



Part 2

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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 2018–19 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 2018–19*, 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 retiring members, analytics relating to departmental social media and publications, evaluations from external stakeholders, an annual survey of departmental staff, and internal records and reporting.

With a general election due to be held in 2019 but uncertainty about the exact timing of the dissolution of the House and commencement of the Forty-sixth Parliament, the department chose to seek formal feedback from members earlier in the financial year than might otherwise have been the case. The annual members' survey and interviews were held between February and April 2019, enabling the department to secure vital performance information for the year.

Members' survey

In February 2019 all members were invited to complete an online questionnaire, with hard copies also available. The survey was open from 8 February to 30 April 2019 and members were advised that their responses would be anonymous.

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

- » the quality and timeliness of chamber procedural support and advisory services
- » the quality and availability of procedural and statistical publications, and support to obtain these
- » the quality and timeliness of advice and services to parliamentary committees

- » the standard of report drafting for parliamentary committees
- » support for participation in official international delegations
- » support for their House of Representatives office accommodation
- » support for their salary payments
- » support for transport coordination in Canberra during sitting weeks.

Members were also able to provide comments in response to each question and, at the end of the survey, they were invited to offer additional comments on any aspect of the services provided by the department.

Forty-three members completed the questionnaire (13 online and 30 in hard copy). This represents a response rate of 29 per cent of the 150 available members.

Members' interviews

To complement the members' survey, the Clerk wrote to 16 members who had announced their intention not to contest a seat at the conclusion of the Forty-fifth Parliament, inviting them to participate in an in-depth face-to-face interview with a senior member of departmental staff. The members were advised that the department was conducting the interviews to receive feedback on the level and quality of its advice, information and services, and to gain insight into service provision. Aside from general reflections on their time as parliamentarians and suggestions for possible areas of parliamentary reform, areas 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, and satisfaction with arrangements made for any parliamentary delegations overseas, 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 were conducted between February and April 2019 with 10 members, a participation rate of 63 per cent of those invited to be involved.

Staff survey

The departmental staff survey for 2018–19 was available online from 3 to 30 June 2019. The purpose of the survey was to understand staff opinions of the department's working environment, performance, governance and leadership. Staff were advised that results of the survey would be distributed to staff of the department, addressing key trends, and that individual responses would not be identified.

A total of 115 staff responded to the survey, a participation rate of 70 per cent.

Other data sources

In addition to the members' survey and interviews, feedback on the services provided by the department is sought from the Speaker's Office through interviews with the Speaker's chief of staff and advisers. Formal feedback is also received through surveys completed by participants in parliamentary delegations, beneficiaries of the department's inter-parliamentary capacity-building activities and 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.

As is typical of the final year of the parliamentary cycle, this year's activity was interrupted by a general election, which is reflected in the activity information. Sittings of the House, meetings of the Federation Chamber, and legislative and committee activity all decreased during the latter part of the year. The figures do not reflect the intensity of activity in some areas, such as legislative drafting for private members, and committee activities continuing up until closer to the time of the election than in previous election years.

Commentary

The department's performance framework continues to mature. The department's revised purpose statement and performance measures are presented in summary in the department's *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, and in more detail in the department's *Corporate Plan 2018–19*.

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 face-to-face interviews with members, and feedback provided by the Speaker'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, statistical publications, analysis and advisory services.

Target: 90 per cent satisfied.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 14; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, page 16.

Result against the performance criterion: Target met.

All respondents to the members' survey (100 per cent) 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, 'always excellent', 'exceptional service and support as always!' and 'could not ask for better'.

Feedback from interviewed members was consistent with the survey results. The majority of interviewed members reported a high degree of satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of chamber support. Procedural support was described as 'always good', 'excellent', 'helpful and accurate' and 'characterised by integrity and competence'. The role of departmental staff was described as 'very impressive' and 'exceptional', with one member commenting that such staff contribute to the dignity of the parliament. One member commented, 'There is never a hint of partisanship by the Clerks. No one would ever worry that they might favour one side over another. Their work reflects well on the House and they are always helpful and flexible'. One member reflected positively on the advice and support they had been provided with throughout their parliamentary career, including as a minister, shadow spokesperson and backbencher.

During interviews, one member suggested making more members aware of services that can be provided by the department, particularly in the more technical areas of drafting support and procedural advice. Several other comments were made about the importance of procedural development and ongoing professional development in a range of areas.

With respect to procedural and other publications, interviewed members indicated a high level of satisfaction with the quality and availability of the department's procedural and statistical publications. The importance of the *House of Representatives Standing Orders* and *House of Representatives Practice* was noted, and the *Live Minutes* was described as 'a great resource'. While some members indicated that they did not use the publications frequently, many commented on the comprehensive and useful nature of the materials, and on their awareness of the availability of materials.

One member suggested recommencing the daily distribution of the *Daily Program* in hard copy to all members.

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 per cent.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 14; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, 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

Target: No target set.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 14.

	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Number of sittings of the House	60	64	60	42
Number of meetings of the Federation Chamber	41	59	59	41
Number of bills introduced	162	248	222	155

a. Election year.

Analysis

In 2018–19 the department continued to perform strongly in the activity of the Chamber and Federation Chamber.

All members surveyed and interviewed were satisfied with the quality and timeliness of chamber support, procedural, statistical publications, analysis and advisory services, exceeding the target set of 90 per cent of members satisfied. During the reporting period, the department has continued to invest heavily in procedural training and development opportunities for staff. This has included a new lunchtime seminar program, an intensive ‘House main course’ tutorial program, and a range of new procedural resources including video material and guidance for Clerks-at-the-Table. The department also published the seventh edition of its flagship publication, *House of Representatives Practice*. This investment in procedural advice and capability will contribute to ensuring that the department continues to be able to deliver high levels of service to support the functioning of the Chamber and Federation Chamber.

During the reporting period, all chamber support service standards were met for sittings of the House and meetings of the Federation Chamber. Further progress on the House Division Recording System project during the next year will enable enhanced support and services for proceedings in the Chamber.

As is typical for the final year of a parliamentary cycle, the activity information reflects a lower than average number of sittings of the House, meetings of the Federation Chamber, and legislative workload. In recent years, the number of Federation Chamber meetings as a proportion of the number of House sittings has been relatively high, and this has continued during the current reporting period. The House's reliance on its second chamber has resulted in an ongoing need to have support staff available to facilitate an increasing number of meetings of the Federation Chamber. The procedural training and development activities discussed earlier make an important contribution in this respect. Although traditionally enjoying relative stability in personnel in key roles, the Table Office has made good use of shadowing arrangements to mitigate the risks associated with potential changes in staffing in future. This will ensure the department can continue to deliver high standards of support and service in this activity area.

Activity 2: Committee support

Performance measures and targets

Criterion 1

Level of satisfaction among surveyed committee members with the thoroughness, accuracy and timeliness of advice, standard of committee reports and other committee support services provided.

Target: 90 per cent satisfied.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 15; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, page 16.

Result against the performance criterion: Target met.

All respondents to the members' survey (100 per cent) indicated satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of advice and services to their committees, and all respondents indicated satisfaction with the standard of report drafting for their committees. Most comments made by members reinforced their satisfaction with the quality of committee-related support and services. Three members commented on their experiences with particular committee secretariats, and one member suggested that hard copies of committee reports be more readily available to committee members.

During interviews, members described the quality and usefulness of committee advice, support and report writing as generally good, and one member commented, 'great committee secretariats with very professional staff'. One member raised concerns about the quality of committee report drafting over the past 12 months, although acknowledged secretariats are under workload pressures. One member suggested dedicating sitting Mondays to committee meetings to avoid committees meeting at other times the House is sitting.

Activity information

Target: No target set.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 15.

	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Number of committee meetings ^b	555	541	693	511
Hours of meetings ^{b,c}	912	845	1,285	988
Number of committee reports ^b	72	46	73	85

a. Election year.

b. Excludes internal committees.

c. To the nearest hour.

Analysis

Feedback gathered through the members' survey and interviews indicates that members are highly satisfied with committee support services, including advice and report drafting. The department prides itself on providing high-quality services to the House and joint committees supported by it. The department is continuing 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.

The department is reviewing its policies in relation to the availability of printed committee reports for members. The department will continue to provide training to Committee Office staff in relation to report drafting to strengthen capacity in this regard. The department will closely monitor secretariat workloads and the resources available to various committees. The department acknowledges one member's suggestion to devote sitting Mondays to committee work, and notes that the House's order of business is a matter for the House itself.

Activity information shows a decline in the number of committee meetings, which is consistent with expectations of an election year. While the hours of meetings also declined compared to last year, the 995 hours of meetings this year was higher than experienced during the last election year. Moreover, the number of committee reports presented (85) exceeded the result for the non-election year in 2017–18 (73 reports) as well as the last election year (46 reports). This somewhat contradictory activity information reflects the fact that, during the Forty-fifth Parliament, the high tempo of committee activities continued late into the final year of the parliamentary cycle before a general election, when in the past committees have typically completed inquiries and become less active at such a stage.

Activity 3: Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building

Performance measures and targets

Criterion 1

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

Target: 90 per cent satisfied.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 16; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, page 16.

Result against the performance criterion: Target met.

Positive feedback was received from the Presiding Officers and their staff on arrangements for incoming and outgoing delegations during the year, including for the Presiding Officers' own travel. Positive comments were also received on improvements that had been made in arrangements for functions for incoming delegations, and more thorough engagement by the International and Parliamentary Relations Office (IPRO) with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Delegates' satisfaction with arrangements for delegations is gauged through an online survey available to all members of incoming and outgoing delegations supported by IPRO. During 2018–19, 26 per cent of all delegates completed the survey. Based on responses to the online survey, 100 per cent of delegates were either very satisfied or satisfied with arrangements.

Nearly all respondents to the members' survey (97 per cent) indicated satisfaction with support for their participation in official outgoing parliamentary delegations. Four additional comments were made, three of which commended the support and services provided by the department. One comment related to the limited opportunities available in this area.

During interviews, members described the parliament's international work as 'great', 'wonderful' and 'really important'. One member described their experience as a delegation member as 'very valuable', and noted their appreciation for the support they received during the visit. Arrangements made by the department were described as 'fabulous' and 'excellent', and one member commented that 'whatever IPRO organises is really good'.

During members' interviews, several suggestions were made, some of which related to minor administrative changes IPRO could consider in relation to its processes. One member also suggested that continuity in the membership of delegations to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly could improve the effectiveness of the Australian Parliament's participation. Another member suggested a greater focus on region-to-region connections for parliamentary friendship groups.

Criterion 2

Level of satisfaction among parliaments with capacity-building activities.

Target: 90 per cent satisfied.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 16; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, page 16.

Result against the performance criterion: Target met.

Formal feedback processes indicate that all respondents (100 per cent) were satisfied with the training and support provided.

These activities included Inter-Parliamentary Study Programs conducted for Speakers of Pacific parliaments and for staff of other parliaments, attachments in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga facilitated as part of parliamentary support programs, and study visit programs conducted for parliamentarians and officials from the parliament of Malaysia.

Activity information

Target: No target set.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 16.

	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Number of delegations managed	47	46	59	56
Number and nature of parliamentary capacity-building activities	29	19	24	28
» Occasions equipment supplied to Pacific parliaments	7	1	3	4
» Staff attachments and study visits	18	13	12	20
» Conferences, seminars and workshops	4	5	9	4

a. Election year.

Analysis

Feedback from Presiding Officers and their staff, members of incoming and outgoing delegations, and participants in capacity-building activities all indicate that the department continues to perform strongly in supporting the parliament with its inter-parliamentary and capacity-building work.

As is typical in the final year of the parliamentary cycle, activity information reflects a slight reduction in the number of delegations during the reporting period (56 delegations, compared with 59 delegations in 2017–18). Notably, more delegations were supported during the reporting period than during the previous election year (56 delegations, compared with 46 delegations in 2016–17). Moreover, despite it being an election year, the number of parliamentary capacity-building activities increased in 2018–19.

The department engages constructively with the feedback provided by members of incoming and outgoing delegations, and seeks to continually refine its processes in response to the changing needs of its clients. IPRO and the Parliamentary Skills Centre (PSC) are considering suggestions made by members, including circulating briefing materials as they become available, where practical to do so.

Activity 4: Community 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 2018–19*, page 17; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, page 16.

Result against the performance criterion: Target partially met.

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

- » Facebook: 7,105 followers (increase of 10 per cent)
- » Twitter: 44,843 followers (increase of five per cent)
- » *About the House* newsletter: 2,102 subscribers (increase of 14 per cent)
- » YouTube: 6,648 subscribers (increase of 40 per cent)
- » Posts to the department's Twitter page received a total of over 4.6 million impressions (increase of approximately 41 per cent), and videos published by the department were viewed over 200,000 times (decrease of approximately 14 per cent).

During interviews, although several members noted the public's lack of trust in the institution of parliament, none offered ready answers on addressing this concern. It was also suggested by some members that addressing this phenomenon was primarily a matter for parliamentarians rather than the parliamentary administration.

One interviewed member was not aware of the department's community awareness activities, but thought that sending out a positive message is a 'good thing'. Another member spoke in favour of more community education highlighting the important work of the parliament within Australia's framework of government. One member commented that the standard of parliamentary debate had changed over time and the broader issue of behaviour during parliamentary debate needed to be addressed, possibly with the assistance of some changes to the standing orders.

Criterion 2

Clients are satisfied with seminars.

Target: 90 per cent of seminar participants are satisfied.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 17; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, page 16.

Result against the performance criterion: Target met.

During the reporting period, the department held 11 seminars, which were attended by a total of 356 participants. Surveys were distributed to all attendees, and 124 were returned (a response rate of 35 per cent). Surveys gauged participants' satisfaction with five aspects of seminars: seminar content, level of detail, presenter, audio-visual information and handouts. Based on seminar feedback forms, over 96 per cent of responses indicated satisfaction (ratings of 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent') across the five areas assessed, and 93 per cent reported that the seminars met their objectives.

Activity information

Target: No target set.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 17.

	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Community contacts with the department's publications				
» @AboutTheHouse Twitter account impressions	No data available	No data available	Over 3.2 million	Over 4.6 million
» Website hits ^b	No data available	No data available	331,870	482,804
Number of seminar programs conducted	8	9	10	11

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 House 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 in a given period, as well as sittings-dependent output produced by the department in a given period. This reporting period has seen steady growth across most of the department's community outreach products with increased subscriptions across all digital platforms. A decrease in the number of views of videos published by the department is due to a reduction in the number of videos published during the election period. Overall, content across the House's Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and email newsletter content received over eight million impressions during the reporting period.

The Chamber Documents and the Powers, Practice and Procedure pages on the website also continue to be popular. Data also indicates continuing strong demand for seminars offered by the department, and high levels of satisfaction from seminar participants.

Members' comments about community perceptions of the parliament highlight the importance of the department's continuing community awareness work.

The department continues to refine its publications and products for members of the public, and uses all available feedback processes to continually improve its offerings.

Activity 5: Members' and corporate support

Performance measures and targets

Criterion 1

Level of satisfaction of the Speaker 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 2018–19*, page 18; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, 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 was very satisfied with the support services provided by the department to the Speaker, the Speaker's Office and members. The Speaker's Office indicated that services and advice from the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office are timely and of good quality, and indicated satisfaction with the services and advice provided. The Speaker had not received any complaints from members with respect to these services.

Criterion 2

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

Target: 90 per cent satisfied.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 18; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, page 16.

Result against the performance criterion: Target met.

Of the respondents to the members' survey, 98 per cent were satisfied with support and services for their Parliament House office accommodation, 98 per cent were satisfied with salary payment services, and 100 per cent were satisfied with transport coordination support during sitting weeks in Canberra. Members provided comments reinforcing their satisfaction with office accommodation services, such as, 'The offices are well-tended. The

mail services are prompt. The attendants are always extremely helpful and great company! Several positive comments were made about transport services, two of which described the department's transport staff as 'excellent', and one member commented, 'I have had no difficulty changing or cancelling bookings. Everyone is always cheerful and helpful'. One member suggested that the COMCAR shuttle run later on Thursday evenings and on Friday mornings in sitting weeks.

Feedback from interviewed members was broadly consistent with the survey results, with the majority of members interviewed expressing satisfaction with their office accommodation and office support services. One member expressed concerns about arrangements for visitor access to various parts of the Chamber. Suggestions for improvement related to the provision of additional equipment in members' Parliament House offices, including dishwashing machines and more crockery and cutlery.

Criterion 3

Level of satisfaction among staff with the quality of corporate advice and services provided by the department.

Target: 90 per cent satisfied.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 18; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, page 16.

Result against the performance criterion: Target met.

The relevant data source is the annual staff survey. Staff were asked to respond either 'Yes' or 'No' to the following statement: 'Based on the last 12 months, I am satisfied with the quality of advice and services provided by the corporate areas of the department'. A total of 92 per cent of respondents to the survey answered 'Yes' to this question.

Activity information

Target: No target set.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 18.

	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Number of Parliament House accommodation and office support services ^b	361	617	718	473
Number of transport coordination services provided to members	13,129	14,892	13,086	12,449

a. Election year.

b. Before 2017–18 this figure was for accommodation services only. From 2017–18 office support is also included in the figure.

Analysis

All performance targets in this area have been met. Feedback from the Speaker's Office and results of the members' survey indicate very high levels of satisfaction with support services provided by this activity area, including accommodation, office support, transport coordination, salary processing and other members' support services. Responses to the annual staff survey also indicate that other departmental staff are highly satisfied with support and advice received from the corporate parts of the department.

Some respondents to the members' survey commented on cleaning and plumbing matters, which the department has forwarded to the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS), as the responsible agency, for its information and action. The department continues to work closely with members to assist them to have any matters promptly resolved.

Additional suggestions, including the provision of certain equipment in members' Parliament House offices, will be considered. Future communications will assist members to understand the range of equipment and facilities available to them in their Parliament House offices, and seek to provide further clarity on the House's practices and procedures relating to visitor access to various parts of the Chamber and Federation Chamber.

Activity 6: Schools hospitality

Performance measures and targets

Criterion 1

Percentage of visiting school groups provided hospitality in accordance with booking.

Target: 100 per cent.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 19; *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19*, page 16.

Result against the performance criterion: Target met.

The data source is exception reporting from DPS and school groups. A total of 124,831 students toured Parliament House during the reporting period. Of those students, 93,225 participated in a Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) program and 94,380 requested and received hospitality. In 2018–19, there were no reports of hospitality not being provided to a school group that had requested it.

Activity information

Target: No target set.

Source: *Corporate Plan 2018–19*, page 19.

	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Number of visiting school students booked	115,774	117,654	119,088	124,831

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 PEO) 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 2018–19 there were no reports of schools not receiving the hospitality they had requested.

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.

To achieve this purpose, the department is committed to the delivery of high standards of advice, service and support to the House, members, parliamentary committees, other parliaments, and the broader community. Performance information from a range of data sources indicates that the department has successfully delivered to high standards.

The department has substantially met all performance targets outlined in its corporate plan and Portfolio Budget Statements. Feedback from the Speaker, members, delegates and recipients of services has been overwhelmingly positive. Quantitative measures and data relating to service standards have also indicated the department is performing well against its purpose.

Activity information indicates the reduction in various outputs, as is typical in an election year. The statistics do not adequately reveal the intensity of the work undertaken by departmental staff, particularly during times of uncertainty. Staff have responded well to changes in the operational environment, and have demonstrated professionalism and considerable flexibility in continuing to deliver support services of a high calibre.

The department's feedback processes have also identified a range of suggestions for improvements or additional services. The department has a strong culture of continually refining its service offering, and will consider this feedback when planning its future work program and priorities.

Overall, the department assesses itself as having fulfilled its purpose of providing advice and services and effectively facilitating engagement activities, in order to support the House 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 2018–19 financial year reporting a surplus of \$1.8 million (before depreciation). This varied from the breakeven position forecast in the department's *Portfolio Budget Statements 2018–19* (PBS). The department incurred total employee benefits of \$19.326 million in 2018–19, \$1.643 million lower than the budget estimate reported in the 2018–19 PBS, but only slightly lower than the employee benefits incurred in 2017–18 (\$19.410 million). The underspend was primarily due to a number of positions remaining vacant throughout the reporting period due to unexpected delays in recruitment processes along with the impact of the election period on staffing requirements.

Supplier expenses increased slightly between 2017–18 (\$4.983 million) and 2018–19 (\$5.243 million). This increase was as expected for this year in the parliamentary cycle and the expended amount only slightly exceeded the supplier expenses budgeted in the PBS budget estimate (\$5.150 million) by \$0.093 million.

The department's financial position has remained strong with appropriation receivable totalling \$17.779 million and cash and cash equivalents of \$0.617 million. In addition, the department has an amount of \$2.546 million on deposit with the purpose of earning interest which is spent on inter-parliamentary relations activities in Pacific parliaments in accordance with a delegation from the Finance Minister.

During the year, the department engaged a valuation specialist to perform a full revaluation of its property, plant and equipment class. The independent valuer's report concluded that a write-down of \$0.429 million was required to fairly represent the value of the assets at 30 June 2019. This amount was recorded in other comprehensive income and in the asset revaluation reserve.

In December 2018, the department transferred assets to DPS as part of the consolidation of status B furniture across the parliamentary departments. The assets were transferred to DPS for no consideration and were recognised as a distribution resulting in a reduction in equity of \$2.519 million.

The department's overall financial position continued to remain sound in 2018–19:

- » total financial assets increased by \$2.154 million from the prior year to \$21.207 million, reflecting an increase in appropriation receivable
- » total liabilities decreased by \$0.044 million to \$6.808 million.

The estimates for 2019–20 indicate that the department has sufficient resources to continue to support members, the House and committees.

Entity resource statement 2018–19

	Actual available appropriation for 2018–19 \$'000	Payments made 2018–19 \$'000	Balance remaining 2018–19 \$'000
	(a)	(b)	(a) – (b)
Departmental¹			
Annual appropriation²	40,967	22,748	18,219
Total	40,967	22,748	18,219
Administered expenses			
Outcome 1³	313	330	(17)
Total	313	330	(17)
Total resourcing	41,280	23,078	18,202
Total net resourcing and payments for the Department of the House of Representatives	41,280	23,078	

1. *Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2018–19*, prior year departmental appropriation and section 74 retained revenue receipts.

2. Includes an amount of \$0.637 million in 2018–19 for the departmental capital budget. For accounting purposes, this amount has been designated as 'contributions by owners'.

3. *Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Act (No. 1) 2018–19*.

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)	48,534

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.

In 2018–19 the budget allocation for this activity was \$3.973 million and expenditure was \$2.715 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 17); staff levels are shown in Table 11.

Following an independent review in 2017–18, the Clerk Assistant (Procedure) position will continue on an ongoing basis. In August 2018 the Clerk approved a structure for the House Procedure Office (expanding the former Chamber Research Office) to reflect the office's increasing focus on procedural development activities in addition to its traditional role of undertaking procedural research and maintaining statistics on the work of the House. Following the restructure, the Procedure Office has an additional director to oversee its procedural development functions.

Performance summary

The focus of the offices is on 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 by interviews with members who had announced their intention to retire at the conclusion of the Forty-fifth Parliament. 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 17 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 2018–19 and the four preceding years are shown in Table 1.

There were 42 sitting days in 2018–19, 18 fewer than in 2017–18 (30 per cent fewer sitting days). In 2018–19, the House sat for 177 fewer hours than in the previous year (32 per cent less time), and the Federation Chamber met for 101 fewer hours than it did in the previous year (44 per cent less time). Legislative activity continued at a high rate: 155 bills were introduced and 148 bills passed both Houses and received assent from the Governor-General.

Detailed information on the business of the House 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, 2014–15 to 2018–19

Aspect of performance	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Number of sittings/meetings					
Sittings of the House	77	60	64	60	42
Meetings of the Federation Chamber	57	41	59	59	41
Hours of sittings/meetings					
Sittings of the House ^b	726	592	570	548	371
Meetings of the Federation Chamber ^b	208	132	237	231	130

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; the requirements of the Constitution and standing orders with respect to financial legislation; privilege matters; and requirements of the House for the registration of members' interests.

House Division Recording System project

The House Division Recording System (HDRS) was trialled in the final sitting week of the Forty-fifth Parliament and was used to record the four divisions that took place that week. The HDRS allows tellers to record members' votes electronically on an iPad. The division result is published immediately on announcement by the Speaker in the *Votes Officer's Minutes* and on Events in Progress screens located in the Chamber. A web page is currently under development that will publish the results of divisions in real time and also provide a searchable and filterable repository of divisions recorded in the HDRS.



The Clerk, David Elder, advising the Speaker, the Hon Tony Smith MP, during a division, August 2018. 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 2014–15 to 2018–19.

Table 2: Questions in writing to ministers and answers to questions in writing, 2014–15 to 2018–19

	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Questions in writing ^b	633	1,310	761	987	250
Questions answered ^c	623	1,235	247	945	206

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.

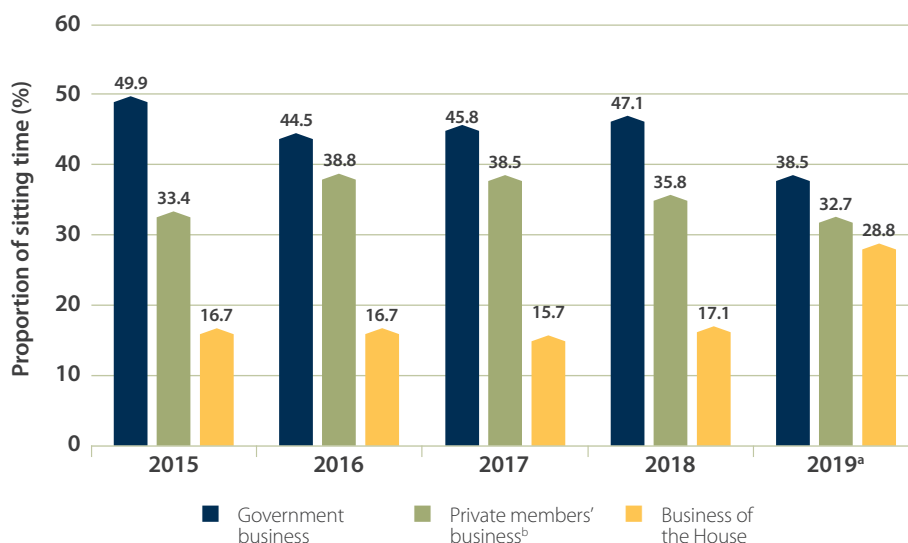
All sittings required the coordination of people, documents and actions, and the programming of the following categories of business:

- » 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).

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 is shown in Figure

3: Government and private members' business and business of the House (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2015 to 20193.

Figure 3: Government and private members' business and business of the House (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2015 to 2019



a. 2019 data is for January to June 2019 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

Legislation

Support for the legislative process in 2018–19 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
- » providing a legislative drafting service for private members

- » preparing and delivering formal messages to the Senate; during 2018–19, we delivered 128 messages relating to the passage of bills (199 in 2017–18) and 12 other messages (16 in 2017–18)
- » preparing and issuing a Daily Bills List for each sitting day; the list provides cumulative information on the status of all bills before the parliament, or assented to in the current calendar year.

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

Queries on the bills and legislation collection on the Parliament of Australia website totalled 1.49 million in 2018–19 (a decrease from 2.10 million in 2017–18), representing 12 per cent of the 12.56 million queries made via searches through ParlInfo, the database that includes all library publications as well as Hansard, bills, chamber and committee documents and the parliamentary handbook.

During the year, 155 bills were introduced (30 per cent fewer than the 222 introduced in 2017–18). Of these, 140 were initiated in the House of Representatives and 15 were received from the Senate.

The House passed 111 bills in 2018–19 (194 in 2017–18), an average of 2.6 bills for each sitting (a substantial decrease on the previous year, in which an average of 3.2 bills were passed per sitting).

A total of 148 bills were finally passed by both Houses in identical form (128 in 2017–18), of which 134 were initiated in the House of Representatives and 14 were initiated in the Senate. This figure includes a number of bills that passed the House prior to 2018–19 but either had not yet passed the Senate or were amended by the Senate and needed to be agreed to in their final form by both Houses.

Table 3 shows the number of bills introduced in the House and assented to in the five years from 2014–15 to 2018–19.

The House amended 20 (18 per cent) of the bills it passed, compared to 28 (14 per cent) in 2017–18. The Table Office incorporated the amendments into the text of the bills and arranged for their reprinting (as third-reading prints) before transmittal to the Senate. The House agreed to Senate amendments, made amendments requested by the Senate, or did both, in relation to 28 House bills (18 in 2017–18). After further processing by the Table Office, the bills were presented to the Governor-General for assent. The House did not make any amendments to bills in place of Senate amendments that were not agreed to. On one occasion the House agreed to Senate amendments with House amendments.

The number of amendments moved during the consideration-in-detail stage remained high: 566 in 2018–19 compared to 599 in 2017–18. Of the 483 such amendments that were passed, two were amendments proposed by the opposition and 10 were amendments proposed by non-aligned members. The House amended two Senate bills in 2018–19.

The Table Office prepared 18 third-reading prints (27 in 2017–18) and 134 assent prints (122 in 2017–18). All documents accurately reflected the decisions of both Houses.

Table 3: Number of bills introduced in the House, and number of bills assented to, 2014–15 to 2018–19

	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Bills introduced	203	162	248	222	155
Bills assented to ^b	168	118	126	128	148

a. Election year.

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

Legislative drafting

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

In 2018–19, 30 private members' bills were introduced (including two private senators' bills). Of the 566 amendments moved during consideration in detail, 95 were private members' amendments, 12 of which were agreed to. Table 4 provides chamber statistics for private members' legislation for the past five years. The table does not reflect all of the department's work in this area, because 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.

Table 4: Private members' bills introduced and amendments moved (Chamber and Federation Chamber), 2014–15 to 2018–19

	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Bills introduced	12	21	35	35	30
Second-reading amendments moved	22	16	40	45	37
Consideration-in-detail amendments moved	88	59	115	65	95

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* is prepared from the *Votes Officer's Minutes* (better known as

the *Live Minutes*), which is 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.

Documents

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

In 2018–19, a total of 2,556 documents were presented to the House, a decrease from the 3,354 presented in the previous year.

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

Online Tabled Documents project

With colleagues from the Department of the Senate and DPS, Table Office staff supported 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 make them available online immediately after tabling through a searchable database, thereby significantly reducing the need for hard copies.

Petitions

The House petitioning process enables Australians to raise issues with the House that are of interest to them. Table 5 shows the number of petitions presented to the House, and the number of signatories, for the past five years. In 2018–19, a total of 190 petitions were presented, compared with 424 in 2017–18. The number of signatures decreased from 371,491 in the previous year to 199,084 in 2018–19.

Table 5: Petitions and signatories to petitions, 2014–15 to 2018–19

	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17 ^a	2017–18	2018–19 ^a
Number of petitions presented	101	87	185	424	190
Number of signatories	250,369	118,846	235,751	371,491	199,084

a. Election year.

Research

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

In 2018–19, the office provided:

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

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

Publications

The seventh edition of the Department's flagship publication, *House of Representatives Practice*, was launched in August 2018. The new edition details more significant events in the Chamber and Federation Chamber that occurred between 2012 and 2018, including a prorogation without dissolution, several uses of the Speaker's casting vote, and a double dissolution. It updates references to the impact of section 44 of the Constitution as it relates to citizenship, has greater analysis of the work of House committees and the Federation Chamber, and references members' use of electronic devices and the House's new e-petitioning system.

The Procedure Office continued to produce regular publications outlining significant procedural events and popular statistics for a variety of readers. After each sitting fortnight, three publications were produced:

- » *Procedural Digest*, a subject-based technical record of proceedings
- » *Statistical Digest*, a statistical record of the work of the House
- » *House Review*, a plain-English analysis of significant House events for a general audience, published on the second Friday of the sitting fortnight.

These were complemented by *Last Week in the House*, which lists and links to official transcripts (Hansard) of key House business transacted each week. *Work of the Session*, a comprehensive six-monthly overview of the business of the House and committees, was published in July 2018, January 2019 and May 2019.

The publicly available, non-technical *Infosheet* series on the work of the House was expanded by two to a total of 24 topics. New titles were *Basic legal expressions* and *Glossary of procedural terms*. All infosheets were updated during the year.

Together, these publications provide a current and concise public record of the work of the House and the more significant aspects of that work. Several other Procedure Office publications were updated in preparation for the Forty-sixth Parliament—for example:

- » the *Members' Handbook* was fully revised and renamed the *New Members' Handbook*—this guide provides an introduction to the role of a member and a guide to services, entitlements and facilities
- » *Members' Notes*—information sheets specifically for members—were updated, and a fourteenth note added: *Register of Members' qualifications relating to sections 44 and 45 of the Constitution*.

The Procedure Office also maintains, publishes and distributes the standing orders of the House.

The Procedure Office has continued to update and increase its publications about the work of the House, to cater to the wide range of needs and interests of members, staff and the public. The intention is to increase procedural capability and understanding of the House's role and formal processes. The department's publications are listed in Appendix 4.

During the reporting period, the Procedure Office commenced work on a collaborative project with the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* at the Australian National University. A *Dictionary of the House of Representatives* will include biographies of all Speakers, Deputy Speakers and Clerks of the House since Federation. The Procedure Office will contribute introductory essays on the roles and history of the positions of Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Clerk.

Collaboration with the Department of the Senate

The Procedure Office continued its longstanding collaboration with colleagues in the Department of the Senate, including through participation in orientation seminars for the Australian National Internships Program and the Australian Defence Force Parliamentary Program (discussed in more detail on page 61).

Collaboration with other parliaments

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

Parliamentary committees

The department continued to provide effective secretariat and advisory support to five House committees and one joint committee dealing with the powers and procedures of the House. Committees supported by the Chamber and Federation Chamber activity area in 2018–19 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 2018–19, those committees held 29 meetings and produced 15 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 11 members: the Speaker (as chair), the chief whips of the three largest parties, four government members and three non-government members. The committee met 10 times during the reporting period and presented 10 reports.

Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration

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

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

Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests

The Standing Committee of Privileges and Members' Interests met 10 times during the reporting period, and presented two reports to the House. One of the reports was presented under the resolution agreed to by the House to allow individual citizens to have published in Hansard a response to an adverse reference made to them in the House. The other report recommended an amendment to the wording of the resolutions for the registration of members' interests, following consideration of a proposal by a member.

The committee's inquiry into the development of a foreign influence transparency scheme to apply to parliamentarians, referred by the House on 25 October 2018, lapsed upon the dissolution of the House on 11 April 2019.

A resolution of the House adopted on 4 April 2019, relating to members' qualifications, gave further responsibilities to the committee. These include determining procedures for the maintenance of a Register of Members' qualifications relating to sections 44 and 45 of the Constitution, and prescribing a form or forms for the purposes of members attesting to the accuracy and completeness of material provided to the Australian Electoral Commission in accordance with Part XIV of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*, and providing supplementary material as required. The resolution also gives the committee the same powers and functions in relation to the new Register of Members' qualifications as it has in relation to the Register of Members' Interests, including the power to inquire into a relevant matter referred to it by the House.

The committee presented two sets of alterations of members' interests and volume 7 of the statements of registrable interests during the period. Also, in February 2019, the committee reported on its operations in connection with the registration and declaration of members' interests in 2018.

Standing Committee on Procedure

The Standing Committee on Procedure usually meets once each sitting week. During the reporting period, the committee presented its final report into the maintenance of the standing orders.

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 has 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 nor did the Joint Committee on Publications.

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.



New members of the House of Representatives in the Chamber during the seminar for new members, 25 June 2019. Image: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.

Procedural training and resources

The reporting period saw an increase in the delivery of innovative procedural training and the development of resources to expand the procedural capacity of departmental staff. From June to November 2018 senior staff in the Procedure Office and Table Office delivered a series of nine lunchtime discussions for departmental staff, titled 'A taste of procedure'. The series covered, broadly, most aspects of parliamentary procedure. The Clerk Assistant (Procedure) and Clerk Assistant (Table) also hosted informal drop-in sessions, enabling staff to ask questions about the House environment and operations. The Procedure Office, in collaboration with the Table Office, also developed and delivered a more formal tutorial

course in procedure. Held from February to May 2019, this course explored key procedural components in greater depth, and targeted skills development for staff, including some preparing to work as Deputy Clerks-at-the-Table in the Chamber and Federation Chamber.

A major innovation that came to fruition during the reporting period was the procedural training resource, the 'CATTalogue'. This glossary was developed by the Procedure Office in collaboration with the Parliamentary and Business Information Services Office (PBIS), which managed the information and communications technology (ICT) aspects of the project. The CATTalogue is a collection of over 25 short educational videos that explain key elements of House procedure for Clerks-at-the-Table and other staff. The videos incorporate footage from proceedings in the House and Federation Chamber, and are supplemented by additional reference materials. The CATTalogue was launched by the Clerk in April 2019 and is hosted on the departmental intranet. New videos will continue to be added. Some CATTalogue content has been adapted for use on the members' intranet site, House Connect.

In addition to the customary procedural publications (see details in the section on page 39 titled 'Research'), the Procedure Office continued to collaborate with PBIS by reviewing and contributing content to be posted online.

Sitting-day briefings for staff rostered for duty as Clerk-at-the-Table and Deputy Clerk-at-the-Table in the House continued. These were complemented by briefings for staff who act as Clerk and Deputy Clerk in the Federation Chamber. Both briefings provided an opportunity for staff to prepare for the day's events and discuss procedural issues in general.

Other departmental measures supporting staff to develop knowledge and skills in parliamentary law, practice and procedure included:

- » debriefs following each sitting week or fortnight, focusing on matters of procedural interest
- » regular parliamentary briefings and training provided by senior departmental staff or external experts
- » specialist training 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, the *Notice Paper* and the *Votes and Proceedings*—once the trainee staff have sufficient experience, the use of shadowing allows chamber support staff to finish work earlier on some sitting nights, and provides a back-up in the event of staffing absences or turnover
- » opportunities for participation in parliamentary conferences, including the annual Australia and New Zealand Association of Clerks-at-the-Table (ANZACATT) professional development seminar
- » participation in the Graduate Certificate in Parliamentary Law, Practice, and Procedure currently offered by the University of Tasmania under the auspices of ANZACATT.

Improving performance

The department's commitment to innovation in procedural training and development continued to be a priority during the year, with the 'House main course' tutorial program delivered and complemented by lunchtime discussions and also drop-in sessions. The CATTalogue is available to all staff, and where possible new resources and activities have been designed so that they can be easily adapted for use by other audiences. Feedback from staff on the new activities and the CATTalogue has been extremely positive. General public and media interest in the procedures of the House continued. Publications such as *House Review* and contributions to the *About the House* newsletter and departmental social media accounts are designed to provide current, non-technical information on House proceedings that can be useful to a wide audience.

Outlook

Following the commencement of the Forty-sixth Parliament, the focus of the chamber support areas will be 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 level of support required is often heightened early in a new parliament, due to the incoming cohort of first-time members, but also due to changes to the ministry and to other key House roles.

Further improvements to the Parliamentary Procedural Records System will make it easier to use and will result in further efficiencies. In 2019–20, highlights for the Procedure Office will include progressing the *Dictionary of the House of Representatives*, and the development of further resources to improve the procedural knowledge and skills of members, and departmental and other parliamentary service staff. The Procedure Office will also continue to expand its resources that seek to increase understanding of the role and operations of the House by the broader public.

Committee support

The Committee Office supports parliamentary committees in their work of examining policy and legislation, and of scrutinising the executive government. In 2018–19, the Committee Office comprised 10 secretariats that supported 13 House committees and 11 joint committees (see Table 6).

In 2018–19 the budget allocation for this activity was \$9.449 million and expenditure was \$8.764 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 19); staff levels are shown in Table 11.

Table 6: Committees of the Forty-fifth Parliament supported by the Committee Office

House committees	Joint committees
Standing Committee on Agriculture and Water Resources	Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit ^a
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 the Environment and Energy	Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training	Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories
Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport	Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia
Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs	Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth
Standing Committee on Industry, Innovation, Science and Resources	Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities	Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security ^a
Standing Committee on Petitions	Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works ^a
Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs	Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition Relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 2018 (19 March–29 November 2018)
Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue	
Select Committee on Intergenerational Welfare Dependence (24 May 2018–2 April 2019)	

a. Joint statutory committee.

Note: Five House internal committees (Appropriations and Administration, Procedure, Publications, Selection, and Privileges and Members' Interests), the Joint Committee on the Broadcasting of Parliamentary Proceedings and Joint Committee on Publications are supported by other areas of the department, and are discussed on pages 41–43.

Committee Office activity

In 2018–19, 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 tabling of committee reports.

Overview

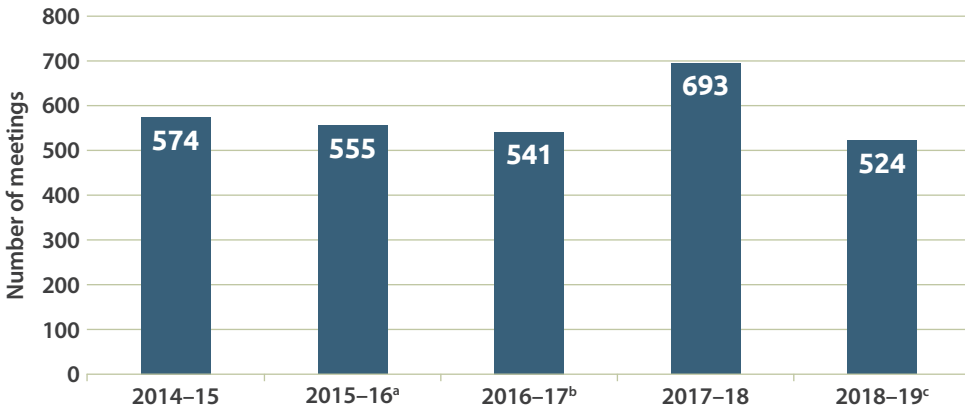
During the year, the Committee Office experienced a consistently high workload, with a large number of inquiries supported, meetings held and reports tabled. Several committees undertook simultaneous inquiries and, in addition, the department supported one House select committee and one joint select committee. Despite this heavy workload, the Committee Office was successful in supporting all the committees within its remit. This was evidenced in the tabling speeches of many members in the Chamber, in which the contributions and professionalism of committee staff were acknowledged. The Committee Office has received positive informal feedback throughout the year from members satisfied with the level of support provided by the Committee Office.

As in each reporting period, committees inquired into and reported on a diverse range of topics. In 2018–19, inquiry topics included the management of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination in and around Defence bases, the future of petitioning, and a bill proposing to lower the voting age to 16 years. Appendix 3 lists all reports tabled over 2018–19 and current inquiries.

The sustained workload of committees is evidenced in Figures 4 and 5, which highlight the number of committee meetings supported and reports tabled in the year.

Committees supported by the Committee Office held 524 meetings in 2018–19. Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of that activity by committee. Figure 4 shows the number of meetings held by committees over the past five years.

Figure 4: Number of committee meetings supported by the Committee Office, 2014–15 to 2018–19



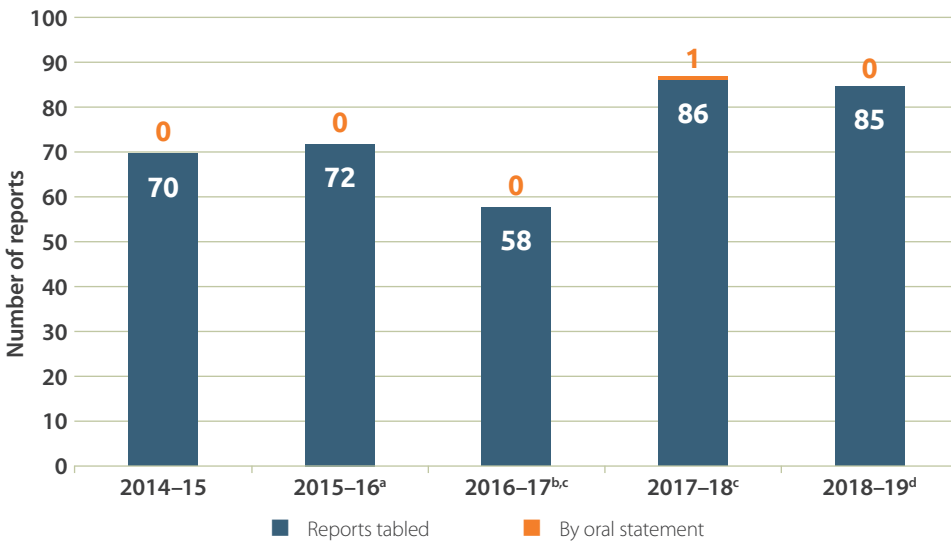
a. The Forty-fourth Parliament ended with the dissolution of both Houses on 9 May 2016.

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

c. The Forty-fifth Parliament ended with the dissolution of the House on 11 April 2019.

Committees supported by the Committee Office tabled 85 reports in 2018–19. Appendix 3 provides a breakdown of that activity by committee. Figure 5 shows the number of reports tabled by committees over the past five years.

Figure 5: Number of reports tabled by committees supported by the Committee Office, 2014–15 to 2018–19



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

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

c. Figures have been updated to incorporate reports of the Petitions Committee when this committee was supported by the Committee Office. These reports were omitted from this chart in earlier annual reports.

d. The Forty-fifth Parliament ended with the dissolution of the House on 11 April 2019.

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 2018–19, 52 of the 85 reports presented by committees supported by the Committee Office contained recommendations that required a government response. Government responses to six reports were received within the six-month timeframe; two reports received partial government responses in the required timeframe, four responses were received outside the required timeframe and the remaining 40 reports are awaiting responses. Nineteen responses were also received for reports presented in previous financial years.

Information and communications technology

The Committee Office continued to make use of ICT to increase the efficiency of work and to provide greater access for stakeholders interested in engaging with committees. Updates to the document templates used by secretariats are expected to be rolled out in 2019–20, and preliminary work to refresh committee ICT systems such as CommDocs will commence following the expected deployment of Office 365.

Shared Committee Information Database and Report Builder

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

Some Report Builder defects have been resolved throughout 2018–19, and other defects are expected to be resolved in the coming year.

Facilitating international visits

The Committee Office facilitated several overseas visits that related to particular inquiries. A delegation from the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities visited the People's Republic of China from 2 to 6 July 2018. The delegation visited Beijing, Tianjin, Chengdu and Hong Kong. The program was intensive, productive and highly interesting, involving meetings with government officials and private sector organisations and site inspections in each location. The committee visited major infrastructure development sites such as the new Beijing airport site at Daxing, the port development in Tianjin, the rail port in Chengdu, and the metro system in Chengdu.

The delegation's aims and objectives were to gain insight into the development of cities and infrastructure in China, and lessons that could be applied in Australia. The delegation was impressed with the scale and speed of development in China's cities and the high level of coordination and integration of urban planning and infrastructure development at the

national, regional and local levels, and is of the view that there is much to be learned from China's approach to urban planning and development.

In August 2018, the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) travelled to India and Indonesia as part of its ongoing oversight of trade treaties. Both countries are currently negotiating trade agreements with Australia. The delegation's objectives were to inquire into how Australian businesses can best operate in each of the two markets, examine the broader economic context, and obtain more information on the perspectives of both governments towards trade with Australia.

The JSCOT delegation learned a great deal about the complex and multifaceted economic environment in both India and Indonesia. The delegation was able to see firsthand the many opportunities for Australian businesses under any future trade agreement. Equally importantly, the delegation gained insight into the many challenges to overcome to take full advantage of those opportunities.



Members of the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition Relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, meeting with stakeholders during the course of the committee's inquiry. Image: secretariat.

Improving performance

The Committee Office will continue to seek to find ways to improve the services provided to committees. This includes adapting more effectively to changes in secretariat workload through the continued use of paired secretariats and increased recruitment activity. Informal training programs for new staff will continue, with an emphasis on developing knowledge of committee procedure.

Outlook

The Committee Office prepared for the commencement of the Forty-sixth Parliament and the establishment of committees. The level of committee activity is expected to increase during 2019–20.

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



Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters hearing from students at Glenala State High School in Brisbane. Image: secretariat.

Inter-parliamentary relations and capacity-building

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

The program's activities and projects in 2018–19 were coordinated by the IPRO and the PSC, with input from all four parliamentary departments. IPRO and the PSC are offices administered by the department, and IPRO receives some funding from the Department of the Senate.

IPRO manages incoming and outgoing delegation programs, membership of international parliamentary organisations, and the international interests and travel of members and senators. The PSC is responsible for all parliamentary strengthening and capacity-building programs of the Australian Parliament, including study programs for visiting parliamentarians and staff of other parliaments.

IPRO administers parliamentary regional networks and parliamentary country groups, as established under the auspices of the Australian National Group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It also administers the parliament's non-country friendship groups.

Information security issues remain a concern for international parliamentary travel and IPRO continues to facilitate the provision of security advice to members and senators travelling overseas as part of official delegations, and also for travel undertaken by parliamentarians in a private capacity.

In 2018–19 the budget allocation for this activity was \$1.297 million and expenditure was \$1.527 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 21); staff levels are shown in Table 11.

Performance summary

A comprehensive program of incoming and outgoing visits during the year strengthened bilateral relations with a wide range of national parliaments of other countries. Activity declined in the first half of 2019 due to the prorogation of parliament and dissolution of the House prior to the general election. The Australian Parliament continued to support the capacity-building of parliaments in the region, and played an active role in parliamentary associations to which it belongs.

Parliamentary engagement

During 2018–19, IPRO coordinated 23 official overseas delegation programs, which involved visits by a total of 59 delegates to 21 countries; attendance at 11 assemblies, conferences, workshops and seminars; and other visits, including Presiding Officer visits (see Appendix 7). There were also 33 visits to Australia from other countries: five hosted visits by parliamentary delegations (see Appendix 5); and 28 other visits, including for a range of capacity-building activities (see Appendixes 6 and 8).

A regional focus was maintained in the visit programs. Of the 33 visits to Australia, 20 were from parliaments in the Asia–Pacific region, including the annual visit by a combined delegation from Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. Of the 23 overseas visits, 11 were to countries in Asia or Oceania. The annual committee exchange with New Zealand continued with the Social Services and Community Committee of the New Zealand parliament visiting to develop the committee’s understanding of Australia’s service delivery for children and families experiencing deprivation and homelessness.

The Australian Parliament’s participation in MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia) continued, with the Deputy President of the Senate attending the fourth annual Speakers’ Consultation in Bali, Indonesia, in September 2018.

During the reporting period, the Australian Parliament welcomed visits by a number of Presiding Officers, including Hon Habib El Malki, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the parliament of Morocco; Hon Dato’ Mohamad Ariff bin Md Yusof, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the parliament of Malaysia; Senator Reinaldo Pared Pérez, President of the Senate of the Dominican Republic; and Mr Michael Müller, President of the German Bundesrat. Other high-level visits included Mr Hirotaka Akamatsu, Vice Speaker of the House of Representatives of the parliament of Japan; and members of the Saudi–Australia Friendship Committee.



*Presiding Officers and the Clerk of the House with members of the delegation from the parliament of Malaysia.
Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.*

The work of incoming and outgoing parliamentary delegations continued to be promoted through the Parliament of Australia website with publication of short articles.

Outgoing and incoming delegations gave positive feedback on the quality of the programs, both at debrief meetings and through correspondence. For example, the Speaker of Morocco expressed his 'deep appreciation and special thanks for the high sense of hospitality and organisation' for his visit program.

Use of an online survey (introduced in 2017–18) continued to provide opportunities for feedback from members of incoming and outgoing delegations. The survey seeks to gauge the level of satisfaction with the arrangements made by IPRO and to provide delegates with an opportunity to make suggestions for improvements. All delegation members are emailed a link to the survey. All survey respondents for outgoing delegations indicated that they were either 'satisfied' or 'highly satisfied' with the arrangements made by IPRO, and all survey respondents for incoming delegations were either 'highly satisfied' or 'satisfied' with logistical and program arrangements.

Parliamentary cooperation

The Australian Parliament maintained its strong commitment to regional and international parliamentary cooperation in 2018–19. Delegations attended the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly; the United Nations General Assembly; the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly; and the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum (for more detail, see Appendix 7).

After formally re-joining the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in January 2018, the parliament was represented at the 37th CPA Australia and Pacific Regional Conference held in the Cook Islands. In July, IPRO resumed responsibility for providing the secretariat to support the CPA Australia Region and the Australia Region Steering Committee of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians.

Parliamentary strengthening

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

The PSC continued to coordinate activities under the Pacific Parliamentary Partnerships (PPP) program with the provision of equipment to Bougainville, Fiji, Kiribati and Tonga under the PPP Fund.

Support was provided to the parliaments of Fiji, Samoa and Tonga through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with participating research officers from the Parliamentary Budget Office, Parliamentary Library and Department of the Senate. In each of these missions, the researchers from the Australian Parliament joined a group of researchers to work with the local secretariats to support the drafting of budget materials for parliamentarians.

Departmental staff and colleagues from all parliamentary departments, with coordination by the PSC, contributed to study programs for visiting members and staff of numerous overseas parliaments including Ghana, India, Japan and Timor-Leste. Feedback from participants on the study visit programs was consistently positive.

Following two study visits by groups of senior officers from the Lok Sabha (lower house of the parliament of India) to the Australian Parliament in 2017 and 2018, four senior officers of the department travelled to New Delhi to undertake a study visit program at the Lok Sabha. The program provided staff with a comprehensive overview of Indian parliamentary procedure, administration and operations, with a particular focus on the Lok Sabha, and the support services provided by the secretariat.

The annual Inter-Parliamentary Study Program was conducted for senior parliamentary staff, with 16 participants from overseas parliaments including that of China, Fiji, Ireland, Malaysia, Sweden and Timor-Leste, and the European Parliament. Among the consistently positive appraisals of the program, one participant spoke highly of the 'nature of the program, its learning methodology and practical experience it provided'.



Clerk of the House, David Elder, and Clerk of the Senate, Richard Pye, with participants in the Inter-Parliamentary Study Program. Image: Department of the House of Representatives.

In November 2018, an Inter-Parliamentary Study Program for Speakers of Pacific parliaments was held at the Australian Parliament. Seven participants from across the region benefited from a unique professional development and networking opportunity with their peers, and from a program that involved input from the Presiding Officers, former Speakers the Hon David Hawker AO and Mr Harry Jenkins AO, and senior officers from the department. The program built on the momentum and feedback gained from the inaugural Inter-Parliamentary Study Program conducted for Pacific Deputy Speakers held in November 2017.

Following Malaysia's general election in May 2018, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade sought the assistance of the Australian Parliament in supporting its parliamentary reform agenda. IPRO coordinated a study visit on 17–21 September 2018 for a delegation of parliamentarians and officials led by the Speaker of the Malaysian House of Representatives,

Hon Dato' Mohamad Ariff bin Md Yusof, and including Hon Dato' Haji Mohd Rashid bin Hasnon MP (Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives), Hon Datuk Seri Dr Ronald Kiandee MP (chair of the Public Accounts Committee) and Hon Dato' Dr Noraini binti Ahmad MP (international chair of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians). The success of this visit program contributed to an increased number of exchanges between the parliaments by members and staff alike.



*Speaker, the Hon Tony Smith MP, former Speakers the Hon David Hawker AO and Mr Harry Jenkins AO, and Clerk Mr David Elder with participants in the Inter-Parliamentary Study Program for Speakers of Pacific parliaments.
Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.*

Improving performance

The streamlined approval process for all overseas delegation travel by the Presiding Officers, made possible by the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017, continues to allow flexibility and agility in the strategic management and forward planning of the international program. The co-location of IPRO and the PSC also continued to allow for greater knowledge-sharing between the offices, and efficiencies in the coordination of the international program through the sharing of resources.

Delegation members continue to make use of the online delegation portal (where appropriate), as a secure and effective way to electronically access visit information and written briefs in a timely manner, both before and during official visits. Work has begun to improve the interface of the delegation portal to improve and increase usability by parliamentarians. Delegates' responses lodged via the online survey platform are helping IPRO to refine its processes.

Information security for delegation members remains a priority, and the office will continue to work with DPS and other departments to ensure delegation members are advised of any issues before going on delegations and are provided with appropriate devices for the destinations.

Outlook

The year ahead will see a resumption of incoming and outgoing delegations working towards the middle year of a parliament and what is traditionally the busiest period for the office.

Activities associated with the parliament's membership of the CPA and Inter-Parliamentary Union will continue and are likely to increase with the commencement of the Forty-sixth Parliament.

Parliamentary strengthening programs administered through the PSC will remain a priority area for the international program.

The Australian Parliament largely relies on funding from government or other sources, such as the UNDP and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, to support much of its parliamentary strengthening work with other parliaments. The PSC will continue to respond to invitations to the Australian Parliament to collaborate on parliamentary strengthening, giving due consideration to the limited resources available for such work.



The Clerk presents to members of a delegation from the parliament of Malaysia. Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.

Community awareness

The department promotes the work of the House through a range of activities aimed at different sectors of the community. In 2018–19 the budget allocation for this activity was \$1.030 million and expenditure was \$0.668 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 23).

Performance summary

During 2018–19, the department continued to grow its communications channels to inform the public of the work of the House and committees and to increase community engagement. The seminar program also experienced strong participation and positive feedback, with increasing demand for customised seminars.

The department continued its role in supporting school visits and providing background support to the PEO. The My First Speech competition offered school students the opportunity to imagine themselves making their first speech as a parliamentarian, and almost a hundred entries were received from across Australia. The parliamentary internship program continued its success in 2018–19, with 48 students placed with a member or senator during the period.

Media and publications

The department uses its electronic media distribution channels to expand the reach of parliamentary business and educational information. Its Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn accounts provide valuable information to the general public, and through these platforms the department receives consistently positive feedback. During the reporting period, the department's Facebook subscriber base increased by 10 per cent (from 6,466 to 7,105 subscribers) and its Twitter following increased by 5 per cent, surpassing 44,000 followers. The House's YouTube account, used for publishing replays of Question Time and an 'About the House' series of short videos, grew by 40 per cent in the reporting period, and now has over 6,600 subscribers.



Header image from the department's About the House newsletter. Image: Department of the House of Representatives.

The department also produces the *About the House* newsletter. This publication aims to promote committee activity, and provide information about the House and its procedures. It also enables the public to engage with the House through a regular 'Ask us anything' segment, which provides a channel for interested members of the community to have their questions answered. Launched at the beginning of the Forty-fifth Parliament, the newsletter has recently surpassed 2,000 subscribers, an increase of 14 per cent over 2017–18.

The department has continued 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 217 media releases during the reporting period. During the election period, work commenced on an updated 'About the House News' page on aph.gov.au, to give members of the public and other interested stakeholders a more convenient way to access media content published by the House of Representatives.

Seminars

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

During 2018–19, 11 seminars were held with a total of 356 participants, a 54 per cent increase in participation over the previous period. Feedback was positive, with 93 per cent of surveyed attendees agreeing that their objectives were met, and over 96 per cent giving a positive score for the content, detail and presenters.

My First Speech competition

In December 2018, the department held the sixth annual My First Speech competition. The competition is open to Australian secondary students in Years 10 to 12. Entrants are asked to imagine themselves as a newly elected member of the House of Representatives, and to write a three-minute speech on issues they are passionate about and record themselves presenting it.

Submissions were reviewed by a panel of members, including the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Finalists were flown to Canberra to receive their awards at a ceremony on 5 December 2018, and were also given a personalised tour of the Australian Parliament.



My First Speech competition finalists with the Speaker. Image: Department of the House of Representatives.

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of Parliament House

In October 2018 the parliamentary departments celebrated the 30th anniversary of the opening of Parliament House. The department collaborated with other parliamentary stakeholders to develop a program of activities to celebrate this milestone, including Parliament House Open Day on 6 October 2018.



The Clerk of the House, David Elder, takes a photograph for a visitor in the Chamber during the Parliament House Open Day, 6 October 2018. Image: Department of the House of Representatives.

Parliamentary assistants program

In 2018–19, the parliamentary assistants program, managed by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, entered its nineteenth year. The program offers university students part-time employment in the House of Representatives to promote understanding of, and engagement with, the work of the parliament (see page 71 for further details).

Parliamentary internship program

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

In the second semester of 2018, 26 students were placed with a member or senator. In the first semester of 2019, 22 students were placed with a member or senator. During their placement, each student completes a research project on a subject agreed to by their host. The report is assessed by the university and counts towards the student's degree.

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 Assistant Minister for Defence in conjunction with the Department of Defence. In September 2018, 21 Defence Force representatives were hosted by senators and members through the program. The departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate collaborate to support the program and provide orientation seminars on the work of the chambers and committees.

Parliamentary Education Office

Jointly funded by the departments of the House of Representatives and Senate, the PEO delivers parliamentary education services to teachers, students and others across Australia through:

- » delivering Australian curriculum-aligned programs for teachers and students on site, off site and digitally
- » developing relevant and accurate print and digital resources that explore the role and value of the parliament and illuminate the aims and achievement standards of the Australian curriculum
- » engaging with senators, members and teachers to promote the work of the parliament.

To date, over two million students have expanded their knowledge of the Australian Parliament through participating in a PEO program.

In addition to operational management from both departments, the PEO is guided by the PEO Advisory Committee. The committee comprises interested members and senators, meets twice a year and reports to the Presiding Officers.

The full-time equivalent staffing level for the PEO in 2018–19 was 10.6 (compared with 11.1 in 2017–18). The cost of providing the service of the PEO in 2018–19 was \$1.4 million (compared with \$1.2 million in 2017–18).

Education programs: on site, outreach and digital

The PEO delivers education programs on site at Parliament House, in classrooms across Australia, through its outreach program and digitally through videoconferencing.

The PEO's immersive learning program at Parliament House is regarded as a highly effective method of parliamentary education. The program continued to run at capacity, with 93,225 students from 1,677 schools across Australia participating in 2018–19. These figures represent a 4.4 per cent increase on 2017–18 student participation rates.

The PEO also delivered tailored programs, including 'Rotary Adventures in Citizenship', a week-long program for 36 Year 11 students from around Australia, and the National Youth Science Forum for 280 Year 12 students.

In 2018–19, the PEO delivered outreach to 2,952 participants in four states: New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. Additional outreach is planned for the 2019 calendar year to Queensland.

The PEO continues to increase the number of students and teachers who take part in a videoconferencing program, with 1,296 participants in 2018–19. This relatively new method of program delivery is facilitating excellent engagement with students unable to travel to Canberra, and provides another avenue for the PEO to deliver teacher professional learning.



2019 Rotary Adventures in Citizenship program participants. Image: PEO.

Content: online and print

The PEO's websites continued to perform strongly. These websites provide information about parliament and curriculum-aligned teaching resources for all Australian teachers and students. A total of 1,227,935 users (representing 2.81 million unique page views) were recorded over the past year, representing an increase of 22 per cent on 2017–18 users.

The PEO produced and distributed a range of publications during the reporting period, including the redeveloped *Teaching Civics and Citizenship: a classroom guide*; *Australian Constitution* pocket edition, produced in partnership with the Australian Government Solicitor; and *Get Parliament*, an easy-to-understand booklet that explores Australia's system of government.

Services for members and senators

The PEO provides dedicated support to encourage and assist members and senators to engage with schools and students. Members and senators are offered a complimentary annual allocation of education and information materials for students, teachers and others in their communities. Senators and members can also request a tailored brochure, *Representing You*, to assist them when explaining their work as an elected representative. In 2018–19, 134 parliamentarians requested their allocation.

PEO outlook

In late 2019 the renewed PEO website will be launched, and this, along with the PEO videoconferencing program, will provide support for students and teachers unable to visit Canberra.

As another strategy to amplify its capacity to reach larger numbers of students, the PEO will also continue to increase engagement with the education profession, actively looking for opportunities to deliver teacher professional learning face to face, off site and via digital platforms.

With advance bookings for learning programs at Parliament House likely to remain high, the PEO will continue to operate at capacity and will continue to explore strategies to effectively meet demand while ensuring program quality in 2019–20.

Outlook

The department will continue to raise community awareness of the work of the parliament through a range of activities. In the forward period, it will seek to further grow its communications channels to expand the reach of parliamentary information, and will work with the other parliamentary departments to enhance the Parliament of Australia website to improve accessibility and navigation. An increased focus on analytics across the department's websites and social media channels will also assist the department to improve the delivery of parliamentary information to the public.

Ongoing review and evaluation by the PEO of programs and content will ensure that these meet the needs of Australian students and teachers.

Members' and corporate support

Members' and corporate support is provided by the Finance Office, PBIS, 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
- » advice and support on financial and human resource management, as well as records management, publishing and office services
- » payment of members' salaries and allowances
- » organisation of members' office accommodation, furniture and fittings
- » provision of mail and courier services, and a booking service for committee rooms and chamber gallery seating
- » maintenance and publication of key information about members and former members.

In 2018–19 the budget allocation for this activity was \$8.480 million and expenditure was \$8.895 million. There were expenses of \$2.587 million that did not require an appropriation; the budget allocation for these was \$2.690 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 25).

By-elections

During 2017, under section 44(i) of the Constitution, the circumstances of members considered to be holding dual citizenship were called into question. Following resignations and judgements by the Court of Disputed Returns, seven by-elections were required. Four of those by-elections took place during 2018–19. Two other by-elections were held during the year, following the resignations of the Members for Perth and Wentworth in circumstances unrelated to section 44(i) of the Constitution. In each case, following the endorsement of writs, returning or new members are required to make and subscribe an oath or affirmation of allegiance before being admitted to the House of Representatives and taking their seat in the Chamber.



Members of the Forty-fifth Parliament, December 2018. Image: David Foote, Auspic/DPS.

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, chamber and gallery security, and ceremonial and other events at Parliament House. Staff work closely with colleagues in the Department of the Senate, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Australian Federal Police and DPS.

The prorogation of the Forty-fifth Parliament and dissolution of the House were a particular area of focus this year, including facilitating the departure of those members who retired or were defeated at the general election in May 2019, and preparing for the arrival of new members.

The ongoing program of building works to improve security at Parliament House also remained a priority. With colleagues from DPS, staff supported the introduction of electronic swipe card access to all members' Parliament House suites, and developed related access protocols and joint business processes. Staff also continued to support the operation of a temporary entrance to the House of Representatives wing during the year. Throughout these works, staff ensured that the House was still able to effectively meet and discharge its responsibilities.

The second phase of the furniture replacement project was completed this year, with the staff offices of 125 members having received new furniture since the commencement of the project.

After consultation with DPS, ownership of status B furniture was transferred to that department through a memorandum of understanding executed in October 2018. Staff provided support for the transfer and subsequent arrangements for refurbishments and service to members.



The view from one of the booths from which attendants support the Chamber during sittings. Image: Penny Bradfield, Auspic/DPS.

Services and advice

Media services

The Serjeant-at-Arms and staff continued to work with the various media bureaus and the governing committee of the 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, the 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 parliamentary events such as budget day.

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

During the year, the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office responded to around 161 requests to film or photograph in the private areas of the building.

Information services

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

Accommodation services

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

During the year, the office arranged 102 office relocations as a result of the dissolution of the House and earlier changes to the ministry and office-holder positions. That number is significantly higher than the 27 relocations in 2017–18. The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office worked closely with the government and opposition whips to ensure that the relocations were completed quickly. The office also coordinated 473 requests to supply and move furniture. That number is significantly lower than the previous year (over 700 requests), which reflects the high activity for the furniture replacement project in 2017–18. 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 work in members' suites are coordinated by the Serjeant-at-Arms' Office, and include both emergency and routine work. During the year, the office coordinated 268 emergency requests, all of which were attended to promptly. In addition, the office coordinated 248 routine requests for repairs or alterations to suites or common areas. The office takes a proactive approach by performing office shutdowns and inspections over the autumn and winter recesses, so that issues can be identified, reported and addressed while parliament is not sitting.

The office coordinated 1,048 requests for assistance with telephone faults, relocations and allocations of telephone numbers (compared with 932 requests in 2017–18). The increase is a result of office moves following the general election. Faults reported were referred to telephone support in DPS within five minutes of receipt, and appropriate timeframes for resolution were agreed with the affected areas.

As the area responsible for access to members' suites, the office approved 998 requests by DPS and contractors working on behalf of DPS for access to suites and general circulation areas for works related to general maintenance, services and projects. This is a small increase on the previous year (962 requests).

The Serjeant-at-Arms' Office operates a Transport Office that delivers a parliamentary shuttle service during sitting periods. The shuttle provides a readily available, secure car-with-driver service in Canberra for members. In 2018–19, the Transport Office managed some 6,630 bookings from members, compared with 7,800 bookings in 2017–18 (figures exclude unbooked shuttle trips from the House of Representatives entrance, and bookings accepted by COMCAR but serviced by the Transport Office). This represents a 15 per cent decrease in bookings on the previous year, reflecting the extended non-sitting period following the dissolution of the House.

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 seven 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, established in 2017–18, is 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 is to develop, coordinate and facilitate security exercises at Parliament House, as determined and scheduled by the Incident Planning and Response Committee.

The department has established a business continuity network to coordinate contingency plans for work areas in the event of business disruptions. The department ran a desktop exercise in December 2018 for staff of IPRO and the PSC, to test their responses in the event of emergencies disrupting programs for incoming and outgoing parliamentary delegations. Further exercises are planned for other areas of the department.

Security screening

Certain guests are exempt from security screening on entry to Parliament House. Approvals for any other exemptions are made jointly by the Serjeant-at-Arms and the Usher of the Black Rod. During the year, exemptions were approved for 19 groups and individuals (compared with 21 in 2017–18).

Information and communications technology

Under the revised ICT service-delivery framework, most of the department's ICT functions are provided by DPS. In support of this arrangement, the department continued to participate in a range of ICT advisory and management committees. A revised memorandum of understanding and service-level agreement with the other parliamentary departments was signed on 6 June 2018.

The Joint Management Committee, which comprises senior parliamentary staff, oversees the service-level agreement; it met three times in the reporting period. The Serjeant-at-Arms is the department's representative on the committee. The same senior parliamentary staff, meeting as the ICT Project Prioritisation Group, consider the priorities for DPS capital expenditure on replacing or upgrading parliamentary business systems.

Information services

During the year, the department continued to work with DPS and the other parliamentary departments to develop new ICT systems and enhance existing applications. These systems support the work of the House, parliamentary committees and members, and include:

- » the House Division Recording System
- » the Online Tabled Documents project (to enable the electronic receipt and publishing of documents tabled in the House and Senate)
- » the Common Data Access Platform (a new centralised data source based on a revised information architecture)
- » the Parliamentarian Information Portal (a replacement for the Members Information Database)
- » the e-petitions system
- » the Parliamentary Procedural Records System (used to record and retrieve procedural events and precedents)
- » the Australian Parliament's delegation portal for outgoing delegations
- » the venue management system
- » the department's intranet.

The department continues to use its electronic document and records management system to file and manage records electronically. The collaboration with the other parliamentary departments on a joint upgrade to reduce running costs as well as enhance user experience is ongoing. The department also completed several information management projects during the year in support of meeting the targets under the National Archives' Digital Continuity 2020 Policy. These included a project to evaluate its business systems against the National Archives' business systems assessment framework, as well as a project to develop and implement an Information Governance Policy and Framework.

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

Digital strategy

On 18 March 2019, following consultation with members and senators, the parliamentary departments published the Australian Parliament Digital Strategy 2019–2022. This strategy 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 continuing to work with DPS and the other parliamentary departments to implement initiatives and improvements under the new digital strategy.

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 2018–19: three were existing assistants, and three were new appointments. 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 2019 members' survey, 98 per cent of members said that they were satisfied with support for salary payments.

Corporate support

Operational performance indicators for finance, human resources and other corporate support services were met in 2018–19, and the department was in compliance with internal and external governance and reporting requirements.

Outlook

In 2019–20, the department will continue to provide advice and services of a high standard to support the Speaker, members in Parliament House and the department. Following the commencement of the Forty-sixth Parliament on 2 July 2019, activity levels are expected to be consistent with those that are normal during the first year of a parliamentary cycle.

Other priorities for the members' and corporate support program during the year include:

- » support for the opening of the Forty-sixth Parliament, involving ceremonial duties, gallery attendance and security, and logistics associated with members' accommodation at Parliament House
- » support for the swearing-in of His Excellency General the Hon David John Hurley AC DSC (Retd) as Governor-General of Australia
- » supporting the completion of major capital works projects in the House of Representatives wing with the re-opening of the House of Representatives entrance
- » supporting the deployment early in the Forty-sixth Parliament of the new Parliamentarian Information Portal to replace the Members Information Database, following data migration and extensive user testing in 2018–19.

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 PEO and the Visitor Experience Office of DPS.

In 2018–19 the administered appropriation for the schools hospitality program activity was \$0.320 million, and expenditure was \$0.310 million. Results against performance criteria are summarised in the annual performance statement (page 14).

Performance summary

In 2018–19, 124,831 school students participated in educational tours of Parliament House, up from 119,088 in the previous year. The number of students from the Australian Capital Territory, Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia decreased, while all other states recorded higher numbers than in the previous financial year (see Table 7).

Table 7: Students visiting Parliament House, by location and year, 2014–15 to 2018–19

Year	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	Other	Total
2014–15	2,158	67,385	819	19,489	5,061	1,750	18,531	5,023	–	120,216
2015–16	3,004	64,438	654	16,056	5,849	1,621	18,950	5,159	13	115,744
2016–17	2,783	65,653	686	15,828	5,610	1,683	19,971	5,440	–	117,654
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

All visiting students participated in a guided tour and visited both chambers; 76 per cent (94,380) received hospitality and 75 per cent (93,225) participated in the PEO program (see pages 61–64 for more information on the PEO's activities).

Improving performance

Staffing arrangements in support of school visits were restructured, with a former full-time position replaced with a sessional position. The restructure will reduce overheads and make more of the administered appropriation available for the relatively non-discretionary hospitality component.

It was possible to implement the restructure and still maintain service levels to schools and agents due to improvements introduced in previous years. Those improvements include bookings being taken on a rolling monthly basis for the following two calendar years and upgrades to the school visits section of the Parliament of Australia website, notably the online availability calendar and new booking form placed on the website in 2017–18.

Outlook

At 30 June 2019, 125,263 students from 3,432 schools had been booked for the following 12 months. Last year at the same time 120,205 students from 1,848 schools had been booked.