel costs for staff supporting the delegations, along with catering, printing and overtime to support delegations outside of normal working hours.</li> </ul>	<p>Statement of comprehensive income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» suppliers expenses</li> <li>» employee benefits</li> </ul> <p>Statement of financial position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» trade and other receivables (in respect of undrawn appropriation)</li> </ul> <p>Cash flow statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» cash used—suppliers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Committee office travel to support parliamentary inquiries recommenced on a much smaller scale with many committees taking up virtual meeting opportunities in place of in-person hearings. Associated costs relating to catering, venue hire, meals and incidentals were significantly reduced during the period.</li> </ul>	<p>Statement of comprehensive income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» suppliers expenses</li> </ul> <p>Statement of financial position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» trade and other receivables (in respect of undrawn appropriation)</li> </ul> <p>Cash flow statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» cash used—suppliers</li> </ul>

## Note 17 Departmental budget variances commentary (continued)

Explanations of major variances	Affected statements and line items
<p>» The department identified a need to better support working from home arrangements for all staff in the event of further lockdowns and restriction of access to Parliament House. To assist the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) with capital funding the department purchased \$407,000 of laptops using existing departmental capital budget. As the Parliamentary departments have an agreement that all ICT equipment will be centrally managed by the DPS, the department agreed to transfer the laptops to the DPS through equity.</p>	<p>Statement of changes in equity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» transfer of assets to DPS</li> </ul> <p>Cash flow statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» investing cash used – purchase of property, plant and equipment</li> </ul>
<p>» Due to the restrictions on international travel, the department did not spend the remaining funds provided by DFAT for capacity building with the Parliament of Fiji. Unspent funds of \$42,436 were returned to DFAT in June 2021.</p>	<p>Statement of comprehensive income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» suppliers expenses</li> <li>» other revenue</li> </ul> <p>Cash flow statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» cash used—suppliers</li> <li>» cash used—revenue repaid to external sources</li> </ul>
<p>» The department identified a need to move its seminar program to a hybrid delivery model, offering online and in-person seminars. To facilitate this approach, an online booking tool and credit card payment portal were implemented allowing registrations and payment well in advance of each seminar. Previously payments were taken in line with service delivery. Payments made in advance are reported as unearned income.</p>	<p>Statement of financial position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» other payables</li> </ul>
<b>Employment matters</b>	
<p>During the year 15 staff with 10 years or more of public service retired or resigned from the department. This level of staff turnover was unforeseen at time of budgeting and resulted in lower leave balances.</p>	<p>Statement of financial position:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» employee provisions</li> </ul>



### Note 18 Administered budget variances commentary

Explanations of major variances	Affected statements and line items
<b>COVID-19 pandemic</b>	
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the administered financial statements in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» School visits to Parliament House did not recommence until February 2021. As a result no hospitality costs were incurred for more than half the year. Costs attributable to the departmental staff member working on the bookings continued as large volumes of cancellations, inquiries and future bookings continued during the period.</li> </ul>	<p>Statement of comprehensive income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» suppliers expenses</li> </ul> <p>Cash flow statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» cash used—suppliers</li> </ul>



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# 1. Chamber and Federation Chamber

This appendix contains summary information on the business of the Chamber and Federation Chamber in 2020–21.

## Sittings of the House of Representatives, 2020–21

Events	Spring 2020	Autumn–Winter 2021	Total
Sitting weeks	8	10	<b>18</b>
Sitting days	31	36	<b>67</b>
Hours of sitting: <sup>a</sup>			
» including suspensions	285	324	<b>609</b>
» excluding suspensions	274	319	<b>593</b>
Sittings after midnight	0	0	<b>0</b>
Government bills introduced	86	70	<b>156</b>
Private members' bills introduced	11	17 <sup>b</sup>	<b>28</b>
Private members' motions moved	17	12	<b>29</b>
Committee reports presented	80	58	<b>138</b>
Days on which:			
» the adjournment motion was debated	27	31	<b>58</b>
» matters of public importance were discussed	24	29	<b>53</b>
» private members' business occurred	7	6	<b>13</b>
Divisions	168	192	<b>360</b>
Closure of question agreed to	34	13	<b>47</b>
Closure of member agreed to	41	73	<b>114</b>
Bills subject to debate management motions	1	0	<b>1</b>

a. Hours are rounded to the nearest hour. Discrepancies in totals are due to rounding.

b. Includes two private senators' bills.

## Meetings of the Federation Chamber, 2020–21

Events	Spring 2020	Autumn–Winter 2021	Total
Number of meetings	31	32	<b>63</b>
Hours of meeting (excluding suspensions) <sup>a</sup>	110	122	<b>232</b>
Bills referred <sup>b</sup>	7	6	<b>13</b>
Private members' bills debated	1	0	<b>1</b>
Private members' motions moved	44	62	<b>106</b>
Committee reports presented	0	0	<b>0</b>
Committee and delegation reports referred	24	9	<b>33</b>
Days on which:			
» the adjournment motion was debated	7	9	<b>16</b>
» grievance debate occurred	6	7	<b>13</b>
» private members' business occurred	7	8	<b>15</b>

a. Hours are rounded to the nearest hour. Discrepancies in totals are due to rounding.

b. Bills referred to the Federation Chamber on more than one occasion are only counted once.

## Bills and amendments dealt with by the House of Representatives (including the Federation Chamber), 2016–17 to 2020–21

Events	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Government bills introduced:					
» initiated in the House	206	172	112	196	142
» initiated in the Senate	7	15	13	17	14
» total	213	187	125	213	156
Private members' bills introduced <sup>a</sup>	35	35	30	35	28
Second reading amendments moved	40	45	37	110	105
Consideration in detail amendments moved:					
» government	58	453	471	32	606
» opposition	44	44	63	89	98
» non-aligned	71	9	32	18	47
» amendments to private members' bills	0	93	0	0	0
Consideration in detail amendments passed:					
» government	58	453	471	32	606
» opposition	0	3	2	3	0
» non-aligned	1	0	10	0	1
» amendments to private members' bills	0	0	0	0	0

a. Includes private senators' bills.

## 2. Committee activity

This appendix tallies the activities of the House of Representatives and joint committees of the 46th Parliament, 2020–21. Only House and joint committees supported by the Department of the House of Representatives are listed.

Committee	Meetings	Inquiries active as at 30 June 2021	Reports presented <sup>a</sup>
<b>Scrutiny committees</b>			
Agriculture and Water Resources	22	1	2
Communications and the Arts	16	1	0
Economics	31	5	2
Electoral Matters	19	0	5
Employment, Education and Training	13	1	1
Environment and Energy	23	2	3
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade	31	8	5
Health, Aged Care and Sport	22	1	0
Indigenous Affairs	22	1	1
Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources	29	1	1
Infrastructure, Transport and Cities	16	1	1
Intelligence and Security	83	13	9 <sup>b</sup>
Mental Health and Suicide Prevention	9	1	1
Migration	30	1	3
National Capital and External Territories	17	3	1
National Redress Scheme	18	1	0
Northern Australia	43	2	1
Public Accounts and Audit	28	5	5
Public Works	31	7	7
Regional Australia	26	1	0
Road Safety	3	1	0
Social Policy and Legal Affairs	38	2	2 <sup>c</sup>
Tax and Revenue	17	3	0
Trade and Investment Growth	20	1	1
Treaties	13	4	6

Committee	Meetings	Inquiries active as at 30 June 2021	Reports presented <sup>a</sup>
<b>Internal committees</b>			
Appropriations and Administration	7	0	3
Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings	0	0	0
Petitions	21	0	15
Privileges and Members' Interests	5	0	1
Procedure	30	0	2
Publications (House)	0	0	0
Selection	18	0	18

- a. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works and the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties often present reports that incorporate multiple completed inquiries. Statistics detailed here tally the number of reports presented only and not the number of completed inquiries.
- b. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security also presented three further reports by oral statement.
- c. The Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs also made one statement discharging the requirement to provide a report.

## 3. Committee inquiries and reports

This appendix provides details of inquiries conducted and reports presented by the parliamentary committees supported by the Department of the House of Representatives in 2020–21.

### Scrutiny committees – inquiries active as at 30 June 2021

Inquiries active as at 30 June 2021
<b>Agriculture and Water Resources, Standing Committee on</b>
Inquiry into the Australian aquaculture sector
<b>Communications and the Arts, Standing Committee on</b>
Australia's creative and cultural industries and institutions
<b>Economics, Standing Committee on</b>
Review of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission annual report 2019
Review of the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority annual report 2019
Review of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission annual report 2019
Review of the four major banks and other financial institutions
Review of the Reserve Bank of Australia annual report 2020
<b>Electoral Matters, Joint Standing Committee on</b>
There were no active inquiries as at 30 June 2021.
<b>Employment, Education and Training, Standing Committee on</b>
Inquiry into adult literacy and its importance
<b>Environment and Energy, Standing Committee on the</b>
Inquiry into the Australian Local Power Agency Bill 2021 and Australian Local Power Agency (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2021
Inquiry into the current circumstances, and the future need and potential for dispatchable energy generation and storage capability in Australia
<b>Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Joint Standing Committee on</b>
Inquiry into Australia activating greater trade and investment with Pacific island countries
Inquiry into certain aspects of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade annual report 2019–20 – child and forced marriage
Inquiry into certain aspects of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade annual report 2019–20 – Myanmar
Inquiry into expanding membership of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership



## Inquiries active as at 30 June 2021

Inquiry into strengthening Australia's relationships with countries in the Pacific region

Inquiry into the Department of Defence annual report 2019–20

Inquiry into the human rights of women and girls in the Pacific

Remediation of PFAS-related impacts ongoing scrutiny and review

## Health, Aged Care and Sport, Standing Committee on

Inquiry into approval processes for new drugs and novel medical technologies in Australia

## Implementation of the National Redress Scheme, Joint Select Committee on

Second interim report on implementation of the National Redress Scheme

## Indigenous Affairs, Standing Committee on

Pathways and participation opportunities for Indigenous Australians in employment and business

## Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources, Standing Committee on

Inquiry into developing Australia's space industry

## Infrastructure, Transport and Cities, Standing Committee on

Inquiry into procurement practices for government-funded infrastructure

## Intelligence and Security, Parliamentary Joint Committee on

Inquiry into extremist movements and radicalism in Australia

Inquiry into national security risks affecting the Australian higher education and research sector

Review of Administration and Expenditure No. 18 (2018–2019) – Australian Intelligence Agencies

Review of Administration and Expenditure No. 19 (2019–2020) – Australian Intelligence Agencies

Review of AFP powers

Review of Part 14 of the *Telecommunications Act 1997* – Telecommunications Sector Security Reforms

Review of the amendments made by the *Telecommunications and Other Legislation Amendment (Assistance and Access) Act 2018*

Review of the Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (High Risk Terrorist Offenders) Bill 2020

Review of the Intelligence Oversight and Other Legislation Amendment (Strengthening Information Provisions) Bill 2020

Review of the Migration and Citizenship Legislation Amendment (Strengthening Information Provisions) Bill 2020

Review of the re-listing of Jama'at Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) and the listing of Neo-Jama'at Mujahideen Bangladesh (Neo-JMB) as terrorist organisations under the Criminal Code

Review of the Security Legislation Amendment (Critical Infrastructure) Bill 2020 and Statutory Review of the *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act 2018*

Review of the Surveillance Legislation Amendment (Identify and Disrupt) Bill 2020

<b>Inquiries active as at 30 June 2021</b>
<b>Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Select Committee on</b>
Mental health and suicide prevention
<b>Migration, Joint Standing Committee on</b>
Inquiry into Australia's skilled migration program
<b>National Capital and External Territories, Joint Standing Committee on the</b>
Availability and access to enabling communications infrastructure in Australia's external territories
Inquiry into economic, social and environmental sustainability in the Indian Ocean Territories
Review of the National Capital Authority: biannual public briefings
<b>Northern Australia, Joint Standing Committee on</b>
Inquiry into the opportunities and challenges of the engagement of traditional owners in the economic development of Northern Australia
Inquiry into the destruction of 46,000-year-old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia
<b>Public Accounts and Audit, Joint Committee of</b>
Governance in the stewardship of public resources: Inquiry into Auditor-General's Reports 11, 31, 39 (2019–20) and 2 and 9 (2020–21)
Inquiry into Commonwealth financial statements 2019–20
Inquiry into the Defence major projects report 2019–20
Regulatory activities: Inquiry into Auditor-General's reports 33, 47, 48 (2019–20) and 5 and 8 (2020–21)
Review of the <i>Auditor-General Act 1997</i>
<b>Public Works, Parliamentary Standing Committee on</b>
Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation intermediate level solid waste storage facility Lucas Heights, NSW
Christmas Island stormwater, landslide and rockfall mitigation works project
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, construction of National Collections Building, Black Mountain Science and Innovation Park, ACT
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment Scientific Research Station modernisation, Macquarie Island
Expansion of the National Sea Simulator at the Australian Institute of Marine Science, Townsville, Qld
Inquiry into Home Affairs 101 George Street Parramatta Fit-Out
United States Force Posture Initiatives Northern Territory training areas and ranges upgrades
<b>Regional Australia, House Select Committee on</b>
Inquiry into matters affecting Regional Australia

Inquiries active as at 30 June 2021
<b>Road Safety, Joint Select Committee on</b>
Inquiry into road safety
<b>Social Policy and Legal Affairs, Standing Committee on</b>
Inquiry into constitutional reform and referendums
Inquiry into homelessness in Australia
<b>Tax and Revenue, Standing Committee on</b>
Inquiry into the Commissioner of Taxation annual report 2018–19
Inquiry into the development of the Australian corporate bond market
Inquiry into the tax treatment of employee share schemes
<b>Trade and Investment Growth, Joint Standing Committee on</b>
Inquiry into the prudential regulation of investment in Australia's export industries
<b>Treaties, Joint Standing Committee on</b>
Certain aspects of the treaty-making process in Australia
Minamata Convention on Mercury
OCCAR-managed programmes participation agreement
Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement

## Scrutiny committees – reports presented during 2020–21

Reports presented	Date presented and parliamentary paper (PP) number
<b>Agriculture and Water Resources, Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Aussie logs for Aussie jobs</i>	23 March 2021; PP: 93/2021
<i>Growing Australia. Inquiry into growing Australian agriculture to \$100 billion by 2030</i>	3 February 2021; PP: 18/2021
<b>Communications and the Arts, Standing Committee on</b>	
No reports were presented during 2020–21.	
<b>Economics, Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Review of the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority annual report 2019 (second report)</i>	9 December 2020; PP: 584/2020
<i>Review of the Australian Securities and Investments Commission annual report 2019</i>	9 December 2020; PP: 585/2020

Reports presented	Date presented and parliamentary paper (PP) number
<b>Electoral Matters, Joint Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Electoral Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous Measures) Bill 2020</i>	25 August 2020; PP: 197/2020
<i>Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Ensuring Fair Representation of the Northern Territory) Bill 2020</i>	16 October 2020; PP: 468/2020
<i>Report on the conduct of the 2019 federal election and matters related thereto</i>	10 December 2020; PP: 583/2020
<i>Review of the Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Funding and Disclosure Reform) Act 2018</i>	27 May 2021; PP: 142/2020
<i>Report of the inquiry on the future conduct of elections operating during times of emergency situations</i>	24 June 2021; PP: 178/2021
<b>Employment, Education and Training, Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Education in remote and complex environments</i>	11 November 2020; PP: 486/2020
<b>Environment and Energy, Standing Committee on the</b>	
<i>Parliamentary delegation to India – 3 to 7 November 2019</i>	31 August 2020; PP: 215/2020
<i>Advisory report on the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Amendment (Transparency in Carbon Emissions Accounting) Bill 2020</i>	31 August 2020; PP: 214/2020
<i>Tackling the feral cat pandemic: a plan to save Australian wildlife</i>	4 February 2021; PP: 19/2021
<b>Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Joint Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Inquiry into PFAS remediation in and around Defence bases – second progress report</i>	31 August 2020; PP: 200/2020
<i>Inquiry into targeted sanctions to address human rights abuses</i>	7 December 2020; PP: 546/2020
<i>Inquiry into the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for Australia's foreign affairs, defence and trade</i>	8 December 2020; PP: 545/2020
<i>Inquiry into Australia's defence relationships with Pacific island nations</i>	12 May 2021; PP: 97/2021
<i>Australia's response to the coup in Myanmar</i>	24 June 2021; PP: 179/2021
<b>Health, Aged Care and Sport, Standing Committee on</b>	
No reports were presented during 2020–21.	
<b>Implementation of the National Redress Scheme, Joint Select Committee on</b>	
No reports were presented during 2020–21.	
<b>Indigenous Affairs, Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Inquiry into food pricing and food security in remote Indigenous communities</i>	7 December 2020; PP: 578/2020
<b>Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources, Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>From rubbish to resources: building a circular economy</i>	7 December 2020; PP: 577/2020

Reports presented	Date presented and parliamentary paper (PP) number
<b>Infrastructure, Transport and Cities, Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Fairer funding and financing of faster rail</i>	9 December 2020; PP: 579/2020
<b>Intelligence and Security, Parliamentary Joint Committee on</b>	
<i>Inquiry into the impact of the exercise of law enforcement and intelligence powers on the freedom of the press</i>	26 August 2020; PP: 198/2020
<i>Review of the Australian Citizenship Amendment (Citizenship Cessation) Bill 2019</i>	1 September 2020; PP: 216/2020
<i>Review of the re-listing of Islamic State East Asia as a terrorist organisation under the Criminal Code<sup>a</sup></i>	7 October 2020; PP: 262/2020
<i>Review of the listing and re-listing of three organisations as terrorist organisations under the Criminal Code<sup>a</sup></i>	7 October 2020; PP: 263/2020
<i>Annual report of committee activities 2019–2020</i>	7 October 2020; PP: 263/2020
<i>Review of the mandatory data retention regime</i>	28 October 2020; PP: 450/2020
<i>Advisory report on the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Amendment Bill 2020</i>	3 December 2020; PP: 555/2020
<i>Review of the listing and re-listing of two organisations as terrorist organisations under the Criminal Code</i>	7 December 2020; PP: 550/2020
<i>Review of 'Declared Areas' Provisions Sections 119.2 and 119.3 of the Criminal Code</i>	24 February 2021; PP: 43/2021
<i>Advisory report on the Telecommunications Legislation Amendment (International Production Orders) Bill 2020</i>	12 May 2021; PP: 133/2021
<i>Review of the re-listing of Jaish-e-Mohammad as a terrorist organisation under the Criminal Code<sup>a</sup></i>	12 May 2021; PP: 134/2021
<i>Review of the listing of Sonnenkrieg Division as a terrorist organisation under the Criminal Code<sup>a</sup></i>	16 June 2021; PP: 165/2021
<i>Report on the review of the re-listing of Hizballah's External Security Organisation as a terrorist organisation under the Criminal Code</i>	23 June 2021; PP: 194/2021
<b>Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Select Committee on</b>	
<i>Mental health and suicide prevention – interim report</i>	15 April 2021; PP: 120/2021
<b>Migration, Joint Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Interim report of the Inquiry into the Working Holiday Maker program</i>	15 September 2020; PP: 255/2020
<i>Final report of the Inquiry into the Working Holiday Maker program</i>	30 November 2020; PP: 530/2020
<i>Interim report of the Inquiry into Australia's Skilled Migration program</i>	18 March 2021; PP: 89/2021

Reports presented	Date presented and parliamentary paper (PP) number
<b>National Capital and External Territories, Joint Standing Committee on the</b>	
<i>Report of the delegation to the Antarctic Parliamentarians Assembly – London, United Kingdom, 1–4 December 2019</i>	19 October 2020; PP: 436/2020
<b>Northern Australia, Joint Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Never Again: Inquiry into the destruction of 46,000 year old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia – interim report</i>	9 December 2020; PP: 564/2020
<b>Public Accounts and Audit, Joint Committee of</b>	
<i>Report 480.1: Annual report (2019–20)</i>	19 October 2020; PP: 465/2020
<i>Report 482: Review of the operations of the Parliamentary Budget Office 2019–20</i>	19 October 2020; PP: 466/2020
<i>Report 483: Inquiry into the 2018–19 Defence major projects report and the future submarine project – transition to design</i>	7 December 2020; PP: 548/2020
<i>Report 484: The administration of government grants</i>	7 December 2020; PP: 549/2020
<i>Report 485: Cyber resilience</i>	9 December 2020; PP: 570/2020
<b>Public Works, Parliamentary Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>4/2020: Referrals made April 2020 and June 2020</i>	19 August 2020; PP: 178/2020
<i>5/2020: Referral made May 2020</i>	28 September 2020; PP: 227/2020
<i>6/2020: Referrals made September and October 2020</i>	7 December 2020; PP: 547/2020
<i>1/2021: Referral made April 2020</i>	22 February 2021; PP: 57/2021
<i>2/2021: Referrals made November and December 2020</i>	17 March 2021; PP: 87/2021
<i>Eighty-fourth annual report</i>	17 March 2021; PP: 86/2021
<i>3/2021: Referral made April 2021</i>	21 June 2021; PP: 172/2021
<b>Regional Australia, House Select Committee on</b>	
No reports were presented during 2020–21.	
<b>Social Policy and Legal Affairs, Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Shelter in the storm – COVID-19 and homelessness – Interim report of the inquiry into homelessness in Australia</i>	7 October 2020; PP: 261/2020
<i>Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence</i>	12 May 2021; PP: 119/2021
<i>Ending Indefinite and Arbitrary Immigration Detention 2021 (private member's bill)<sup>b</sup></i>	22 June 2021
<b>Tax and Revenue, Standing Committee on</b>	
No reports were presented during 2020–21.	

Reports presented	Date presented and parliamentary paper (PP) number
<b>Trade and Investment Growth, Joint Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Diversify Australia's trade and investment profile</i>	17 March 2021; PP: 92/2021
<b>Treaties, Joint Standing Committee on</b>	
<i>Report 189: Capital increase WBG IBRD; Capital increase WBG IFC; Amendments CMS; Termination IPPA – Indonesia</i>	6 August 2020; PP: 167/2020
<i>Report 190: Matters relating to two treaties with Hong Kong</i>	7 October 2020; PP: 264/2020
<i>Report 191: IMF NAB; IMF BBA; IMF PRGT</i>	7 October 2020; PP: 265/2020
<i>Report 192: Military training – Singapore; Digital economy agreement – Singapore</i>	8 December 2020; PP: 553/2020
<i>Report 194: Certifications – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; Amendments 2020 – CITES</i>	16 March 2021; PP: 74/2020
<i>Report 195: Film co-production – Malaysia; Radio regulations – WRC-19; Tax information exchange – Timor-Leste</i>	11 May 2021; PP: 121/2021

a. Report presented by oral statement.

b. Statement discharging requirement to provide a report.

## Internal committees – their purpose and reports presented by them during 2020–21

Committee purpose and reports presented
<b>Appropriations and Administration, Standing Committee on</b>
The committee considers estimates of the funding required for the operation of the department and may confer with the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations, Staffing and Security.
Reports presented:
» <i>Report No 19: Budget estimates 2020–21</i> , presented on 8 October 2020; PP: 266/2020
» <i>Report No 20: Annual report 2019–20</i> , presented on 8 October 2020; PP: 267/2020
» <i>Report No 21: Budget estimates 2021–22</i> , presented on 13 May 2021; PP: 132/2020
<b>Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings, Joint Committee on the</b>
The committee meets when required to consider the general principles applying to the radio broadcasting and, in certain circumstances, the televising of proceedings of parliament by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.
No reports were presented during 2020–21.

## Committee purpose and reports presented

### Petitions, Standing Committee on

The committee receives and processes petitions, and inquires into and reports to the House on any matter relating to petitions and the petitions system. Information on how to go about petitioning the House of Representatives is available at the petitions page on the Parliament of Australia website.

Reports presented:

- » *Report 14: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 24 August 2020
- » *Report 15: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 31 August 2020
- » *Report 16: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 19 October 2020
- » *Report 17: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 26 October 2020
- » *Report 18: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 9 November 2020
- » *Report 19: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 30 November 2020
- » *Report 20: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 7 December 2020
- » *Report 21: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 15 February 2021
- » *Report 22: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 22 February 2021
- » *Report 23: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 15 March 2021
- » *Report 24: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 22 March 2021
- » *Report 25: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 12 May 2021
- » *Report 26: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 24 May 2021
- » *Report 27: Petitions and ministerial responses*, presented on 21 June 2021
- » *Report on the inquiry into aspects of petitioning security and accessibility*, presented on 24 June 2021; PP: 177/2021

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

The committee is appointed at the commencement of each parliament to inquire into and report on complaints of breach of privilege referred to it by the House, oversee arrangements for the maintenance of the register of members' interests and the register of members' qualifications, and consider any specific complaints about the registering of interests.

Reports presented:

- » *Report concerning the registration and declaration of members' interests during 2020*, presented on 18 February 2021; PP: 56/2021

### Procedure, Standing Committee on

The committee's role is to inquire into and report on the practices and procedures of the House and its committees.

Reports presented:

- » *Inquiry into the practices and procedures put in place by the House in response to the COVID-19 pandemic*, presented on 7 December 2020; PP: 576/2020
- » *Inquiry into the practices and procedures relating to Question Time*, presented on 13 May 2021; PP: 131/2021

### Publications, Standing Committee on

The committee presents reports making recommendations relating to the inclusion in the Parliamentary Papers Series of documents presented to parliament.

No reports were presented during 2020–21.



## Committee purpose and reports presented

### Selection Committee

The committee was established to determine the program of committee and delegation business and private members' business for each sitting Monday and to select bills for referral to committees.

Reports presented:

- » 24 August 2020
- » 26 August 2020
- » 7 October 2020 (Report No. 19)
- » 7 October 2020 (Report No. 20)
- » 21 October 2020
- » 28 October 2020
- » 11 November 2020
- » 2 December 2020
- » 3 February 2021
- » 17 February 2021
- » 24 February 2021
- » 17 March 2021
- » 24 March 2021
- » 25 March 2021
- » 12 May 2021
- » 26 May 2021
- » 16 June 2021
- » 24 June 2021

## 4. Publications

This appendix contains summary information on Department of the House of Representatives publications.

### Parliament of Australia website: [www.aph.gov.au](http://www.aph.gov.au)

The Parliament of Australia website includes members' home pages and home pages for House of Representatives committees and joint committees administered by the Department of the House of Representatives.

The House of Representatives pages of the website include many of the publications listed below as well as general information about the House and its work.

### Publications directly related to the work of the House and its committees

#### **About the House newsletter**

E-newsletter containing articles on the work of the House and its committees

#### **Committee Office brochures**

- » *Appearing as a witness at a committee public hearing*
- » *Committee support standards*
- » *Dealing with parliamentary committees*
- » *Making a submission: Notes to help those intending to make a submission to a parliamentary committee inquiry*

#### **House of Representatives facts and figures: Forty-sixth Parliament, first edition**

A document produced primarily for use by Parliament House visitor guides

#### **House of Representatives Infosheet series**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>Questions</i>                                  | 13. <i>The Constitution</i>                                  |
| 2. <i>A typical sitting day</i>                      | 14. <i>Making decisions – debate and division</i>            |
| 3. <i>The Speaker</i>                                | 15. <i>The work of a Member of Parliament</i>                |
| 4. <i>Committees</i>                                 | 16. <i>The Federation Chamber</i>                            |
| 5. <i>Parliamentary privilege</i>                    | 17. <i>Citizen's right of reply</i>                          |
| 6. <i>Opportunities for private Members</i>          | 18. <i>Double dissolution</i>                                |
| 7. <i>Making laws</i>                                | 19. <i>The House, government and opposition</i>              |
| 8. <i>Elections for the House of Representatives</i> | 20. <i>The Australian system of government</i>               |
| 9. <i>A new Parliament</i>                           | 21. <i>The Clerk and other officials</i>                     |
| 10. <i>The budget and financial legislation</i>      | 22. <i>Political parties in the House of Representatives</i> |
| 11. <i>Petitions</i>                                 | 23. <i>Basic legal expressions</i>                           |
| 12. <i>Finding out about the House</i>               | 24. <i>Glossary of procedural terms</i>                      |

### Publications directly related to the work of the House and its committees

#### **Guide to Procedures, sixth edition**

A concise introduction to House procedures, 2017 (reprinted 2019 with minor amendments)

## Publications directly related to the work of the House and its committees

### **House of Representatives Practice, seventh edition**

The official authority for issues of practice and procedure, 2018

### **House Review**

Discussion and analysis of selected features of House business, published each sitting week or fortnight

### **Last Week in the House**

An overview of the work of the House each sitting week, including links to selected events in the official transcript of proceedings (Hansard)

### **Members' Notes**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>First speeches</i>                          | 8. <i>Bills</i>                                  |
| 2. <i>Registration of Members' interests</i>      | 9. <i>Raising a matter in the House</i>          |
| 3. <i>Register of Members' qualifications</i>     | 10. <i>Private Members' motions</i>              |
| 4. <i>Introduction to the Chamber environment</i> | 11. <i>Private Members' bills and amendments</i> |
| 5. <i>Etiquette in the Chamber</i>                | 12. <i>Procedural motions</i>                    |
| 6. <i>House business documents and guidance</i>   | 13. <i>Parliamentary privilege</i>               |
| 7. <i>Motions, debate and voting</i>              | 14. <i>Presenting a petition</i>                 |

### **New Members' Handbook**

A guide to services and facilities for new members of the House, 2019

### **House of Representatives Procedural Digest**

A record of procedural events in the House, published each sitting week or fortnight

### **The Speaker of the House of Representatives**

An illustrated history of the office, role and duties of the Speaker, 2016

### **House of Representatives Standing Orders**

The permanent rules of procedure, as of 19 September 2019

### **House of Representatives Statistical Digest**

A statistical record of the work of the House, published each sitting week or fortnight

### **Work of the Session**

A periodic summary of the business of the House and its committees

### **Working with parliamentary committees**

- » *A guide for committee chairs*
- » *A guide for Members*
- » *A guide for Members' staff*

## Publications of an administrative nature

Department of the House of Representatives annual reports

Department of the House of Representatives corporate plans

Department of the House of Representatives Portfolio Budget Statements

*Department of the House of Representatives Enterprise Agreement 2017–2020*

Department of the House of Representatives service charter: service standards, January 2014

## 5. Correction of material errors

There are three errors to be corrected in the *Department of the House of Representatives Annual Report 2019–20*:

- » The number of hours of committee meetings supported in 2019–20 was reported on page 18 as 728. The actual figure was 790.
- » The number of seminars conducted in 2019–20 was reported on page 22 as 11. The actual figure was seven.
- » The number of transport coordination services provided to members in 2019–20 was reported on page 24 as 16,630. The actual figure was 17,811.

## 6. Contact directory

This appendix contains the contact details of House of Representatives office holders and the department's senior executive officers as at 30 June 2021.

<b>Speaker of the House of Representatives</b> Hon Tony Smith MP	<b>Parliament House</b> Phone (02) 6277 4000
	<b>Electorate office</b> Phone (03) 9727 0799
	<b>Email</b> tony.smith.mp@aph.gov.au
<b>Deputy Speaker</b> Mr Llew O'Brien MP	<b>Parliament House</b> Phone (02) 6277 2301
	<b>Electorate office</b> Phone (07) 4121 2936
	<b>Email</b> llew.obrien.mp@aph.gov.au
<b>Second Deputy Speaker</b> Mr Rob Mitchell MP	<b>Parliament House</b> Phone (02) 6277 4117
	<b>Electorate office</b> Phone (03) 5716 3000
	<b>Email</b> rob.mitchell.mp@aph.gov.au
<b>Clerk of the House</b> Ms Claessa Surtees	<b>Phone</b> (02) 6277 4111
	<b>Email</b> clerk.reps@aph.gov.au
<b>Deputy Clerk</b> Mr Peter Banson	<b>Phone</b> (02) 6277 4222
	<b>Email</b> depclerk.reps@aph.gov.au
<b>Clerk Assistant (Table)</b> Mr Glenn Worthington	<b>Phone</b> (02) 6277 4777
	<b>Email</b> glenn.worthington.reps@aph.gov.au
<b>Clerk Assistant (Procedure)</b> Ms Peggy Danaee	<b>Phone</b> (02) 6277 4396
	<b>Email</b> peggy.danaee.reps@aph.gov.au
<b>Clerk Assistant (Committees)</b> Mr Russell Chafer	<b>Phone</b> (02) 6277 4399
	<b>Email</b> russell.chafer.reps@aph.gov.au
<b>Serjeant-at-Arms</b> Mr James Catchpole	<b>Phone</b> (02) 6277 4444
	<b>Email</b> james.catchpole.reps@aph.gov.au
<b>Departmental addresses</b>	<b>Post</b> Department of the House of Representatives PO Box 6021 Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600
	<b>Internet</b> <a href="http://www.aph.gov.au/dhr">www.aph.gov.au/dhr</a>

## 7. List of requirements

Section 17AJ(d) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 requires the table below to be included in annual reports as an aid of access.

PGPA Rule reference	Part of report (print version)	Description	Requirement
<b>17AD(g)</b>	<b>Letter of transmittal</b>		
17AI	p. iii	A copy of the letter of transmittal signed and dated by accountable authority on date final text approved, with statement that the report has been prepared in accordance with section 46 of the Act and any enabling legislation that specifies additional requirements in relation to the annual report.	Mandatory
<b>17AD(h)</b>	<b>Aids to access</b>		
17AJ(a)	p. v	Table of contents.	Mandatory
17AJ(b)	pp. 173–182	Alphabetical index.	Mandatory
17AJ(c)	p. 172	Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms.	Mandatory
17AJ(d)	pp. 165–171	List of requirements.	Mandatory
17AJ(e)	p. ii	Details of contact officer.	Mandatory
17AJ(f)	p. ii	Entity's website address.	Mandatory
17AJ(g)	p. ii	Electronic address of report.	Mandatory
<b>17AD(a)</b>	<b>Review by accountable authority</b>		
17AD(a)	pp. 2–5	A review by the accountable authority of the entity.	Mandatory
<b>17AD(b)</b>	<b>Overview of the entity</b>		
17AE(1)(a)(i)	p. 6	A description of the role and functions of the entity.	Mandatory
17AE(1)(a)(ii)	pp. 6–8	A description of the organisational structure of the entity.	Mandatory
17AE(1)(a)(iii)	p. 9	A description of the outcomes and programmes administered by the entity.	Mandatory
17AE(1)(a)(iv)	p. 6	A description of the purposes of the entity as included in corporate plan.	Mandatory
17AE(1)(aa)(i)	p. 12	Name of the accountable authority or each member of the accountable authority.	Mandatory
17AE(1)(aa)(ii)	p. 12	Position title of the accountable authority or each member of the accountable authority.	Mandatory
17AE(1)(aa)(iii)	p. 93	Period as the accountable authority or member of the accountable authority within the reporting period.	Mandatory

PGPA Rule reference	Part of report (print version)	Description	Requirement
17AE(1)(b)	Not applicable	An outline of the structure of the portfolio of the entity.	Portfolio departments – mandatory
17AE(2)	Not applicable	Where the outcomes and programs administered by the entity differ from any Portfolio Budget Statement, Portfolio Additional Estimates Statement or other portfolio estimates statement that was prepared for the entity for the period, include details of variation and reasons for change.	If applicable, mandatory
<b>17AD(c) Report on the performance of the entity</b>			
<b>Annual performance statements</b>			
17AD(c)(i); 16F	pp. 12–26	Annual performance statement in accordance with paragraph 39(1)(b) of the Act and section 16F of the Rule.	Mandatory
<b>17AD(c)(ii) Report on financial performance</b>			
17AF(1)(a)	p. 27	A discussion and analysis of the entity's financial performance.	Mandatory
17AF(1)(b)	p. 28	A table summarising the total resources and total payments of the entity.	Mandatory
17AF(2)	Not applicable	If there may be significant changes in the financial results during or after the previous or current reporting period, information on those changes, including: the cause of any operating loss of the entity; how the entity has responded to the loss and the actions that have been taken in relation to the loss; and any matter or circumstances that it can reasonably be anticipated will have a significant impact on the entity's future operation or financial results.	If applicable, mandatory
<b>17AD(d) Management and accountability</b>			
<b>Corporate governance</b>			
17AG(2)(a)	p. 80	Information on compliance with section 10 (fraud systems).	Mandatory
17AG(2)(b)(i)	p. iii	A certification by accountable authority that fraud risk assessments and fraud control plans have been prepared.	Mandatory
17AG(2)(b)(ii)	p. iii	A certification by accountable authority that appropriate mechanisms for preventing, detecting incidents of, investigating or otherwise dealing with, and recording or reporting fraud that meet the specific needs of the entity are in place.	Mandatory

PGPA Rule reference	Part of report (print version)	Description	Requirement
17AG(2)(b) (iii)	p. iii	A certification by accountable authority that all reasonable measures have been taken to deal appropriately with fraud relating to the entity.	Mandatory
17AG(2)(c)	pp. 68–81	An outline of structures and processes in place for the entity to implement principles and objectives of corporate governance.	Mandatory
17AG(2)(d) – (e)	Not applicable – see p. 80	A statement of significant issues reported to Minister under paragraph 19(1)(e) of the Act that relates to non-compliance with Finance law and action taken to remedy non-compliance.	If applicable, mandatory
<b>Audit Committee</b>			
17AG(2A)(a)	p. 69	A direct electronic address of the charter determining the functions of the entity's audit committee.	Mandatory
17AG(2A)(b)	pp. 69–71	The name of each member of the entity's audit committee.	Mandatory
17AG(2A)(c)	pp. 69–71	The qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience of each member of the entity's audit committee.	Mandatory
17AG(2A)(d)	p. 72	Information about the attendance of each member of the entity's audit committee at committee meetings.	Mandatory
17AG(2A)(e)	p. 72	The remuneration of each member of the entity's audit committee.	Mandatory
<b>External scrutiny</b>			
17AG(3)	p. 82	Information on the most significant developments in external scrutiny and the entity's response to the scrutiny.	Mandatory
17AG(3)(a)	p. 82	Information on judicial decisions and decisions of administrative tribunals and by the Australian Information Commissioner that may have a significant effect on the operations of the entity.	If applicable, mandatory
17AG(3)(b)	p. 82	Information on any reports on operations of the entity by the Auditor-General (other than report under section 43 of the Act), a Parliamentary Committee, or the Commonwealth Ombudsman.	If applicable, mandatory
17AG(3)(c)	Not applicable	Information on any capability reviews on the entity that were released during the period.	If applicable, mandatory



PGPA Rule reference	Part of report (print version)	Description	Requirement
<b>Management of human resources</b>			
17AG(4)(a)	pp. 83–97	An assessment of the entity's effectiveness in managing and developing employees to achieve entity objectives.	Mandatory
17AG(4)(aa)	pp. 83–85	Statistics on the entity's employees on an ongoing and non-ongoing basis, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» statistics on full-time employees</li> <li>» statistics on part-time employees</li> <li>» statistics on gender</li> <li>» statistics on staff location.</li> </ul>	Mandatory
17AG(4)(b)	pp. 83–85	Statistics on the entity's APS employees on an ongoing and non-ongoing basis; including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» statistics on staffing classification level</li> <li>» statistics on full-time employees</li> <li>» statistics on part-time employees</li> <li>» statistics on gender</li> <li>» statistics on staff location</li> <li>» statistics on employees who identify as Indigenous.</li> </ul>	Mandatory
17AG(4)(c)	p. 91	Information on any enterprise agreements, individual flexibility arrangements, Australian workplace agreements, common law contracts and determinations under subsection 24(1) of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> .	Mandatory
17AG(4)(c)(i)	p. 91	Information on the number of SES and non-SES employees covered by agreements etc identified in paragraph 17AG(4)(c).	Mandatory
17AG(4)(c)(ii)	p. 92	The salary ranges available for APS employees by classification level.	Mandatory
17AG(4)(c)(iii)	p. 92	A description of non-salary benefits provided to employees.	Mandatory
17AG(4)(d)(i)	Not applicable – see p. 91	Information on the number of employees at each classification level who received performance pay.	If applicable, mandatory
17AG(4)(d)(ii)	Not applicable – see p. 91	Information on aggregate amounts of performance pay at each classification level.	If applicable, mandatory
17AG(4)(d)(iii)	Not applicable – see p. 91	Information on the average amount of performance payment, and range of such payments, at each classification level.	If applicable, mandatory
17AG(4)(d)(iv)	Not applicable – see p. 91	Information on aggregate amount of performance payments.	If applicable, mandatory

PGPA Rule reference	Part of report (print version)	Description	Requirement
<b>Assets management</b>			
17AG(5)	p. 98	An assessment of effectiveness of assets management where asset management is a significant part of the entity's activities.	If applicable, mandatory
<b>Purchasing</b>			
17AG(6)	p. 98	An assessment of entity performance against the Commonwealth Procurement Rules.	Mandatory
<b>Reportable consultancy contracts</b>			
17AG(7)(a)	p. 98	A summary statement detailing the number of new contracts engaging consultants entered into during the period; the total actual expenditure on all new consultancy contracts entered into during the period (inclusive of GST); the number of ongoing consultancy contracts that were entered into during a previous reporting period; and the total actual expenditure in the reporting year on the ongoing consultancy contracts (inclusive of GST).	Mandatory
17AG(7)(b)	p. 98	A statement that 'During [reporting period], [specified number] new consultancy contracts were entered into involving total actual expenditure of \$[specified million]. In addition, [specified number] ongoing consultancy contracts were active during the period, involving total actual expenditure of \$[specified million].'	Mandatory
17AG(7)(c)	p. 98	A summary of the policies and procedures for selecting and engaging consultants and the main categories of purposes for which consultants were selected and engaged.	Mandatory
17AG(7)(d)	p. 99	A statement that 'Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on contracts for consultancies. Information on the value of contracts and consultancies is available on the AusTender website.'	Mandatory
<b>Reportable non-consultancy contracts</b>			
17AG(7A)(a)	pp. 99–100	A summary statement detailing the number of new reportable non-consultancy contracts entered into during the period; the total actual expenditure on such contracts (inclusive of GST); the number of ongoing reportable non-consultancy contracts that were entered into during a previous reporting period; and the total actual expenditure in the reporting period on those ongoing contracts (inclusive of GST).	Mandatory

PGPA Rule reference	Part of report (print version)	Description	Requirement
17AG(7A)(b)	p. 100	A statement that 'Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on reportable non-consultancy contracts. Information on the value of reportable non-consultancy contracts is available on the AusTender website.'	Mandatory
<b>Additional information about organisations receiving amounts under reportable consultancy contracts or reportable non-consultancy contracts</b>			
17AGA	pp. 98–100	Additional information, in accordance with section 17AGA, about organisations receiving amounts under reportable consultancy contracts or reportable non-consultancy contracts.	Mandatory
<b>Australian National Audit Office access clauses</b>			
17AG(8)	Not applicable	If an entity entered into a contract with a value of more than \$100,000 (inclusive of GST) and the contract did not provide the Auditor-General with access to the contractor's premises, the report must include the name of the contractor, purpose and value of the contract, and the reason why a clause allowing access was not included in the contract.	If applicable, mandatory
<b>Exempt contracts</b>			
17AG(9)	Not applicable	If an entity entered into a contract or there is a standing offer with a value greater than \$10,000 (inclusive of GST) which has been exempted from being published in AusTender because it would disclose exempt matters under the FOI Act, the annual report must include a statement that the contract or standing offer has been exempted, and the value of the contract or standing offer, to the extent that doing so does not disclose the exempt matters.	If applicable, mandatory
<b>Small business</b>			
17AG(10)(a)	p. 100	A statement that '[Name of entity] supports small business participation in the Commonwealth Government procurement market. Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and Small Enterprise participation statistics are available on the Department of Finance's website.'	Mandatory
17AG(10)(b)	p. 100	An outline of the ways in which the procurement practices of the entity support small and medium enterprises.	Mandatory

PGPA Rule reference	Part of report (print version)	Description	Requirement
17AG(10)(c)	Not applicable	If the entity is considered by the Department administered by the Finance Minister as material in nature – a statement that '[Name of entity] recognises the importance of ensuring that small businesses are paid on time. The results of the Survey of Australian Government Payments to Small Business are available on the Treasury's website.'	If applicable, mandatory
<b>Financial statements</b>			
17AD(e)	pp. 102–144	Inclusion of the annual financial statements in accordance with subsection 43(4) of the Act.	Mandatory
<b>Executive remuneration</b>			
17AD(da)	pp. 93–95	Information about executive remuneration in accordance with Subdivision C of Division 3A of Part 2-3 of the Rule.	Mandatory
<b>17AD(f)</b>	<b>Other mandatory information</b>		
17AH(1)(a)(i)	Not applicable	If the entity conducted advertising campaigns, a statement that 'During [reporting period], the [name of entity] conducted the following advertising campaigns: [name of advertising campaigns undertaken]. Further information on those advertising campaigns is available at [address of entity's website] and in the reports on Australian Government advertising prepared by the Department of Finance. Those reports are available on the Department of Finance's website.'	If applicable, mandatory
17AH(1)(a)(ii)	p. 100	If the entity did not conduct advertising campaigns, a statement to that effect.	If applicable, mandatory
17AH(1)(b)	Not applicable	A statement that 'Information on grants awarded by [name of entity] during [reporting period] is available at [address of entity's website].'	If applicable, mandatory
17AH(1)(c)	p. 82	Outline of mechanisms of disability reporting, including reference to website for further information.	Mandatory
17AH(1)(d)	Not applicable – see p. 82	Website reference to where the entity's Information Publication Scheme statement pursuant to Part II of FOI Act can be found.	Mandatory
17AH(1)(e)	p. 163	Correction of material errors in previous annual report.	If applicable, mandatory
17AH(2)	pp. 68, 81, 100	Information required by other legislation.	Mandatory

# Abbreviations and acronyms

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
AC	Companion of the Order of Australia
AFP	Australian Federal Police
ANZACATT	Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table
APRA	Australia Prudential Regulation Authority
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CH	Companion of Honour
DPS	Department of Parliamentary Services
EB	Executive Band
GST	goods and services tax
ICT	information and communications technology
LCCDC	Liaison Committee of Chairs and Deputy Chairs
MIKTA	Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia
MP	Member of Parliament
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PFAS	poly-fluoroalkyl substances
PGPA	Public Governance, Performance and Accountability
PHIAC	Private Health Insurance Administration Council
PP	parliamentary paper
PSL	Parliamentary Service Level
QR code	quick response code
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
SES	Senior Executive Service
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
WHS Act	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>

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