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Australian Parliamentary Library
Client service evaluation 2015

Parliament of Australia
Department of Parliamentary Services

Contents

1.   Executive summary

The 2015 Parliamentary Library client service evaluation followed similar methodology to previous years and as far as possible used the same questions so that direct comparisons could be made.

The research comprised qualitative interviews and a focus group followed by a quantitative study. Face-to-face interviews were held with:
-   12 Senators
-   14 Members
-   two staff of Senators
-   Clerk Assistants of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and
-   a focus group with six members of the Parliamentary departments who worked with committees.

The online survey was completed by 148 Senators, Members and their staff, and 67 Parliamentary department staff. Details of respondents are provided in Section 3.

Overall satisfaction and performance
The general response to the Library—its staff and its services—was extremely positive. Satisfaction among Senators, Members and their staff is high at 93 per cent and likelihood of recommending the Library is even higher at 97 per cent. Most respondents considered Library staff to be hard-working, professional and friendly and services to be of a high quality right across the board.

Satisfaction among department staff (Department of the House of Representatives, Department of the Senate and the Parliamentary Budget Office) is significantly lower at 75 per cent, yet their likelihood to recommend the Library to a colleague is much higher at 93 per cent. In 2012 satisfaction among this cohort was 86 per cent. Satisfaction among Committee staff was 78% (n=27) and among non-Committee staff was 86% (n=29). The overall satisfaction level was brought down by the Parliamentary Budget Office respondents (n=9). With such small numbers it is not possible to draw firm conclusions.

One issue was raised consistently across the qualitative and quantitative research—a perceived variability in the quality of research services. This issue has been raised in past research and was raised again this year in the qualitative and quantitative research with Senators, Members and their staff as well as Parliamentary department staff.

The research suggests that the impact of the resource cuts to the Library has been felt by all client groups.

It has affected the satisfaction level of Parliamentary department staff and while Senators, Members and their staff rated their satisfaction highly, many spoke of the cuts and the pressure they knew Library staff were under. There was a very strong perception that the Library was so busy that it was best not to add to their workload. Some said they tried to only use the Library in non-sitting weeks so as not "to bother them". Some Government members thought it best to leave the Library for Opposition members. They even spoke of using the Library less than they would like because of the pressure they knew staff were under. The research suggests that issues with the timeliness of the Bills Digests were the main area of concern for Parliamentary department staff and this was seen to be the result of reduced staffing. Although pursued in the qualitative research, there was no indication that anyone had been told by Library staff that they were too busy to respond to a request. It appears that the resource cuts made in previous budgets were well-known and people were responding in a way they felt appropriate.

Variable quality
As mentioned before, while the majority of respondents reported that the quality of the work undertaken by the Library was consistently of high quality, there were a number of comments about the variability in quality. This was sometimes put down to "it's only been on occasions" but some other respondents were more insistent that there were some staff who consistently provided a lesser or poor service. Some referred to instances where they were provided with a list of links after asking for analysis and allowing 'a couple of weeks' for the work to be done. Others referred to the research being a bit shallow or later finding 'excellent' sources that the Library hadn't used. Another person commented that data had been misunderstood making the analysis inaccurate. Responses to this variability ranged from "it's only happened once or twice so it's not a great concern" through to "there are two people in that research group who I will not use".

Timeliness was raised as an issue on occasions where there was no discussion about expected timeframes. One interviewee showed an email trail where timing was not discussed yet they were provided with a quick response comprising a set of links rather than the more considered analysis they were seeking. The person ended up looking for assistance elsewhere. Another respondent spoke about providing a timeframe of a couple of weeks but still only receiving a set of links at the end of that time.

These findings point to the need for a tracking and quality assurance system with a transparent process in place where clients can see how their enquiry is being handled and have the opportunity to raise issues along the way. There are standard questions that should be asked of every request (for example, timeframe, preferred length and type of response).

How is the Library 'value-adding'?
It's clearly a changing information world, and the Library has to keep its eye on where it can add value. With many clients feeling capable of doing basic searches themselves, it's the Library's ability to provide analysis that is valued—respondents valued its independence, ability to look at complex issues, customer-focus, easy access, professionalism, and the fact it is there "just for them". Research services are used 'heavily' or 'frequently' by almost half the Senators, Members and staff. There is also an appreciation of the Library's move to online services and respondents showed a greater preparedness to use online services than was apparent in previous years (although many people indicated that any investment in online services should not be at the expense of the quality of the research analysis provided).

Use of Library services
Library services are all well used and respected. The research indicates that the use of Library services as a whole has increased, particularly use of the print collection. Research services and Bills Digest were the most commonly referred to services. Many Senators and Members who were interviewed didn't realise that media monitoring was provided through the Library.

Research services
Research services are being used more now than in 2012 with 86 per cent reporting they use research 'sometimes', 'frequently' or 'heavily' compared with 71 per cent in 2012. Parliamentary department staff reported a lower level of use with just 19 per cent reporting this level of use and 69 per cent reporting they used it 'rarely' or 'never'. The research service continued to be the most highly used service by Senators, Members and staff.

News and media services
News and media continues to be highly used with 'sometimes', frequently' and 'heavy' use increasing from 63 per cent in 2012 to 73 per cent. Similar use was reported by 59 per cent of Parliamentary department

staff. If 'use rarely' is factored in, news and media use is constant, scoring 88 per cent in 2012 and 87 per cent in 2015. Consistent with other services, news and media scored slightly less by Parliamentary department staff at 77 per cent.

Mapping services
The percentage of Senators, Members and their staff in 2015 who reported being unaware of mapping services is slightly higher than in 2012 and is the highest unaware rating of all services. Usage has fallen slightly from 62 per cent in 2012 to 56 per cent in 2015. Only 25 per cent of Parliamentary department staff reported a similar level of usage and 55 per cent never used mapping services.

Library publications including Bills Digest
Use of Library publications (including Bills Digest) has not changed from 2012 (91%) to 2015 (89%). Slightly fewer Parliamentary department staff make use of Publications. Most people spoke positively of the Bills Digest and used it regularly. An issue with its timeliness was raised by committee staff in particular, on behalf of themselves and the parliamentarians. They were very strong in their desire to see the Digest come out before the Committee looked at the Bill.

Other online resources
Use of online resources has increased with 66 per cent claiming to use these sometimes, frequently or heavily in 2015 compared with 53 per cent in 2012. This is mainly seen in a move from 'rarely use' to 'sometimes use'. If 'rarely use' is added, use has remained constant with 86 per cent claiming to use these services in 2015 and 87 per cent in 2012. Similar use was reported by 82 per cent of Parliamentary department staff (or 58 per cent without 'rarely use' included). Quick and easy is the key if people are going to do something online. If it isn't, or if they don't perceive it to be quick and easy, they won't use it. Most Senators and Members interviewed thought using the Library's online services probably wouldn't be quick and easy for them suggesting a lack of familiarity with the service.

Print collection
Use of the Library's print collection has increased significantly from 61 per cent in 2012 to 85 per cent in 2015. Use by Parliamentary department respondents is also 85 per cent. This is the most often used service for Parliamentary department respondents. There was no indication in the qualitative research or from the survey of a reason for this significant increase.

Contact officer program and orientation / visits
While Senators and Members appreciated the efforts the Library went to with regard to the Contact Officer program, many seemed to have forgotten about it by the time they were interviewed. They didn't see this as a problem however because if they wanted help they just rang the enquiry desk and went from there.

Most tried to ensure their new staff attended an orientation session but this was inconsistent. A few newer Senators and Members were unaware of the orientation program. Staff who had attended orientation sessions spoke very positively about them. During the interviews most Senators and Members and their staff spoke of wishing they knew more about what the Library offered, realising with hindsight that they took little information in during their first weeks. Many responded positively to the idea of a 'refresher' course either mid-way through their first term or at the beginning of a second term. Some longer-term Senators and Members also agreed that they would like a refresher, particularly on how to access online material.

Information sources and preferences
The Library is regarded very highly as a source of trusted information. Government Senators and Members said they used the Ministers' offices heavily because they 'provided the line'. All other services are used to varying degrees but the Library remains the most trusted.

Knowledge of the Library
Everyone acknowledged that the Library tried to keep people up-to-date with what was happening in the Library (What's New, FlagPost etc), but most said they scanned this information at the best. Many (but not all) saw this as being their problem rather than the Library's and it was because of their not having enough time. This is a common challenge for organisations (although possibly amplified in Parliament House) and highlights the need for very concise and wherever possible targeted approaches to communication and promotion.

The expert seminars were highly regarded although most said they were too busy to attend. Almost everyone reacted positively to the idea of these being podcast although "it would need to be easy to access" and would need to be promoted.

Predicting the issues
Responses were varied when we discussed how well the Library managed to predict upcoming issues and have information ready in advance. Some believed the Library did an excellent job in this regard but others felt it could be improved. One person spoke of being surprised by the length of time it took the Library to research a topic (health care costs) on which they thought there would already be information and analysis available.

Most reacted very positively to the idea of the Library producing a series of papers at the beginning of each term or year on topics which were likely to be debated or raised at some time. These could be just facts and figures or something with a little more analysis and include information from other countries. Topics such as health care costs, welfare costs, government debt, imports/exports, and immigration were raised. It was also suggested that if these were made available publically they could help to inform the quality of public debate.

What is impartial and balanced?
Balance and impartiality were generally rated highly with the notable exception of one person interviewed who felt they had been treated badly either because of their politics or their perceived unimportance. This person had received a list of links instead of the analysis he had asked for. He mentioned, however, that his staff had not experienced the same treatment. In addition, a comment was made in the survey by a committee staff member who said that the response they received to a research request was so biased that they felt unable to provide it to the committee.

The issue of impartiality triggered some discussion during the interviews. Two people commented how sometimes they were not necessarily looking for impartiality. One person said: "My politics are obviously on the right side of the spectrum so I'm not looking for information to back-up the arguments of the other side. I want to know if there are credible sources out there to back up where I'm coming from. When I get all the other stuff I feel like I'm being lectured to". This issue was also articulated by someone who talked about 'knowing your customer' and orientating your work to their needs. There might be a way to factor this into a tracking and quality assurance system so that clients are asked whether they want all the literature reviewed or only that which supported an argument. This is obviously a difficult issue in the context of maintaining balance and impartiality.

Recommendations

Recommendations are covered more fully at the end of the report but the three that the research suggests are most critical are:

1. Ensure high quality research skills through training, mentoring and quality assurance and consider staff exchanges with other institutions.

2. Introduce a request and tracking system so a client can see how their request has been recorded and prioritised, who is dealing with it, what the agreed requirements are and when they can expect a response.

3. Ensure Bills Digests are timelier even if this means they are shorter, and let Committees know which Bills will be included.

2.   Introduction and background

The Parliamentary Library conducts a review of the needs of clients once in every Parliament to:

- gain insights into the use of its services and clients' changing information needs
- measure and assess clients' satisfaction with the Library services at a point in time
- to gauge ongoing satisfaction, including whether the Library is providing balanced, impartial, confidential, consistent and timely services and the quality of information services and research products
- determine areas where the information and research needs of the current Parliament are not being met by the Library, where the priorities exist (taking into consideration the balance of available resources) and help identify the direction of potential future information delivery.

Previous evaluations, including those conducted by Uncommon Knowledge in 2009–10 and more recently by Leapfrog and Orima in 2012, have shown that the Library has provided a high quality and valued service to the Parliament over a considerable period of time.

This in itself is an achievement and reflects the Library's success in responding with flexibility and innovation to the demands of new technologies and the 24/7 media cycle. It's clearly a changing information world, and the Library has had to keep its eye on where it adds value.

Since the 2012 research, the Library has faced a period of reduced budgets affecting staff numbers and other resources. The Librarian noted in her Annual Report 2013–14 that making sense of information and providing specialist services to clients was resource intensive and something which could not be automated. Managing the impact of those reductions while maintaining a high quality service to Senators, Members and their staff, and Parliamentary department staff, has been the Library's major challenge over the last three years.

The 2015 client assessment included feedback from staff from the Department of the Senate, the Department of the House of Representatives and the Parliamentary Budget Office, focusing on their role assisting Senators and Members. This has provided an additional layer of information and perspective that has been highlighted throughout the report.

This report provides information in a spirit of continuous improvement so that the Library can continue to provide a high-quality service to its clients in a high pressure and dynamic environment and within the context of wider and ever more rapid societal change in information and communication.

3.   Objectives, methodology and sample

Objectives
The overall research objective was to determine levels of satisfaction with the Parliamentary Library's services, including research and information services, and make recommendations for future directions. The research will help the Library assess client service needs and plan new services and delivery to ensure continued high standards and quality service.

Specifically, the objectives of the evaluation were to determine:

- clients' satisfaction with Library services
- areas where the information and research needs of the current Parliament are not being met by the Library
- whether the Library is providing balanced, impartial, confidential, consistent and timely services
- the quality of information services and research products, and
- clients' changing information needs.

Research methodology
The research design comprised a qualitative stage followed by a quantitative study. The qualitative study involved face-to-face interviews with:
-   12 Senators
-   14 Members
-   two staff of Senators
-   Clerk Assistants of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and
-   a focus group with six Parliamentary department staff working with committees.

The quantitative survey was completed by 148 Senators, Members and their staff, and an almost identical survey was completed by 67 Parliamentary department staff (details are provided below).

For the purposes of this report, the findings from Senators, Members and their staff are analysed separately from Parliamentary department staff, although both are drawn upon in the Executive Summary and in the Conclusions and Recommendations.

As far as possible, questions were identical to those asked in 2012 to allow direct comparisons. Some changes were made in scales in response to feedback received during the interviews, some questions were dropped and others were added. The 2012 research findings were based on 23 qualitative interviews and 154 survey responses from Senators, Members and their staff. A survey of Parliamentary services was also undertaken in 2012 and the Library was included in this. It was completed by 194 staff of the Parliamentary departments and where possible, these results are compared with those from 2015.

Stage 1—Knowledge sharing and planning
The first stage involved sharing the existing body of knowledge and planning the project in detail. This included sharing and discussing previous results and the actions taken as a consequence. Based on this information, Uncommon Knowledge put together discussion guides for the in-depth interviews and focus groups, and a questionnaire for the Library's consideration and approval. While every effort was made to replicate questions from previous years, it was agreed that some questions would need to be reworded or some rating scales would need to be changed.

Stage 2—In-depth interviews and focus group
To gain the depth of qualitative insight needed, the researchers undertook 29 in-depth personal interviews with a mix of Senators and Members across the Parliament ensuring:

- a balance of parties and independents

- high, medium and low users

- longer term and newer users.

Wherever feasible, staff were interviewed at the same time as the Member or Senator or immediately afterwards. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in Parliament House.

In addition, two in-depth interviews and a focus group with six participants were held with representatives of the Departments of the Senate and the House of Representatives, particularly staff members who worked to Committees. These were held on the same day in Parliament House.

The discussion guide for the in-depth interviews was semi-structured to enable the qualitative insights to be captured and key quantitative measures to be captured at the time (thus eliminating the need for the client to complete responses via two mechanisms).

Stage 3—Online survey
An online survey was designed to reflect the Library's current concerns and to, as far as possible, mirror questions asked in previous surveys so that comparisons could be made and trends identified. A link to the online survey was distributed to Senators, Members and their staff to obtain the quantitative measures. A similar survey was sent to Parliamentary department staff two days later. The surveys were open for 20 and 18 days respectively, and during this time two reminders were sent out by the Librarian.

Sample
The sample of 148 Senators, Members and their staff was collected compared with 154 in 2012 (although questions were not mandatory in 2012 and so the sample for each question ranged from 106 to 154). The breakdown of this sample is below. In 2015 the sample of staff working for Parliamentary departments was 67 compared with the 2012 sample of 194. The breakdown of this sample is on the following page.

Senators, Members and their staff (n=148)

Sex		Position		Length of service	
Male	77	Senator	12	Less than 6 months	10
Female	71	Member	19	Between 6 and 12 months	21
Age		Staff of Senator	48	Between 1 and 2 years	30
24 or younger	9	Staff of Member	69	Between 2 and 5 years	36
25–34	42	**Party / Independent**		Between 5 and 10 years	34
35–44	23	Liberal Party	40	Between 10 and 20 years	15
45–54	35	National Party	13	More than 20 years	2
55–64	32	Australian Labor Party	65	**Constituency**	
65 or over	5	Greens	19	Predominantly urban	63
		Other	11	Predominantly rural	33
				Equally urban and rural	52

Parliamentary department staff (n=67)

Sex		Position		Length of service	
Male	24	House of Representatives staff	33	Less than 6 months	3
Female	43	Senate staff	24	Between 6 and 12 months	8
Age		Parl. Budget Office staff	9	Between 1 and 2 years	6
24 or younger	4	Other	1	Between 2 and 5 years	12
25–34	12	**Committee office**		Between 5 and 10 years	15
35–44	28	Yes	27	Between 10 and 20 years	17
45–54	16	No	29	More than 20 years	6
55–64	6	Unsure	1		
65 or over	-				

103/11 Trevillian Quay, Kingston ACT 2604
T +61 2 6231 0350   M +61 410 866 642   E enquiry@uncommonknowledge.net.au
www.uncommonknowledge.net.au

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4. Overall satisfaction and performance

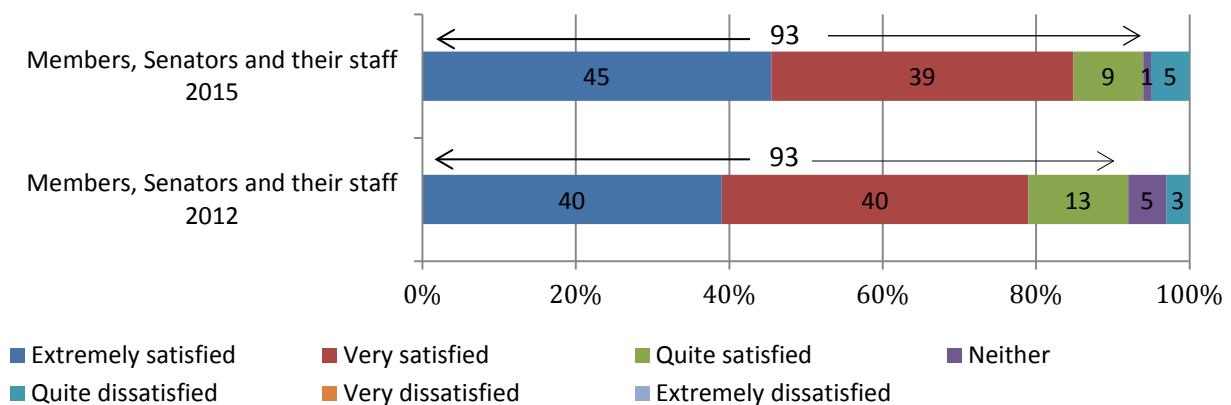## Senators, Members and their staff

Satisfaction

Satisfaction among Senators, Members and their staff remains high and is consistent with the ratings provided in previous years. This is despite a period of reduced budgets affecting staff numbers and other resources.

Research in 2012 and 2015 used the same 7-point scale. Different scales were used in the years before 2012 making accurate comparisons difficult. It is clear, however, that the Library has maintained a high satisfaction rating over a long period of time.

Figure 1 below shows 93 per cent satisfaction among Senators, Members and their staff in 2015 and this is consistent with the satisfaction rating of 2012. As in 2012, there were no responses against 'very dissatisfied' or 'extremely dissatisfied'. It is worth noting however that while not significant, there has been a small increase in both the 'extremely satisfied' and the 'quite dissatisfied'.

Although not having a marked effect on satisfaction, the qualitative research indicated that a select number of Senators, Members and their staff held 'academics' in low esteem and it is possible that the Library, and especially the researchers, are tarred with this brush and generally mistrusted.
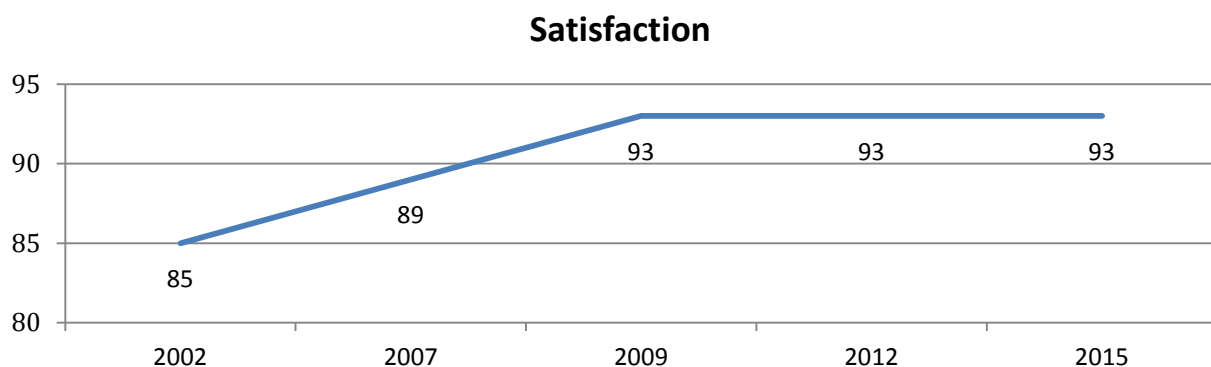

Figure 1: Satisfaction with Library services

Q3: Which of the following best describes your overall level of satisfaction with Parliamentary Library services?
Senators and Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=132

In such cases of high satisfaction over a long period of time, it is possible that some of the satisfaction is 'residual' and has been acquired over time. In other words, the 'brand' acquires positive attributes which over time become the perceived reality rather than the actual reality. This doesn't mean there is underlying dissatisfaction, but it does mean that the satisfaction rating is likely to be based on years of experience rather than the immediate past, and that 'allowances' are made for any lapses in quality service. Care should be taken not to let any residual satisfaction erode as it can be difficult to win back.

An example of this 'residual satisfaction' is the higher score for willingness to recommend the Library than for satisfaction with its services which is discussed in Figure 3 later in the report.

Figure 2 below shows the trend line for satisfaction since 2002. As mentioned, comparing satisfaction over the years is not possible because 2002 and 2007 used different rating scales and 2007 had a 'somewhat satisfied' which if added would bring that year's satisfaction to 99 per cent. What is clear, however, is that satisfaction has remained strong over a long period of time. To maintain such ratings, an organisation needs to keep developing and evolving so that it continues to meets its customers' needs and if possible foresee their future needs and prepare for them.

Satisfaction

Figure 2: Satisfaction trend since2002

Q3: Which of the following best describes your overall level of satisfaction with Parliamentary Library services?
Senators and Members and their staff 2015—n=148, 2012—n=132, 2009—n=399, 2007—n=223, 2002—n=?

Those parliamentarians and their staff who indicated they were extremely satisfied were more likely to indicate they would recommend the Library service to a colleague, believe the overall performance of the Library has stayed the same, and that the Library was focusing effectively on the services it needed to provide. They were also more likely to rate the quality, consistency and timeliness of the responses they received from the Library highly, and also rate the Library staff highly on their display of initiative, impartiality, fairness and professionalism when answering phone calls and emails. At the same time, they were more likely to indicate they tended to begin their research with Google and to use it highly, and more likely not to have the time to use the mapping service.

Those who indicated they were very satisfied were also likely to recommend the Library to colleagues. However, they were more likely to indicate that only received a high quality response some of the time, and that they only have an average trust in Library's online resources.

Those who were only quite satisfied were more likely to indicate that the Library does not provide a consistent standard of response.

Parliamentarians and their staff who indicated they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied were more likely to indicate they would not recommend the Library to colleagues. They were also more likely to indicate that the Library only provided high quality and accurate responses some of the time and disagree that the Library staff demonstrated an understanding of their needs. These parliamentarians and their staff were more likely to have never used the Library research services and believed social media was very reliable as an information source.

The quite dissatisfied were more likely to be Senators and low users of the Library's services both in sitting and non-sitting weeks. At the same time they are more likely to be low users of Google, use other sources as

starting point when beginning research and to never use Government websites. The quite dissatisfied were more likely to indicate the Library rarely or never provided high quality responses and to rate Library staff poorly on their display of initiative, being available to assist, impartiality, fairness, and professionalism when answering phone calls and emails.

What drives satisfaction ratings?

Responsiveness, professionalism and quality research were all cited as reasons for satisfaction. There were comments about varying quality in the research and this issue was repeated in other responses.

Table 1 below lists the reasons given by Senators, Members and their staff for giving a rating of satisfaction or for being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Table 1: Drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among Senators, Members and their staff

Satisfied because	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied because …
Staff are exceptionally helpful, knowledgeable and responsive	Research service can be variable in terms of quality: depends who you talk to
Easy to access quality information	Longer response times than in the past
When it's good, it's very good …	… when it's not good it's useless
Timely, courteous, quality, flexible	Variable
Well written and easy to understand responses	"Occasionally I have to follow up a request in order to get in answered"
Online service is great	Don't use it very much

Would clients recommend the Library?

The percentage of Senators, Members and staff who would recommend the Library remains high (97%), with only 1 per cent saying 'no'. This is consistent with previous years.
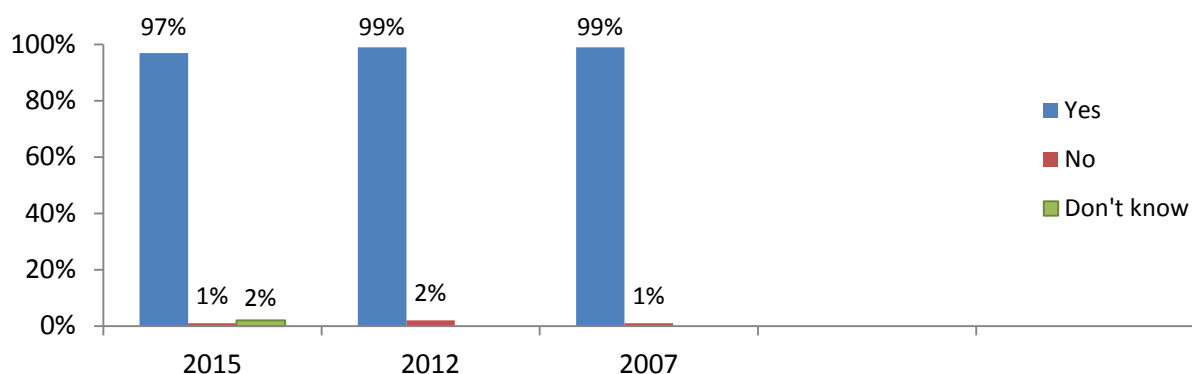
Figure 3: Likelihood to recommend the Library

Q5: Would you recommend the Parliamentary Library to a colleague?
Senators and Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=131; 2009—n=399; 2007—n=223

With willingness to recommend scoring higher than satisfaction, the obvious question is why are more people prepared to recommend the Library than claim to be satisfied with its services. This has been a

103/11 Trevillian Quay, Kingston ACT 2604
T +61 2 6231 0350 M +61 410 866 642 E enquiry@uncommonknowledge.net.au
www.uncommonknowledge.net.au

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consistent pattern over the last few surveys and in 2015 the survey specifically asked the question of those who gave a dissatisfaction rating but who also indicated that they would recommend the Library to a colleague. Unfortunately no-one chose to provide an explanation.

As mentioned earlier, this is partly the result of a high satisfaction rating over a long period of time. Also, drawing on the qualitative research to answer the question, it would be reasonable to assume that where people were dissatisfied, it was often because of the inconsistency in the quality of research services. However, because these respondents generally agreed that when the research was good, it was very good, they were still prepared to recommend the Library.

The parliamentarians and their staff who indicated they would recommend the Library to colleagues were more likely to indicate that their work practices and use of the Library had changed in the last three years and that the Library staff demonstrated an understanding of their needs. Interestingly they were less likely to be high users of the research services and Library collection services. They were also more likely to say that it depends each time on the information required whether they would find a two page summary or a longer comprehensive and detailed document most useful.

Members and those who used the Library services once a week in non-sitting weeks, were more likely to answer that they didn't know if they would recommend the Library to colleagues.

There were no significant differences among the small number who would not recommend the Library.

Do clients perceive a change in the Library's performance?

Clients were asked for the first time in 2015 whether they believed there had been a change in the Library's performance. Figure 4 below shows that the significant majority (64%) of Senators, Members and their staff believe there has been no change in the performance of the Library and 8 per cent believe it has improved, despite the Library experiencing a decline in funding and resources. Only 3 per cent indicated that the performance had declined. A quarter of respondents said they 'didn't know' and these tended to be new Senators, Members or staff who did not have the past experience to provide a comparison.

Members, Senators and their staff
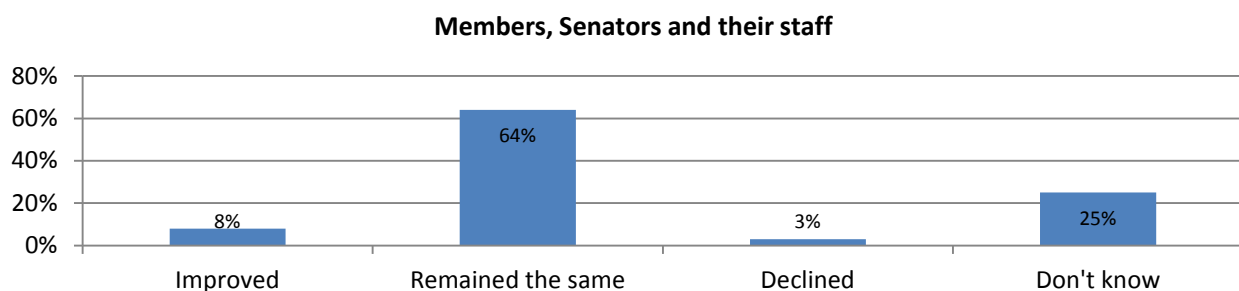
Figure 4: Has Library performance changed?

Q3: For the period you have had dealings with the Parliamentary Library, do you believe its overall performance has declined, remained the same, or improved?
Senators and Members and their staff—n=148

No reasons were given for Senators, Members and their staff claiming that Library performance had improved or remained the same, and only three reasons were given for claiming it has declined. These are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Reasons for believing performance had improved, remained the same or declined

| Declined |
|---|
| "Staff numbers are insufficient leading to longer response times than before. Everyone we deal with appears quite stretched." |
| "Longer response times" |
| "Need to be able to access more from my iPad and remotely from my laptop." |

Those who indicated the Library's performance had declined were more likely to have been in parliament for more than twenty years, use the Library services once a day in non-sitting weeks, to indicate low usage and trust of Government websites as information sources and low trust of the Library's print collection.

Parliamentarians and their staff who indicated the performance had improved were more likely to have been in parliament between 5 and less than 10 years and more likely to agree that Library staff treated them fairly and impartially and answered telephone calls and emails professionally. They didn't know if the Parliamentary Library was focusing effectively on the services it needed to provide and were more likely to claim to use the Library services several times a day in non-sitting weeks. They were more likely to indicate the Library print collection as a starting point for their research, and less likely to use think tanks.

Those who indicated that the Library's performance had remained the same were less likely to indicate they were a member of a minor party or an Independent, and less likely to have indicated they were dissatisfied with the Library's service overall. They were more likely to say they believed the Library was focusing effectively on the services it needed to provide and that they used the services in sitting weeks once a day. They were more likely to indicate that the Library provided accurate and timely responses all the time and to prefer a two page summary. They were more uncertain on whether Library staff informed them clearly about the services available.

Does the Library have its focus right?

Respondents were asked whether they thought the Library had its focus right, was trying to do too much or whether there were areas in which it could do more or expand into. Figure 5 below shows that Senators, Members and their staff were more likely (69%) to report that they thought the Library was focusing effectively on services. The figures for the two extremes ('could expand its focus and activities' and 'is trying to do too much') were very low at 3 per cent and 2 per cent respectively.
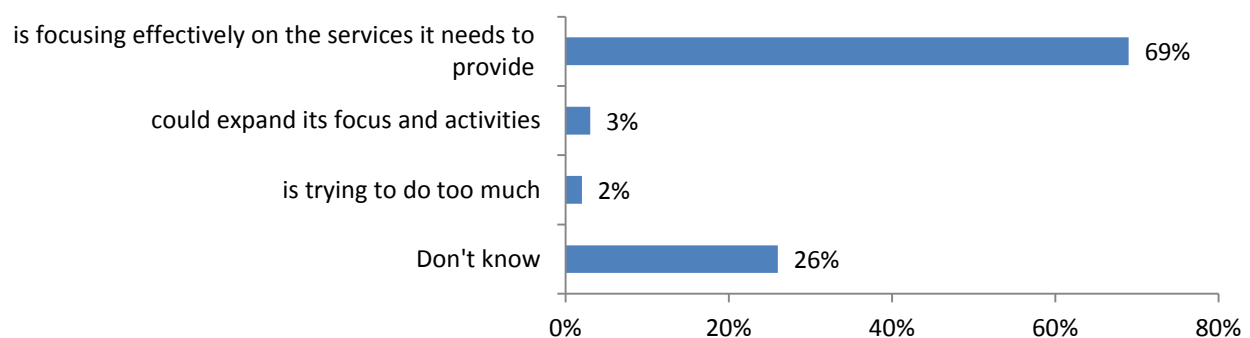
Figure 5: Parliamentary Library's focus

Q4: Which of the following do you believe is true? The Parliamentary Library …
Senators and Members and their staff—n=148

When those who responded that the Library could expand its focus and activities were asked to provide examples, one response was received:

- "Greater anticipation and proactive supply, looking at the needs of marginal seat members and what they might find helpful."

When asked what the Library could stop doing, there was only one suggestion:

- "…they could drop the special events/displays if resources were too tight, but it's not a major issue. The special events are great when they relate to my business."

Possible improvements

As in previous years, Senators, Members and their staff were asked to suggest improvements in how the Library could operate. Comments made in 2012 and 2015 are essentially similar which lends weight to the issues. The dominant themes were around the need for more training and guidance in using services and in a system which allows for tracking and quality assurance. Table 3 below lists the specific comments from 2015.

Table 3: Suggested improvements

Improvements
A simple dot point response would be good option
More staff: more online services
More online training and tours for new people and those who have forgotten what's available
Make the effort to understand and qualify the information people are seeking
Help people to learn about services in more creative ways
More researchers who have experience in business and industry—perhaps visiting fellows/interns from industry
Continued engagement of staff with strong research abilities
A list of researchers and their relevant subject matter
Perhaps a follow-up email a couple of weeks later asking if anything further is needed
More clarity around the physical Library and what it offers
Briefing packs on general issues
Online request system that tracks jobs
More engagement and outreach
Non-sensitive client advice could be available online if the requesting Member or Senator agreed
Be copied into the email to the researcher so I know the request has been actioned, or researcher could email that they have received your request or have an automatic out of office message if not available. On several occasions I have discovered the particular researcher isn't at work
Consistency of quality across your research team
Ensure more uniformity of economic advice. Invest in people who can crunch micro data (unit level HILDA or census data)

Library performance against its performance measures

As in previous years, the Library is seen to perform very well on all measures of service delivery. Looking at 'all the time', confidentiality (74%) and being balanced and impartial (70%) were rated most highly, followed by accuracy (63%), timeliness (59%), quality (53%) and lastly consistency (51%). This can be seen in Figure 6 below. 'High quality' and 'consistency' were the only measures to receive a score of 'rarely' (although only 1%) and this is consistent with the qualitative findings which point to variability in the quality of responses.
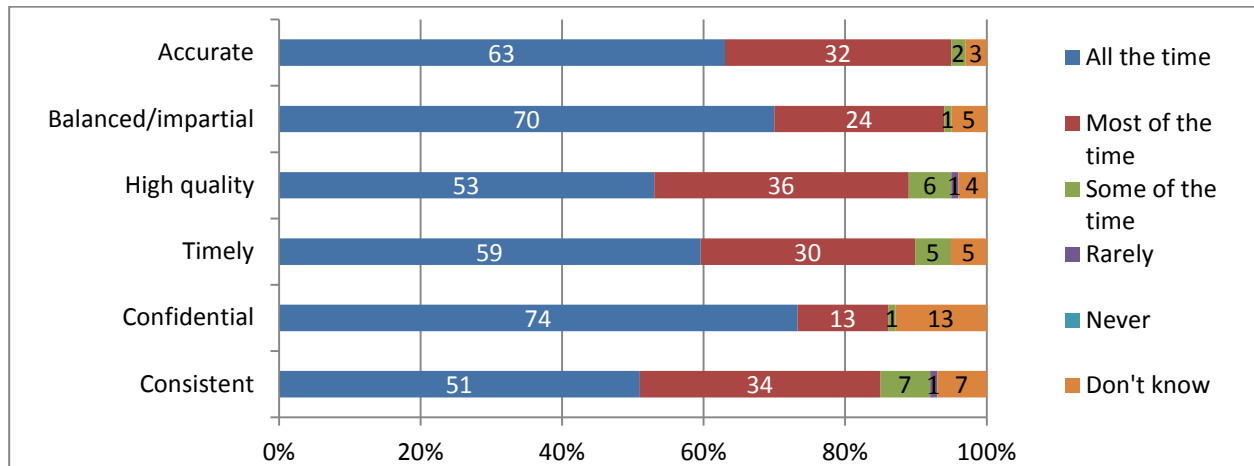
Figure 6: Perceived performance of Parliamentary Library by Senators, Members and their staff

Q12: How does the Parliamentary Library perform against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Senators and Members and their staff—n=148

As can be seen from the 2015 and 2012 figures in Figure 7 below, the ratings for confidentiality and being balanced/impartial have increased, while the ratings for quality and consistency have declined. The issue of consistency of quality was raised repeatedly in both qualitative and quantitative research.
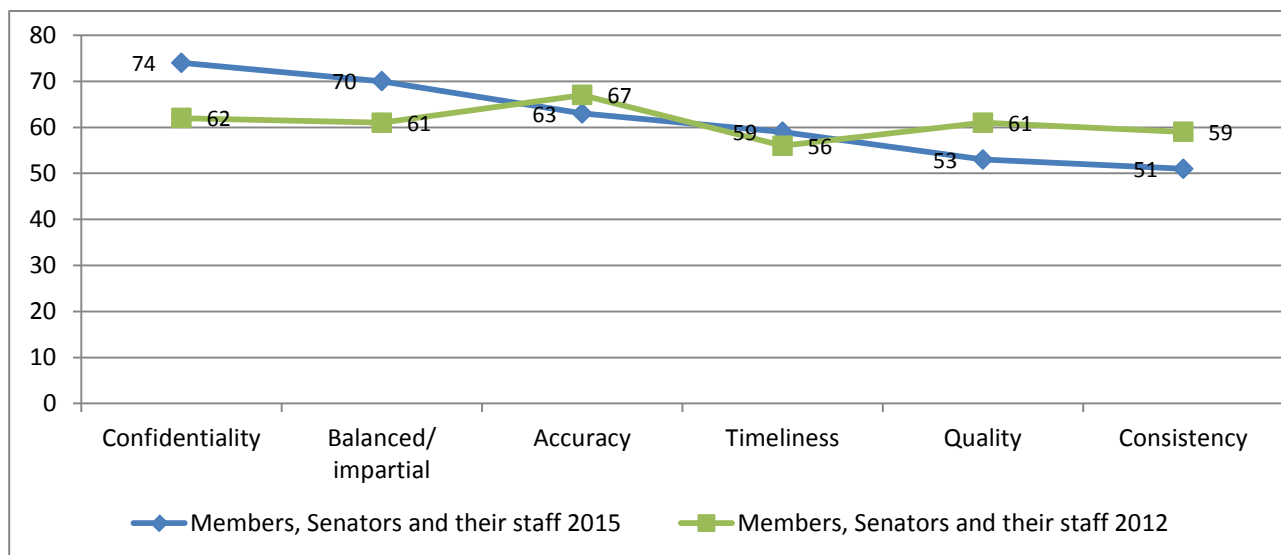
Figure 7: Scores of 'all the time' against the Library's performance measures

Q12: How does the Parliamentary Library perform against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Senators and Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=131

Members were more likely to indicate that the Library provided high quality responses 'rarely' or 'never'. Staff of Senators and respondents aged 55-64 were more likely to indicate that the Library provided a consistent standard of responses 'all the time' or 'most times'.

Those aged 25-34 and the staff of Senators were more likely to indicate that the Library's responses were balanced and impartial.

Library staff

Library staff were highly regarded by the majority of respondents. When compared with 2012 and looking at responses against 'strongly agree', Library staff performed as well if not better on all measures except 'display initiative' where the score has dropped significantly from 53 per cent to 41 per cent. Figure 8 below charts the 2015 ratings from Senators, Members and their staff.
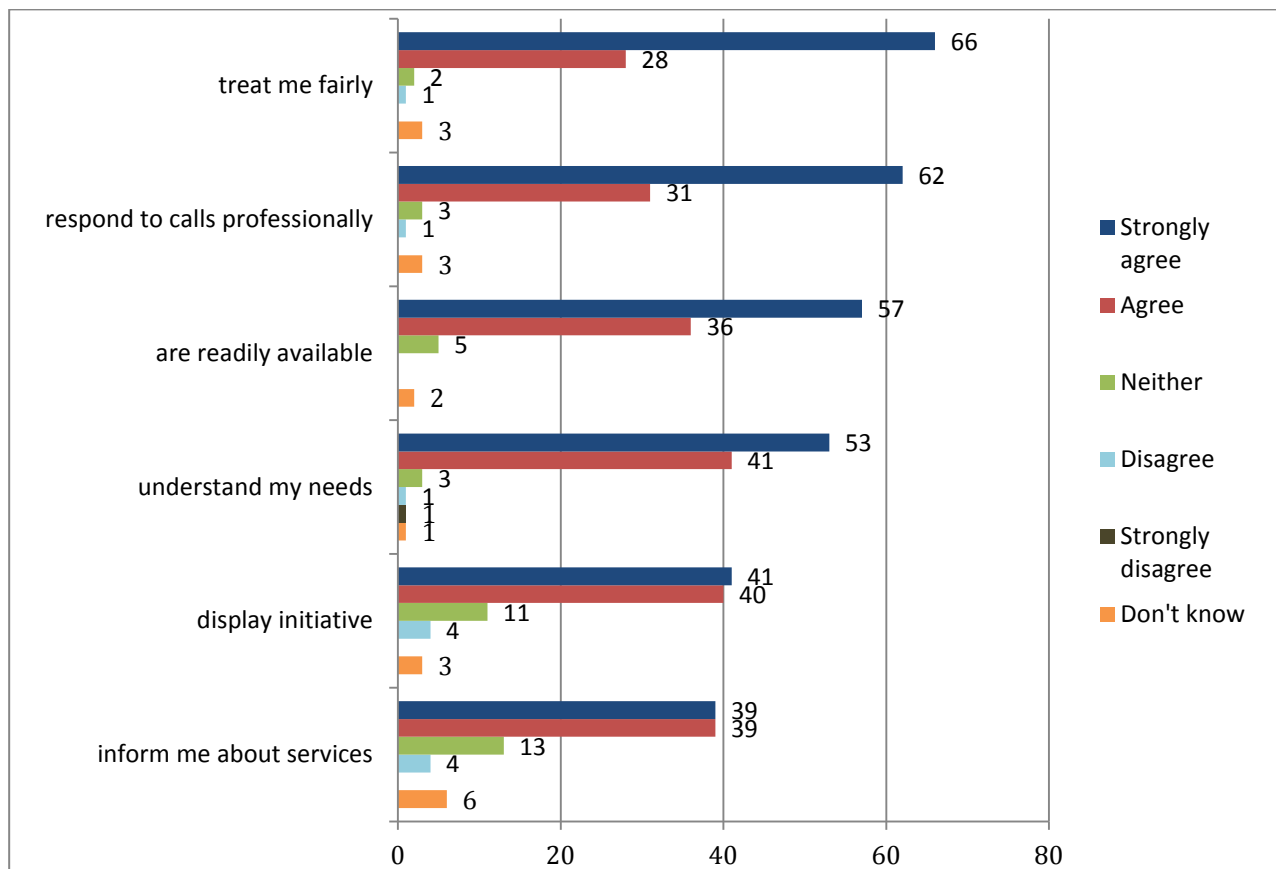
Figure 8: Evaluation of Library staff by Senators, Members and their staff

Q13: In your experience, do Library staff …
Senators and Members, and their staff 2015—n=148

Parliamentary departments

Satisfaction

Research with Parliamentary department staff in 2012 (Orima) distinguished between Library services and Library facilities and the report does not indicate the scale used to gauge satisfaction. It found satisfaction with both services and facilities to be 86 per cent compared with a significantly lower figure in 2015 of 75 per cent. This trend of lower satisfaction compared with Senators, Members and their staff is repeated throughout the survey. The 2015 figures are graphed in Figure 9 below.

In 2012 staff of the House of the Senate were more satisfied (90%) than those from the House of Representatives (82%). In 2015 staff from the House of Senate were still significantly more likely to be satisfied and particularly in comparison to staff from the Parliamentary Budget Office.

While staff from the Parliamentary departments have the same access to services as the staff of Senators and Members when undertaking official duties, only half the department respondents worked in areas on behalf of Senators and Members. Those who worked with committees rated their satisfaction at 78 per cent compared with 86 per cent for those whose work did not involve them with Senators or Members.

Legend:
- ■ Extremely satisfied
- ■ Very satisfied
- ■ Quite satisfied
- ■ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ■ Quite dissatisfied
- ■ Very dissatisfied
- ■ Extremely dissatisfied
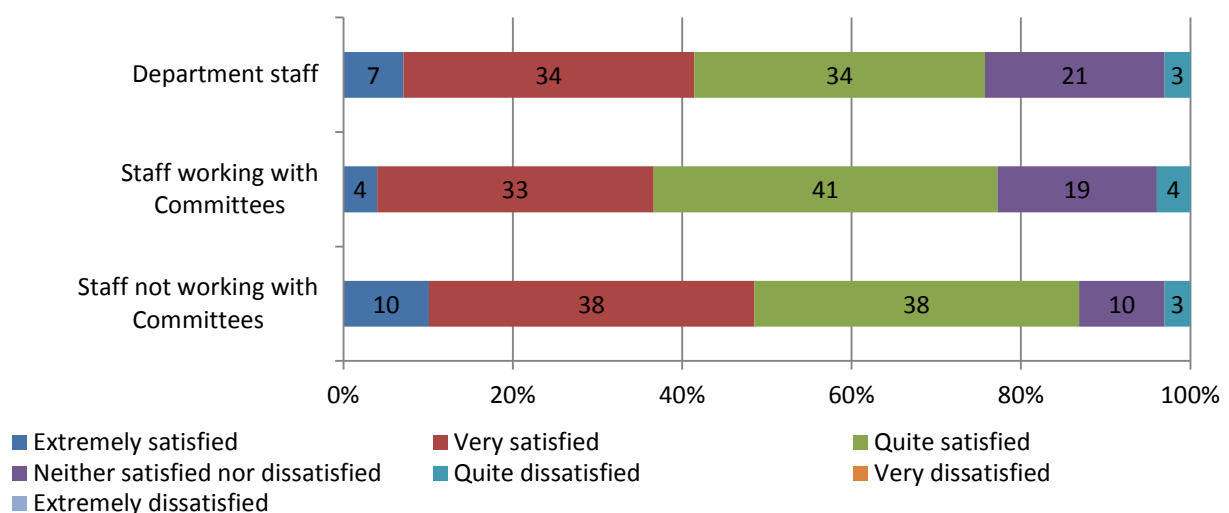
Figure 9: Satisfaction with Library services

Q3: Which of the following best describes your overall level of satisfaction with Parliamentary Library services?
Parliamentary department respondents 2015—n=67

What drives satisfaction ratings?

Responsiveness, professionalism and quality research were all cited as reasons for satisfaction. As with Senators, Members and their staff, there were comments about varying quality in the research and this issue was repeated in other responses.

From the comments made, it appears that the relative dissatisfaction among Parliamentary department staff is driven by the timeliness of Bills Digests not meeting their needs, the variable quality if research services and an impression they have of not being considered as important as other clients (even if the end clients are parliamentarians). As comments these cannot be quantified.

103/11 Trevillian Quay, Kingston ACT 2604
T +61 2 6231 0350   M +61 410 866 642   E enquiry@uncommonknowledge.net.au
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There is also some confusion among Parliamentary department staff regarding the Library's responsibilities, with comments being made about the website and Parlinfo and incorrectly attributed to the Library, and this would probably be helping to drive satisfaction ratings down. Recorded under 'dissatisfied because …' were the following comments by Parliamentary department respondents:

- "Parlinfo is a poor search tool"
- "The APH web redevelopment was poorly run and resulted in a second class website."
- "With the change to the internet many of the hyperlinks in Parlinfo are now broken and info cannot be found."

Parliamentary department staff provided similar reasons for satisfaction as Senators, Members and staff but were more forthcoming with reasons for dissatisfaction as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Drivers of satisfaction among Parliamentary department respondents

Satisfied because	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied because …	Dissatisfied because …
Staff have generally been helpful when I have needed to approach them for specific information.	We have commissioned some research papers and they have been of mixed quality. Mostly good.	I have on occasion been made to feel like a nuisance for making requests.
They have been very helpful in organising interlibrary loans, helping me locate electronic references, monitor media, etc	I don't use the Library at all—don't know what it offers staff from the departments.	Papers that are written with multiple links and no analysis are not helpful.
Every request or inquiry I have made in the 8 years I have worked in APH has been addressed by Library staff thoroughly and promptly in a warm, professional and friendly manner.	Variable quality of research, instances of clear bias in research on at least one occasion, misunderstanding what they have been asked to do	"It would be more helpful to have access to bills digests prior to tabling committee reports as we in the committee office are not subject matter experts. They are often tabled too late for information/issues to be included in committee reports. While all information is ultimately for senators to use in the chamber, bills digests used to be available earlier than a day before discussion in the chamber and committees appreciated the inclusion of the Library information in committee reports."
		"Online databases occasionally come in handy, although the Library does not have all the subscriptions that a university Library would have. Bills Digests are good in theory but less useful for committees as they are generally produced after the committee's report is adopted and/or tabled."

Would clients recommend the Library?

The percentage of Parliamentary department respondents who would recommend the Library is high (93%) although the remaining 7 per cent say 'no' compared with only 1 per cent of Senators, Members and their staff. There were no statistically significant differences between those who worked with committees and those who did not.
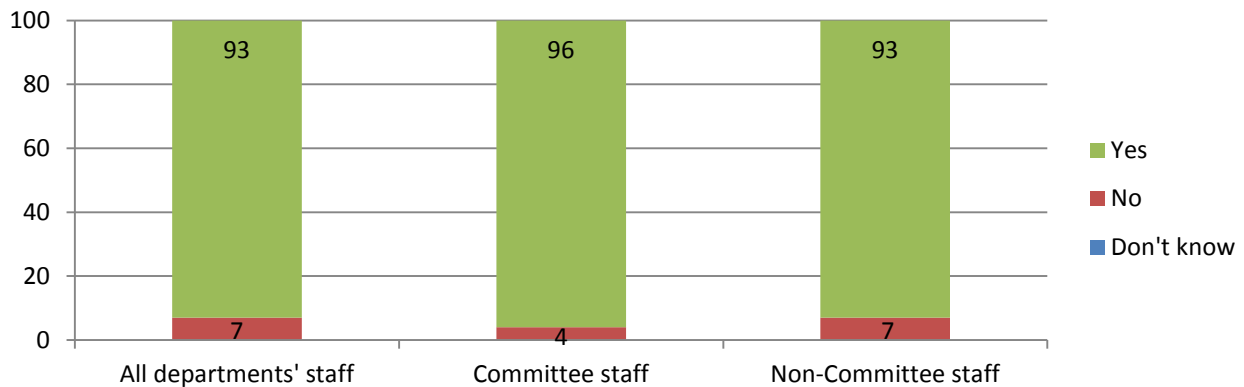

Figure 10: Likelihood to recommend the Library

Q5: Would you recommend the Parliamentary Library to a colleague?
Department staff—n=67

The pattern of a higher rating for willingness to recommend than for satisfaction appears with both Senators, Members and their staff and Parliamentary department staff. In 2015 the survey specifically asked the question of those who gave a dissatisfaction rating but who also indicated that they would recommend the Library to a colleague but unfortunately no-one chose to provide an explanation. Drawing on the qualitative research to answer the question, it would be reasonable to assume that similar to Senators, Members and their staff, where people were dissatisfied it was often because of the inconsistency in the quality of research services and because when the research was good, it was very good, they were still prepared to recommend the Library.

Do clients perceive a change in the Library's performance?

Figure 11 below shows that the significant majority (57% of Parliamentary department staff) believe there has been no change in the performance of the Library. Around a quarter of respondents (n=16) said they 'didn't know' suggesting that either there is a proportion of new staff or staff who had recently transferred into positions where their use of Library had changed.
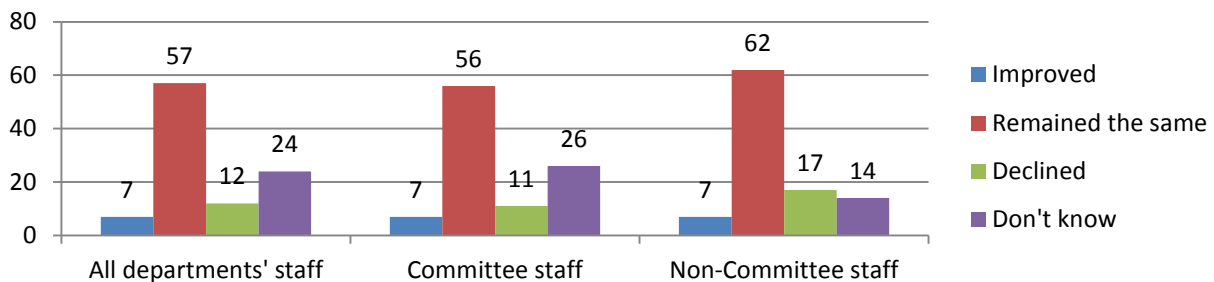
Figure 11: Has Library performance changed?

Q3: For the period you have had dealings with the Parliamentary Library, do you believe its overall performance has declined, remained the same, or improved?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

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T +61 2 6231 0350   M +61 410 866 642   E enquiry@uncommonknowledge.net.au
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Parliamentary department staff were significantly more likely to report a decline in performance than Senators, Members and their staff. The Parliamentary department staff who indicated that the service has declined were more likely to be dissatisfied with the Library service overall. They were more likely to say they used the Library's service one a fortnight in sitting weeks, only used the mapping service sometimes and used the Library collections heavily or frequently. They tended to indicate the Library's responses were not 'consistent' and only 'sometimes' were they of high quality, timely and confidential. They preferred a longer comprehensive and detailed document. They were more likely to not trust the Library research services or external experts as a source of information, much preferring community groups. Lastly they were more likely to have found out about the Library services via a colleague.

Those who indicated the service had improved were also likely to indicate they used the Library services several times a day during both sitting and non-sitting weeks.

Parliamentary department staff who indicated the Library's service had remained the same were more likely to be satisfied with the Library services overall. They were more likely to indicate they only used the Library service once a month during sitting weeks. They were more likely to indicate the Library's responses were consistent, accurate and timely all the time or most of the time. They were also more likely to indicate that Library staff answered their phone calls and emails professional and treated them fairly and impartially.

Reasons given for claiming that services had improved, remained the same or declined, were similar for both Senators, Members and their staff and the Parliamentary department staff. Table 5 below shows the comments provided by Parliamentary department respondents.

Table 5: Reasons given by Parliamentary department respondents for believing performance had improved, remained the same or declined

Improved or remained the same
"Technology and efficient use of online services—ability to access more information in a faster way."
"I feel like I know more of the staff now and they will always do what they can to help out, which is very good."
"The ability to incorporate digital technology is very helpful—their ability to operate with new technologies is commendable."
"Communication has improved with *What's New*."

Declined
"Staff numbers are insufficient leading to longer response times than before. Everyone we deal with appears quite stretched."
"While there are some very competent staff, there are some less competent staff."
"Need to be able to access more from my iPad and remotely from my laptop."

Does the Library have its focus right?

Respondents were asked whether they thought the Library had its focus right, was trying to do too much or whether there were areas in which it could do more or expand into. Figure 12 below shows that Parliamentary department staff were more likely to be unsure (48%) than to believe the Library had the focus right (40%). The figures for the two extremes ('could expand its focus and activities' and 'is trying to do too much') were significantly lower.
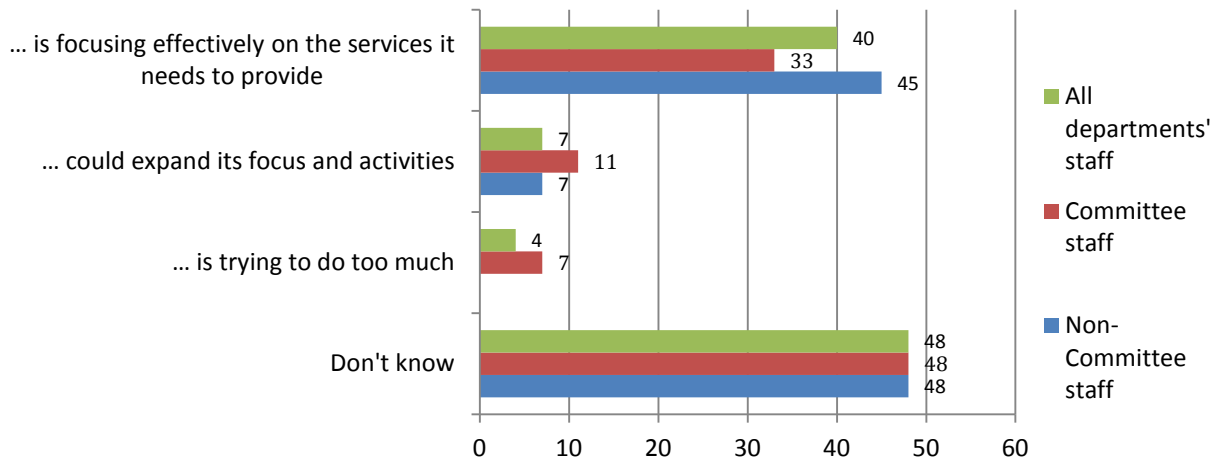

Figure 12: Parliamentary Library's focus

Q4: Which of the following do you believe is true? The Parliamentary Library …
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

When those who responded that the Library could expand its focus and activities were asked to provide examples, the following were typical of the responses received:

- "Expansion of online journals and new books."

- "Clearer communication about how we can 'bid' or 'commission' work and where we are in their priority list, quick access to Bill's Digests."

- "Online feedback forms to assist in quality control."

When asked what the Library could stop doing, there were three suggestions:

- "Targeting better which bills benefit from a bills digest, less general research briefs which would give more capacity to focus on requested research."

- "I think the Library should focus on its core functions, and particularly maintaining the role, knowledge and expertise of researchers and the esteem in which they're held. With the advent of the internet and the subsequent ease with which people can find information for themselves, as well as the establishment of the PBO, I think there is a risk that the Library research section becomes redundant if it doesn't focus on comprising credible experts who are appropriately supported and resourced, are impartial and provide timely and relevant advice."

- "Wider dissemination of its work to the parliamentary departments and focus on improving the knowledge of departmental staff about the work of the Library and how it may benefit them."

Possible improvements

In 2015 Parliamentary department staff were asked to suggest improvements in how the Library could operate. The dominant themes were around the need for more training and guidance in using services and in a system which allows for tracking and quality assurance. Table 6 below lists the specific comments from 2015.

Table 6: Suggested improvements

Improvements
"There could be a sharper focus on how the research products of the Library support parliamentarians (i.e. how does it help their work in the chambers and on committees)."
"Improved research tools."
"The wider availability of electronic resources."
"Portfolio-specific portals online each summarising current legislation, regulations, announcements, developments in the portfolio area."
"Need to know how requests have been prioritised."

Library performance against its performance measures

The Library is seen to perform very well on all measures of service delivery. Looking at 'all the time', balanced/impartial (31%), confidentiality (30%) accuracy (28%) and quality (27%) were rated most highly and consistency (19%) rated the lowest. Consistency was also rated lowest by Senators, Members, and their staff. This can be seen in Figure 13 below.

Senators, Members and their staff were around twice as likely to rate the Library's response to requests positively than were Parliamentary department staff.
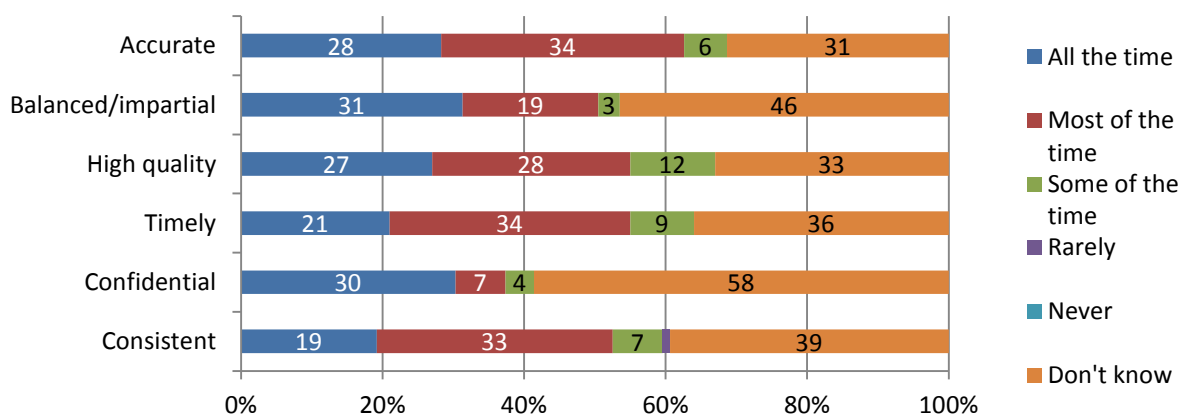
Figure 13: Perceived performance of Parliamentary Library by Parliamentary department's staff

Q12: How does the Parliamentary Library perform against each of the following measures when responding to requests? Parliamentary department staff—n=67

As can be seen from Figure 14 below, Parliamentary department staff scored the Library's performance significantly lower on all measures although following a similar pattern to Senators, Members and staff in 2015. The issue of consistency of quality was raised repeatedly in both qualitative and quantitative research.

Committee staff were significantly more likely to give high scores to Parliamentary Library against the confidentiality of response measurement.
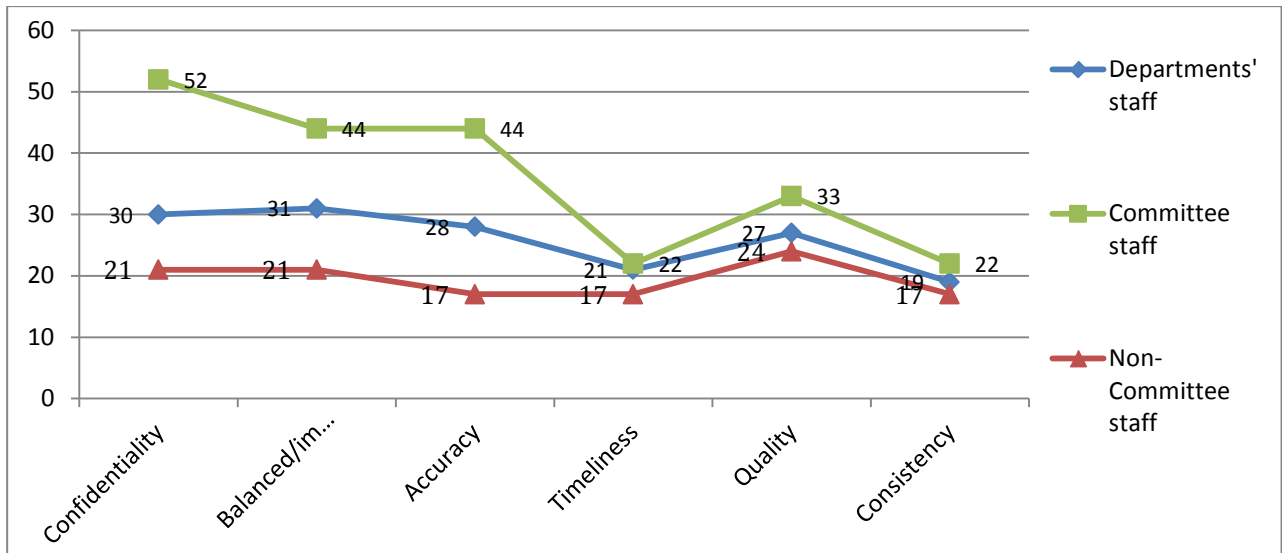
Figure 14: Scores of 'all the time' against the Library's performance measures

Q12: How does the Parliamentary Library perform against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Library staff

The data for Parliamentary department staff tells a similar story to that of Senators, Members and their staff but with much lower figures. The larger number of 'don't know' ratings is significantly different from the ratings of Senators, Members and their staff and suggests either reticence on the part of the respondents or a lack of clarity with regard to the level of service they can expect from the Library. The ratings of Parliamentary department respondents are shown in Figure 15 below.
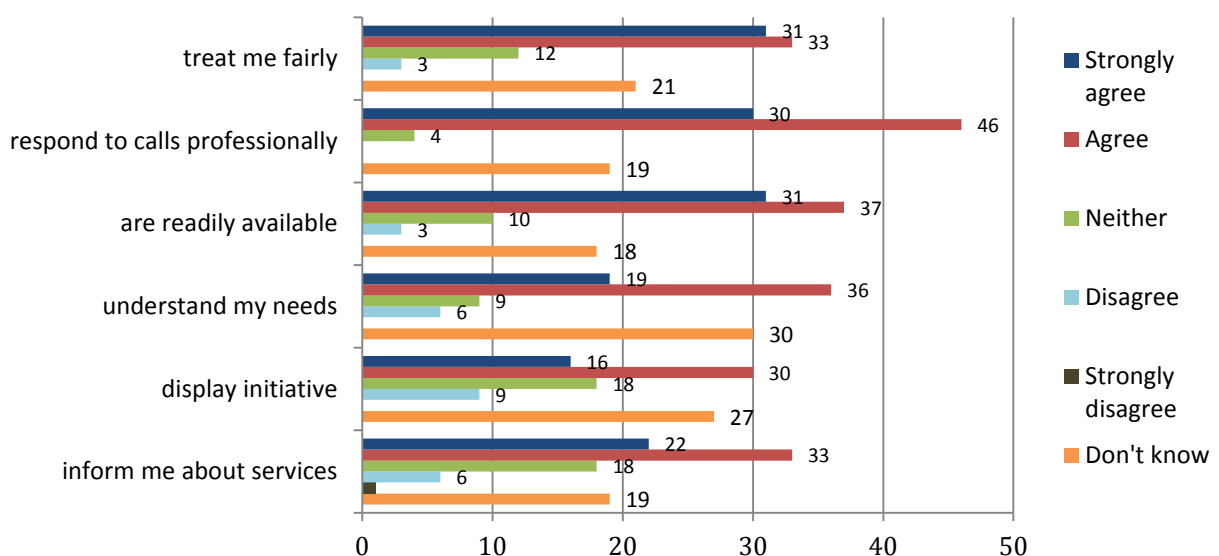
Figure 15: Evaluation of Library staff by Parliamentary department respondents

Q13: In your experience, do Library staff …
Parliamentary department respondents n=67

5. Use of Library services

Senators, Members and their staff

There continues to be differences in Library use between sitting and non-sitting weeks although this was not always reflected in the qualitative research. Some Senators, Members and their staff thought they were more likely to make many short requests during sitting weeks and fewer but more complex enquiries during non-sitting weeks and the results would offer support to this hypothesis.

Figure 16 below compares usage patterns of Senators, Members and their staff between sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks in both 2015 and 2012. Direct comparisons between the years cannot be made because three additional response options were allowed in 2015 following feedback from the qualitative research. In 2015 usage was shown to be higher during sitting weeks than non-sitting weeks and there were no significant differences between the use of Senators, Members or their staff. In 2012 however, the research found that staff working for Senators were heavier users of Library services during sitting weeks than staff of Members.
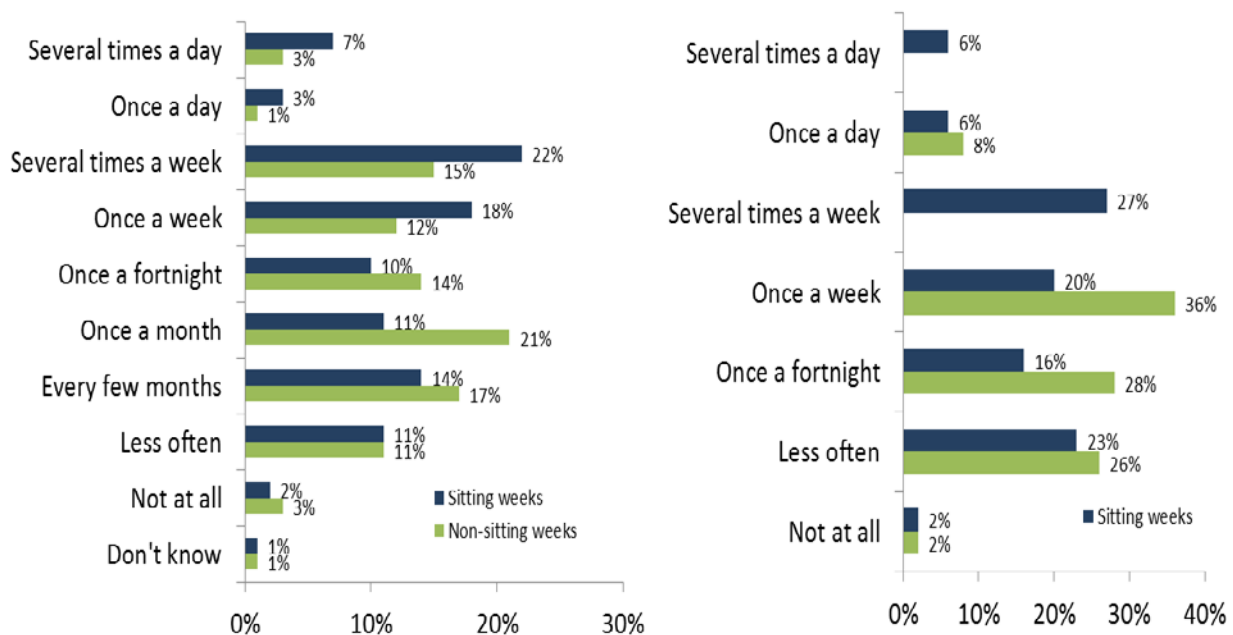
Figure 16: Reported usage by Senators, Members and their staff during sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks in 2015 (left) and 2012 (right)

Q6: Which of the following best describes how often you use the Parliamentary Library during sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148

Change in work patterns and Library use
The rate of change in work patterns appears to have increased with significantly more people reporting change in 2015 (52%) than in 2012 (40%). Figure 17 below graphs these comparisons.
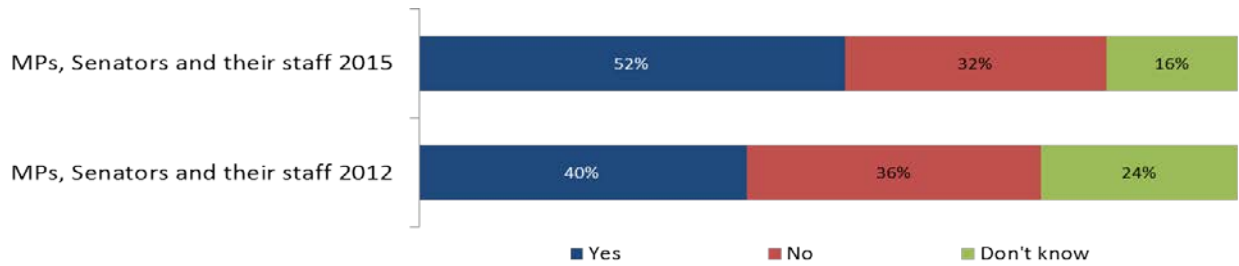
Figure 17: Reports of change in work practices of the last three years

Q7: Have your work practices changed over the past three years?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015 (worked in PH more than 3 years) n=98; 2012 n=130

There has been a corresponding increase in the number of Senators, Members and staff who have worked within the Parliament for more than three years and who report that their use of Library has changed. These comparisons are graphed in Figure 18 below.
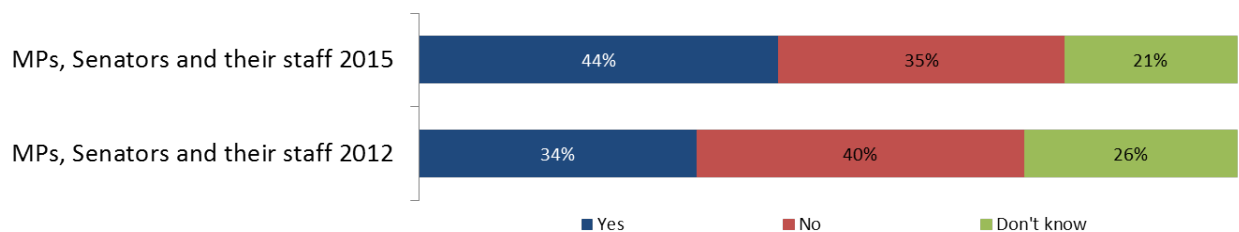
Figure 18: Reported change in use of the Library over the last three years

Q8: Has your use of the Library changed over the past three years?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015 (worked in PH more than 3 years) n=98; 2012 n=130

Interpretations of figures 17 and 18 should be viewed with some caution. Many Senators, Members and their staff reported a change in their work practices based on their move to, or from Government and the role they now play within the Parliament. These reasons do not necessarily reflect changing work practices and their effect on the way they use the Library. If this issue is to be explored again, it is recommended that the questions be more specific to try to eliminate these variables as much as possible. That said, there were some reasons given for change including:

- "Move from Government to Opposition means I rely more heavily on the Parliamentary Library (no longer have the benefit of departmental research and analysis resources)"
- "Greater use of online tools"
- "Tend to Google more—find own articles"
- "Change of role has led to responsibility for a greater range of policy areas"
- "Orientations open a whole new world—as an electorate officer I was unaware of how easy it is to use"
- "Access more online"
- "I no longer feel bad about asking them to do work"
- "I have a need for more demographic data analysis"

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The point raised about using online services more than in the past was reflected often in both the qualitative and quantitative research: there is an appreciation of the Library's move to online services and a greater preparedness to use them than was apparent in previous years.

Use of different Library services

Looking at 'heavy, frequent and sometimes', use of all Library services has increased since 2012. If 'rarely' is added, the only significant differences are an increase in use of the Library's collections and a decline in the use of mapping services. This suggests that there has been an overall increase in use of Library services but this can only be verified by the Library's figures.
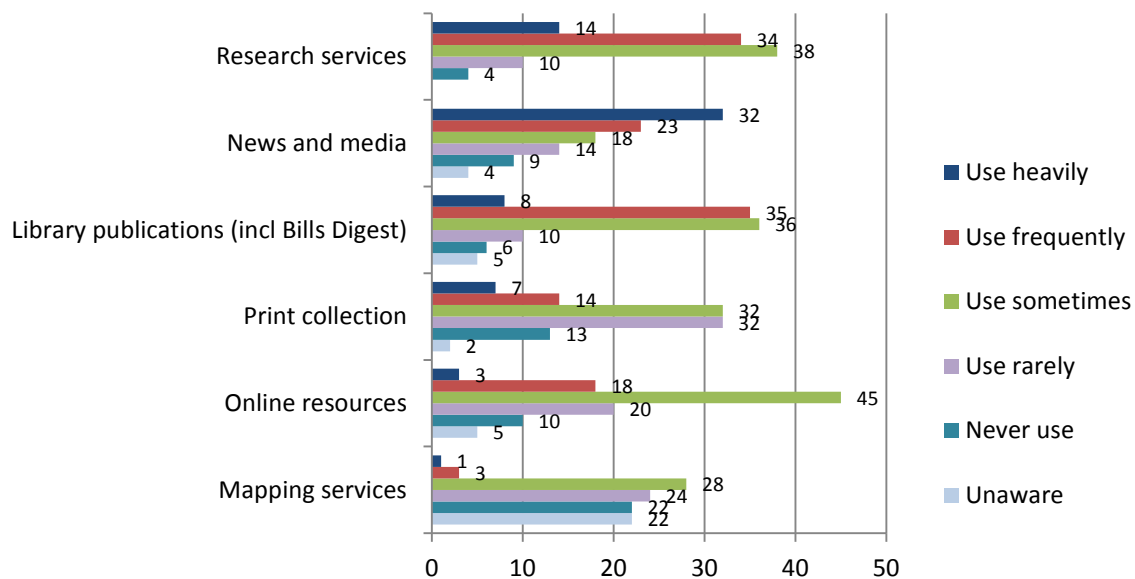
Figure 19: Frequency of use of specific Library services by Senators, Members and their staff 2015

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148

Research services

The survey results indicate research services are being used more now than in 2012 with 86 per cent reporting they use research sometimes, frequently or heavily compared with 71 per cent in 2012. The research service was the most highly used service by Senators, Members and staff in 2012 and 2015.
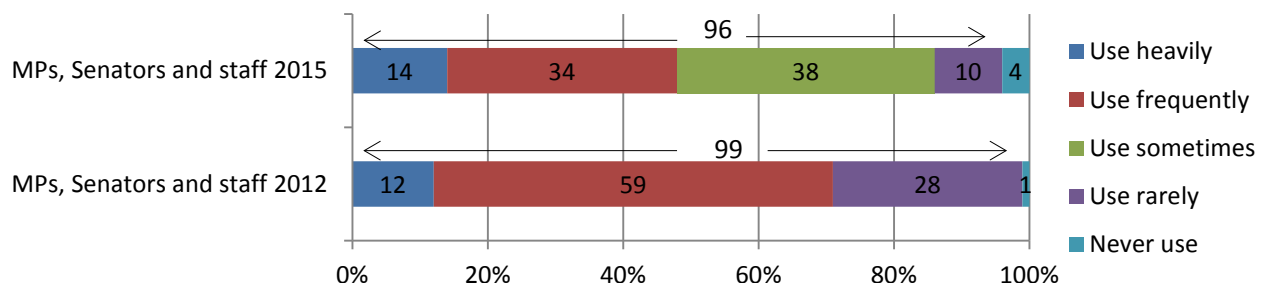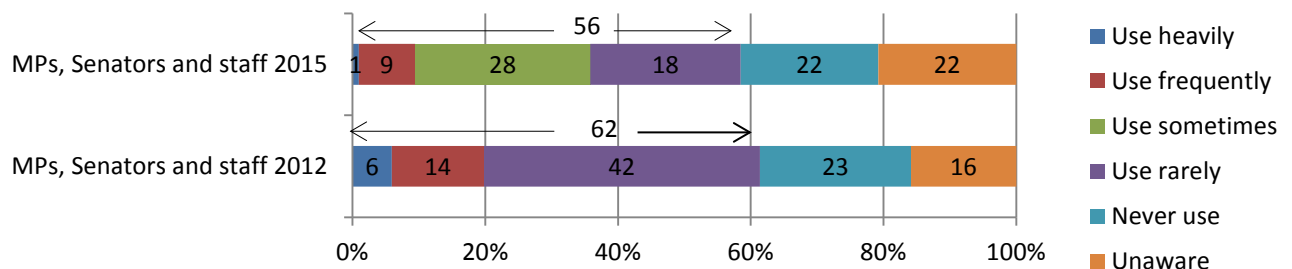

Figure 20: Use of research services

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=118

News and media services

News and media continues to be highly used with 'sometimes, frequent and heavy' use having increased by 10 per cent to 73 per cent since 2012. Similar use was reported by 59 per cent of Parliamentary department respondents. If 'use rarely' is factored in, news and media use is constant, scoring 88 per cent in 2012 and 87 per cent in 2015.
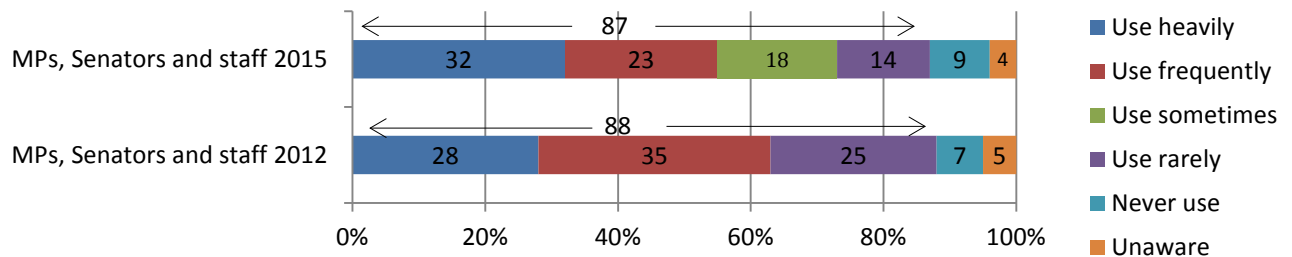
Figure 21: Use of news and media services

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=118

Mapping services

The number of Senators, Members and their staff in 2015 who reported being *unaware* of mapping services is slightly higher than in 2012 and is the highest unaware rating of all services. Usage has fallen slightly from 62 per cent in 2012 to 56 per cent in 2015.

Figure 22: Use of mapping services

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=118

Library publications (including Bills Digest)

Use of Library publications (including Bills Digest) has not changed from 2012 (91%) to 2015 (89%).
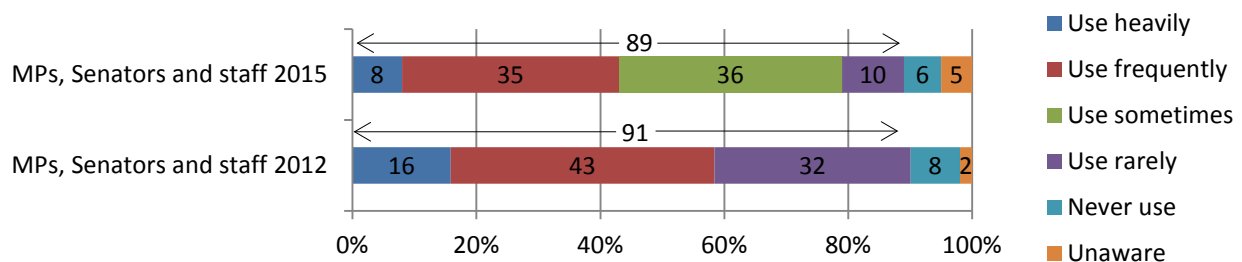
Figure 23: Use of Library publications (including Bills Digest) services

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=118

Other online resources

Use of online resources has increased with 66 per cent claiming to use these sometimes, frequently or heavily in 2015 compared with 53 per cent in 2012. This is mainly seen in a move from 'rarely use' to 'sometimes use'. If 'rarely use' is added, use has remained constant with 86 per cent claiming to use these services in 2015 and 87 per cent in 2012.
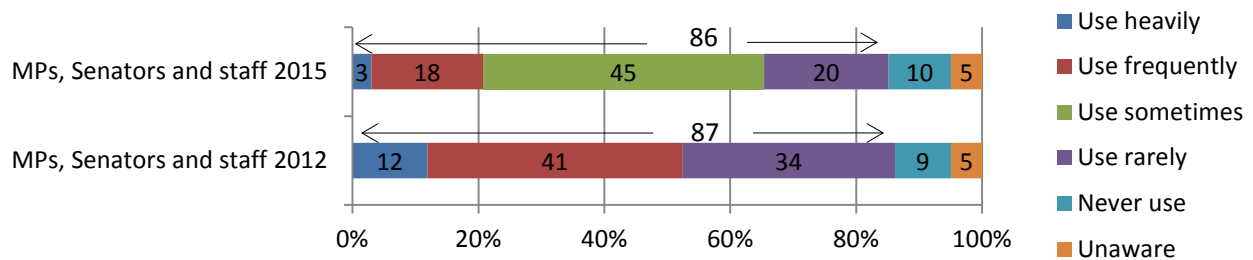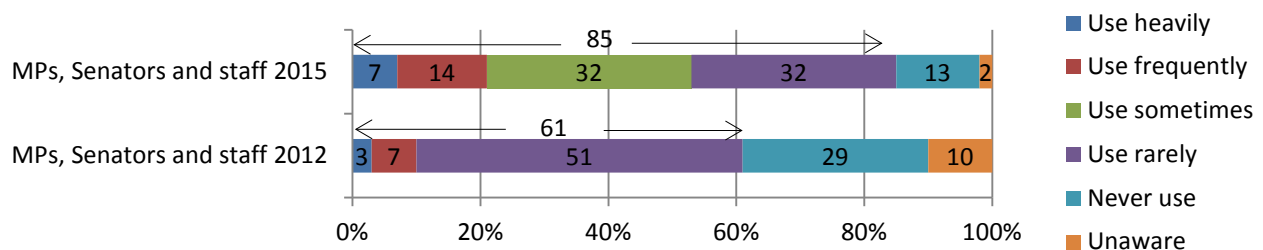

Figure 24: Use of online resources

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=118

Print collection

Use of the Library's print collection has increased significantly from 61 per cent in 2012 to 85 per cent in 2015. There was no indication in the qualitative research or from the survey of a reason for this significant increase.

Figure 25: Use of Library print collection

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=118

A number of reasons were offered for why particular services were not used with most citing 'unaware of the service' or 'not having the time to use the service'. Other reasons offered included having no need for the service and not knowing how to use the service. This indicates that there is still ongoing need to try to address knowledge gaps with a sizeable segment of clients.

Parliamentary department staff

The pattern of Library use among Parliamentary department staff in sitting and non-sitting weeks is different from that of Senators, Members and their staff and as can be seen in <u>Figure 26</u> below, is more consistent between sitting and non-sitting weeks.

There is no statically significant difference between those who work with committees and those who do not.
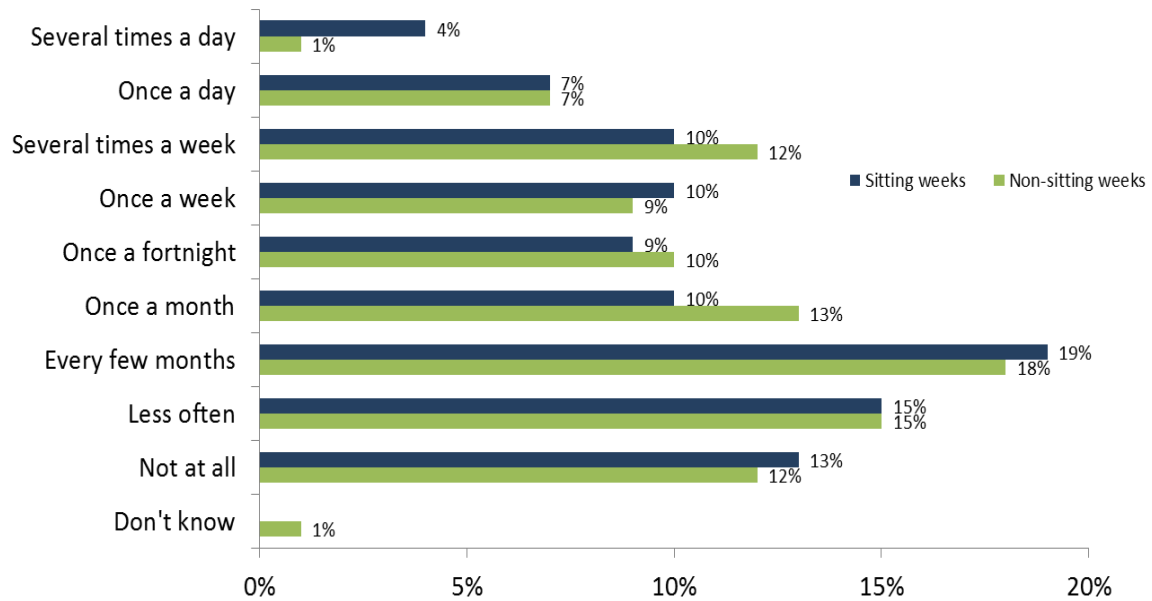
Figure 26: Reported usage by Parliamentary department respondents in sitting and non-sitting weeks

Q6: Which of the following best describes how often you use the Parliamentary Library during sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks?
Parliamentary department respondents n=67

Change in work patterns and Library use

Parliamentary department respondents reported a similar rate of change (54%) as did Senators, Members and their staff (52%). Figure 27 below graphs Parliamentary department responses.
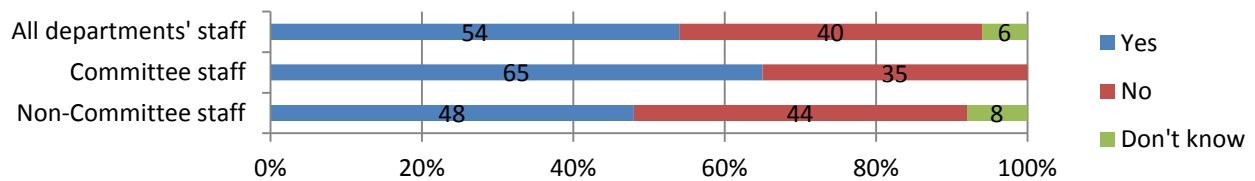
Figure 27: Reports of change in work practices of the last three years

Q7: Have your work practices changed over the past three years?
Parliamentary department respondents who had worked in PH more than 3 years, n=50

Almost two-thirds of Parliamentary department respondents, however, reported no change in their use of the Library. These comparisons are graphed in Figure 28 below.
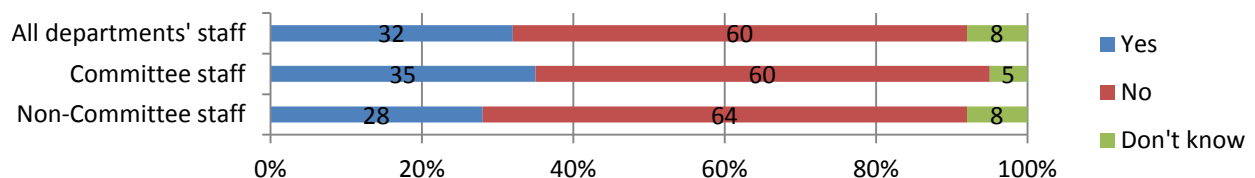
Figure 28: Reported change in use of the Library over the last three years

Q7: Have your work practices changed over the past three years?
Parliamentary department respondents (worked in PH more than 3 years)—n=50

Use of different Library services

Usage by Parliamentary department respondents is lower against all services except the Library's collections where usage is the same as for Senators, Members and staff in 2015. This can be seen in Figure 29 below.

The only significant difference between those who work with committees and those who do not was that committee staff were significantly more likely to indicate they use the Library news and media services sometimes.
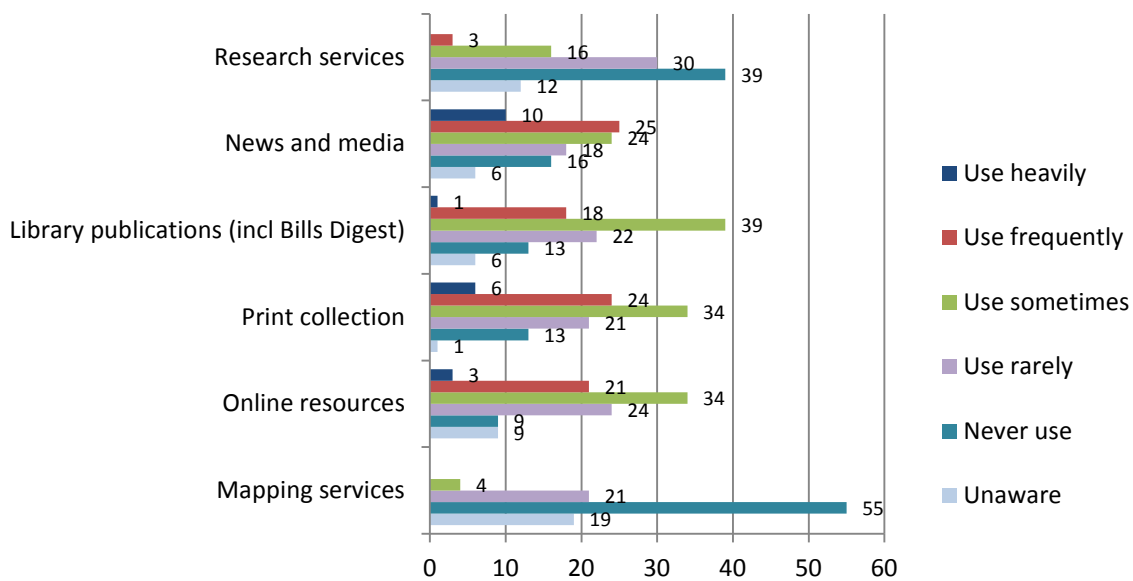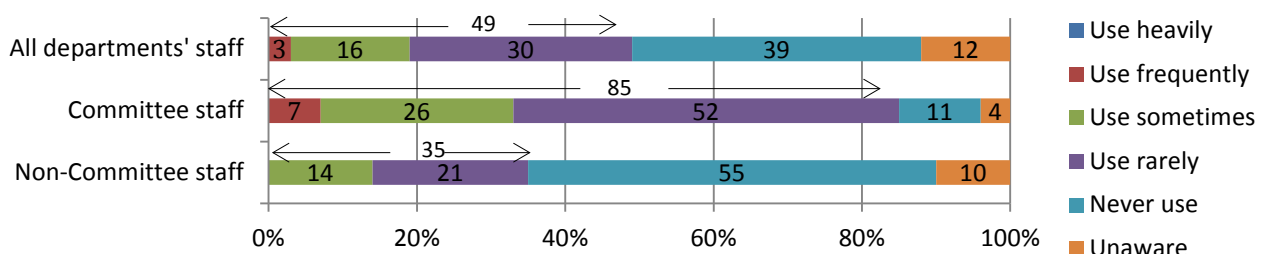

Figure 29: Frequency of use of specific Library services by Parliamentary department respondents

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Research services

Parliamentary department respondents reported a lower level of use than Senators, Members and staff with just 19 per cent reporting using the services sometimes, frequently or heavily and 69 per cent reporting they use it rarely or never. If you factor in 'rarely' however, 49% of staff use the services and 85% of committee staff. Staff who worked with committees were had a significantly higher usage rate of the research services.

Figure 30: Use of research services

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

103/11 Trevillian Quay, Kingston ACT 2604
T +61 2 6231 0350   M +61 410 866 642   E enquiry@uncommonknowledge.net.au
www.uncommonknowledge.net.au

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News and media services

News and media is used 'sometimes, frequently and heavy' by 59 per cent of Parliamentary department respondents. If 'use rarely' is factored in, news and media is used by 77 per cent of Parliamentary department respondents. Staff who work with committees have higher rate of use 'sometimes', while non-committee staff have a higher heavy use of the service.
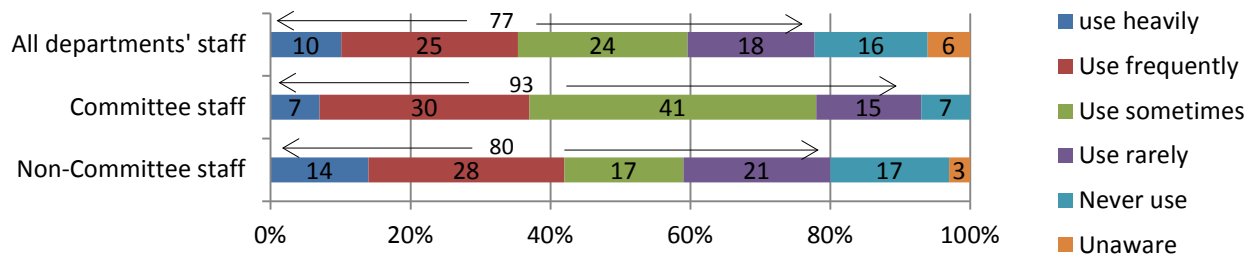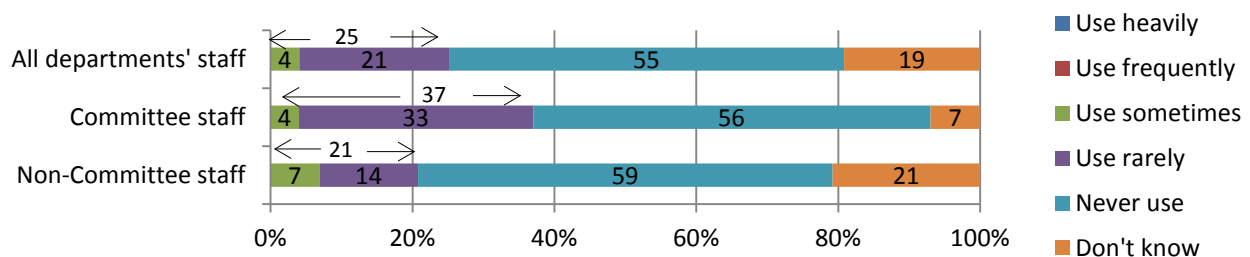

Figure 31: Use of news and media services

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Mapping services

Only 25 per cent of Parliamentary department respondents reported that they had ever used mapping services and more than half (55%) said they had never used them. Almost one fifth of respondents were unaware of the service. This is the highest unaware score of any Library service. Staff who worked with committees had a higher level of 'rarely use' of the mapping service.

Figure 32: Use of mapping services

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Library publications (including Bills Digest)

Use of Library publications (including Bills Digest) is at 80 per cent. The usage rate was very similar between staff working with committees and those who did not, with the exception that committee staff had a higher level of 'use rarely'.
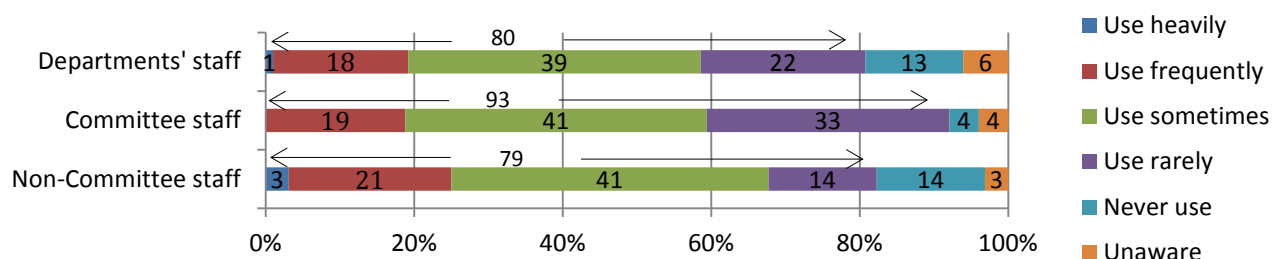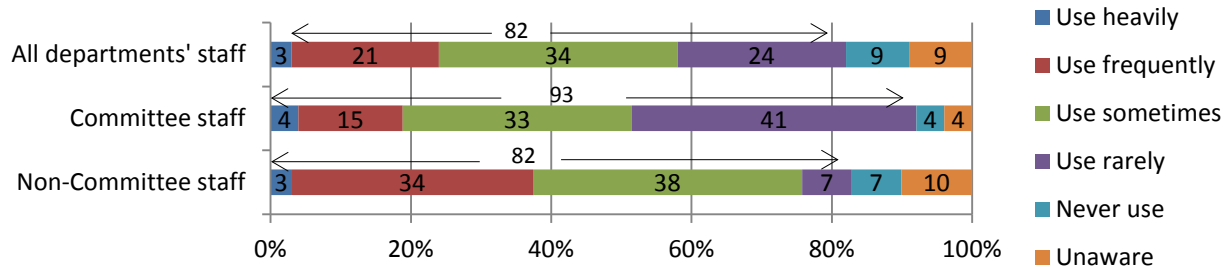

Figure 33: Use of Library publications (including Bills Digest) services

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Other online resources

More than half (58%) Parliamentary department respondents reported using online services sometimes, frequently or heavily. If 'rarely use' is included, 82 per cent of Parliamentary department respondents use the online resources.
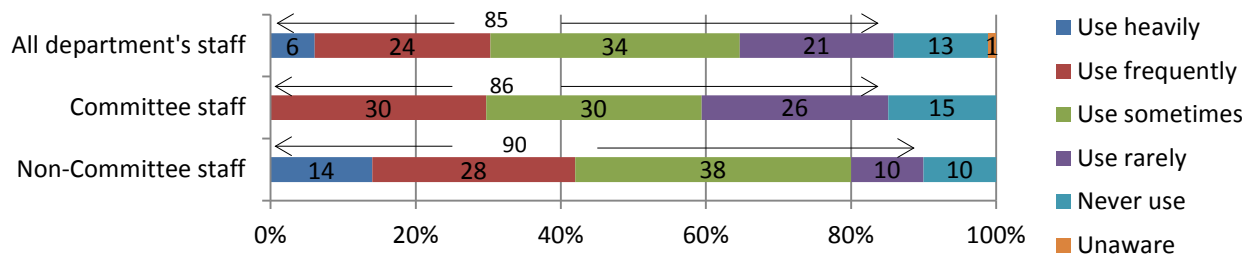

Figure 34: Use of online resources

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Print collection

Use by Parliamentary department respondents is 85 per cent making it the most often used service for Parliamentary department respondents.

Figure 35: Use of Library print collection

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

A number of reasons were offered for why particular services were not used with most citing having no need for the service, not knowing how to use the service, or being unaware of the service. This indicates that there is still ongoing need to try to address knowledge gaps.

6. Information sources and preferences

Senators, Members and their staff

During preliminary discussions around the survey design, there was some debate among Library researchers as to whether clients generally preferred shorter responses (for example, a two-page summary) or longer, more detailed responses. This question was raised during the qualitative interviews and asked in the survey.

The most common response from Senators, Members and their staff, and Parliamentary department respondents, was that it depended on what they were looking for. If it was appropriate, 32 per cent of Senators, Members and their staff would prefer a shorter document BUT it was clear that a shorter document should <u>not</u> be a list of links—they were still most likely to be looking for a piece of analysis. This was raised repeatedly. <u>Figure 36</u> below charts responses from Member, Senators and their staff.
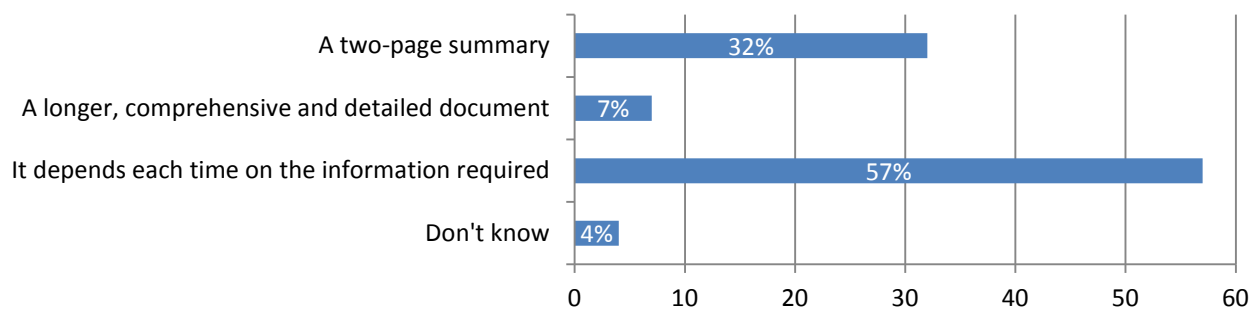
Figure 36: Preferred length of response

Q14: In most instances when you are seeking information from the Parliamentary Library research services on a topic or Bill, which of the following is most useful to you?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148

Where else do people go for information?
As in 2012, the research looked at the different sources of information that clients used.

Google continues to be the most used source of information although it scored significantly lower against 'use heavily' (53%) than it did in 2012 (65%). This was followed in both years by online news services, scoring 43 per cent against 'use heavily' in 2015 and 55 per cent in 2012, again a significant drop.

When 'use heavily' and 'use frequently' are added together, the order remains much the same although in 2015 constituents/community scored higher than social media and similar to Ministerial/Party resources. In 2015 Google scored 81 per cent and online news services 76 per cent. Comparable ratings were much higher in 2012 with Google scoring 91 per cent and online news services 93 per cent.

There was no significant change between 2012 and 2015 in the use of social media as an information source, and use by Parliamentary department respondents was comparable.

Government websites were used heavily with a quarter of Senators, Members and their staff reporting heavy usage.

Ministerial and party resources were considered for the first time in 2015 where it was found that 93 per cent of Senators, Members and their staff used them as a source and 19 per cent reported heavy usage.

Constituents and community groups were also considered for the first time in 2015 where they were found to be used by 94 per cent of Senators, Members and their staff.

The 2015 data for lobby groups and think tanks cannot be directly compared with that of 2012 because in that year the two were combined and considered as one source. In 2015, 85 per cent of Senators, Members and their staff reported using think tanks and 83 per cent indicated they used lobby groups.

Senators, Members and their staff were slightly less likely to use external experts in 2015 (87%) than in 2012 (92%).
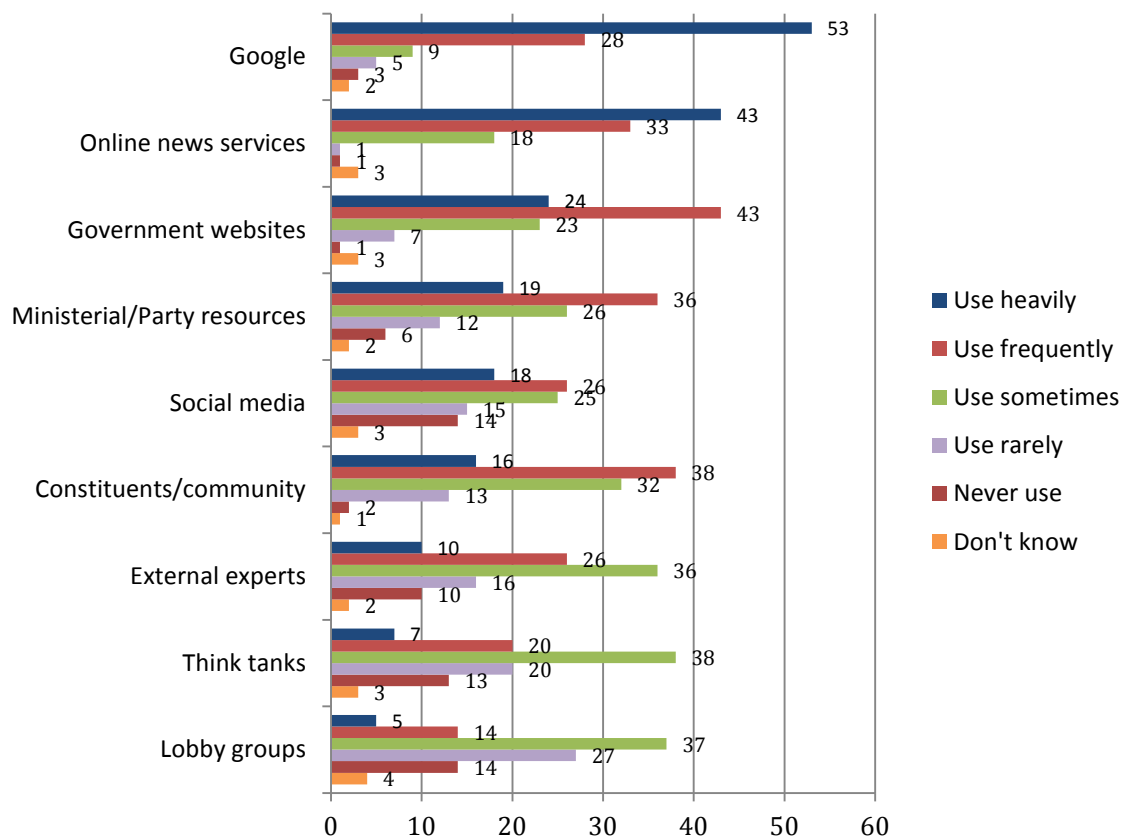
Figure 37: Use of other information sources

Q15: How often do you use the following information sources?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148

Respondents indicated that in addition to the sources referred in Figure 37, they used the following sources:

- Colleagues
- "I frequently access additional academic databases"
- "Alternative libraries, generally for information from international sources when deeper information or alternative perspectives are required"

How much trust do people have in various information sources?

Library services are the most trusted source of information for Senators, Members and their staff. These are charted in Figure 38 below. This is consistent with 2012.

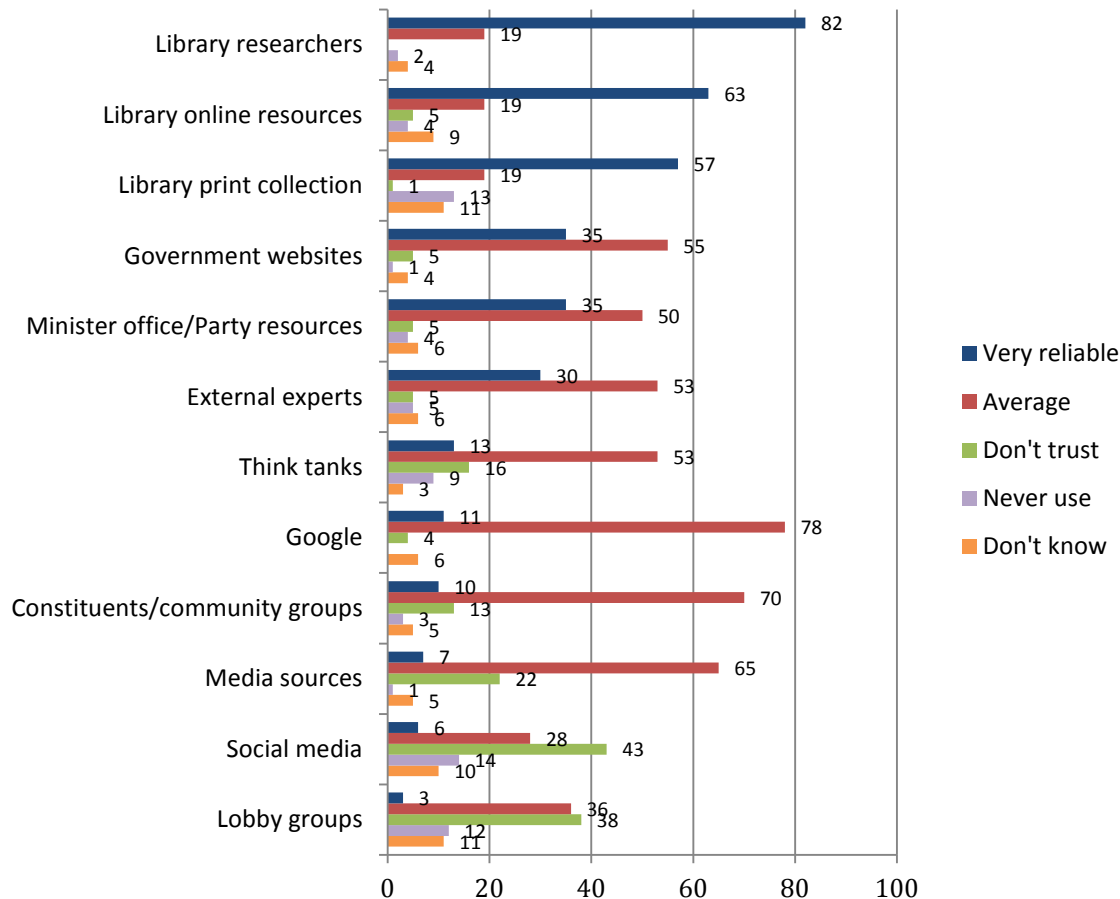Figure 23:

Figure38: Trust in other information sources by Senators, Members and their staff

Q17: Please rank the following sources in terms of your overall level of trust in the information source?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148

Research services

There is particularly a high level of trust in the Library's research services which has remained stable since 2012.
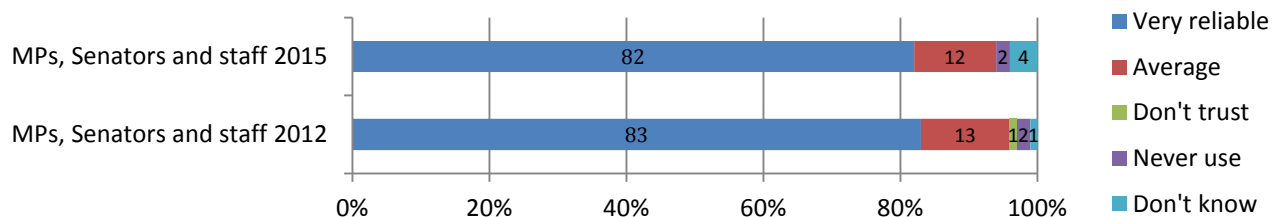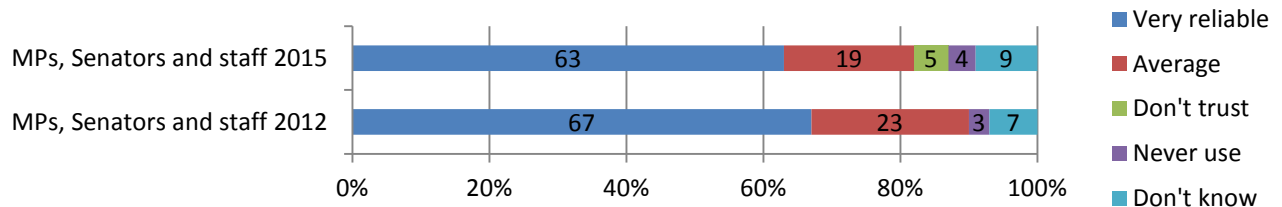

Figure 39: Level of trust in Library research services as a source of information

Q17: Please rank the following sources in terms of your overall level of trust in the information source?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=106

Online resources

The Library's online resources also have a high level of trust, although slightly less that the research services (which is mostly due to a higher level of non-use of the service or not knowing their level of trust). Five per cent of Members and Senators indicated a lack of trust.
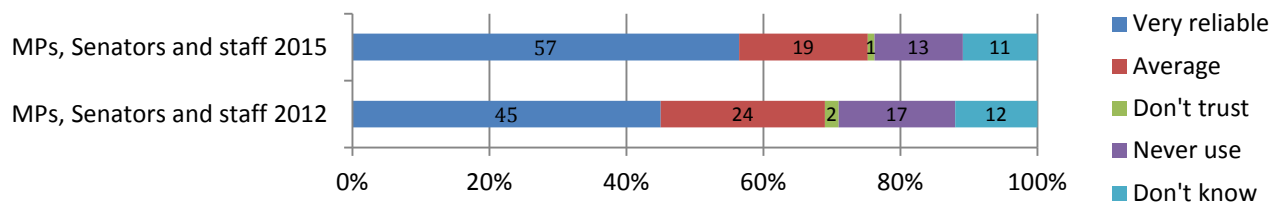

Figure 40: Level of trust in Library online resources as a source of information

Q17: Please rank the following sources in terms of your overall level of trust in the information source?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=106

Print collection

There were also high levels of trust for the Library's print collection among those who have used it and who felt they could give a rating.


Figure 41: Level of trust in Library print collections as a source of information

Q17: Please rank the following sources in terms of your overall level of trust in the information source?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; 2012—n=106

Where do people begin to search?

Three quarters of Senators, Members and their staff use Google as one of their first information sources. This is followed by news services (45%) and Government websites (44%) and then Library research (36%) and Ministers and Party resources (34%). Figure 42 below list the information sources that Senators, Members and their staff were most likely to turn to first when searching for information.
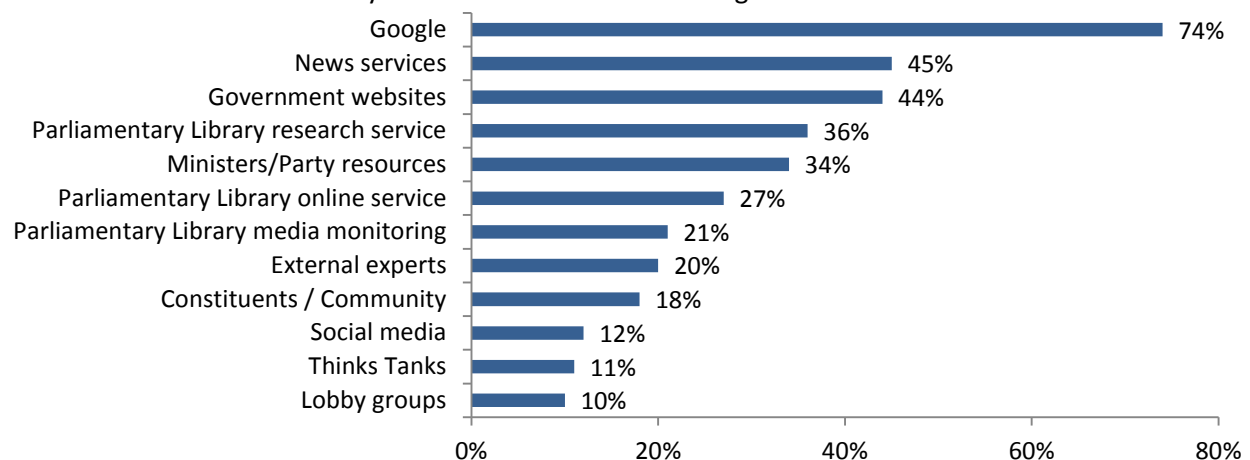
**Figure 42: Where do people start when looking for information?**

Q16: When needing to research a new topic, which sources would you usually begin with? (Multiple response)
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148

Parliamentary department staff

During preliminary discussions around the survey design, there was some debate among Library researchers as to whether clients tended to prefer shorter responses (for example, a two-page summary) or longer, more detailed responses. This question was raised during the qualitative interviews and asked in the survey.

The most common response from Parliamentary departments was that it depended on what they were looking for or that they didn't know. Figure 43 below charts responses from Parliamentary department staff. Staff working with committees in particular were more likely to indicate that it depended each time whether a two page summary or a longer, comprehensive and detailed document would be most useful.
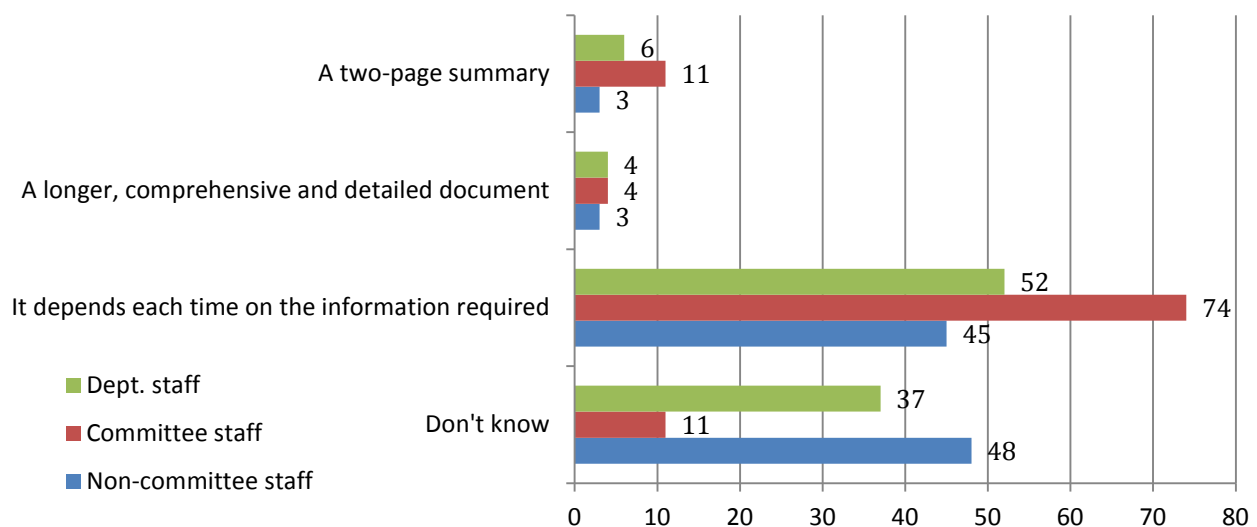

Figure 43: Preferred length of response

Q14: In most instances when you are seeking information from the Parliamentary Library research services on a topic or Bill, which of the following is most useful to you?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Where else do people go for information?
The research looked at the different sources of information that Parliamentary department respondents used.

As with Senators, Ministers and their staff, Parliamentary department respondents rated Google as the most used source of information at 58 per cent. Online news services were a distant second at 33 per cent. This was followed in both years by online news services, scoring 43 per cent against 'use heavily' in 2015 and 55 per cent in 2012, again a significant drop.
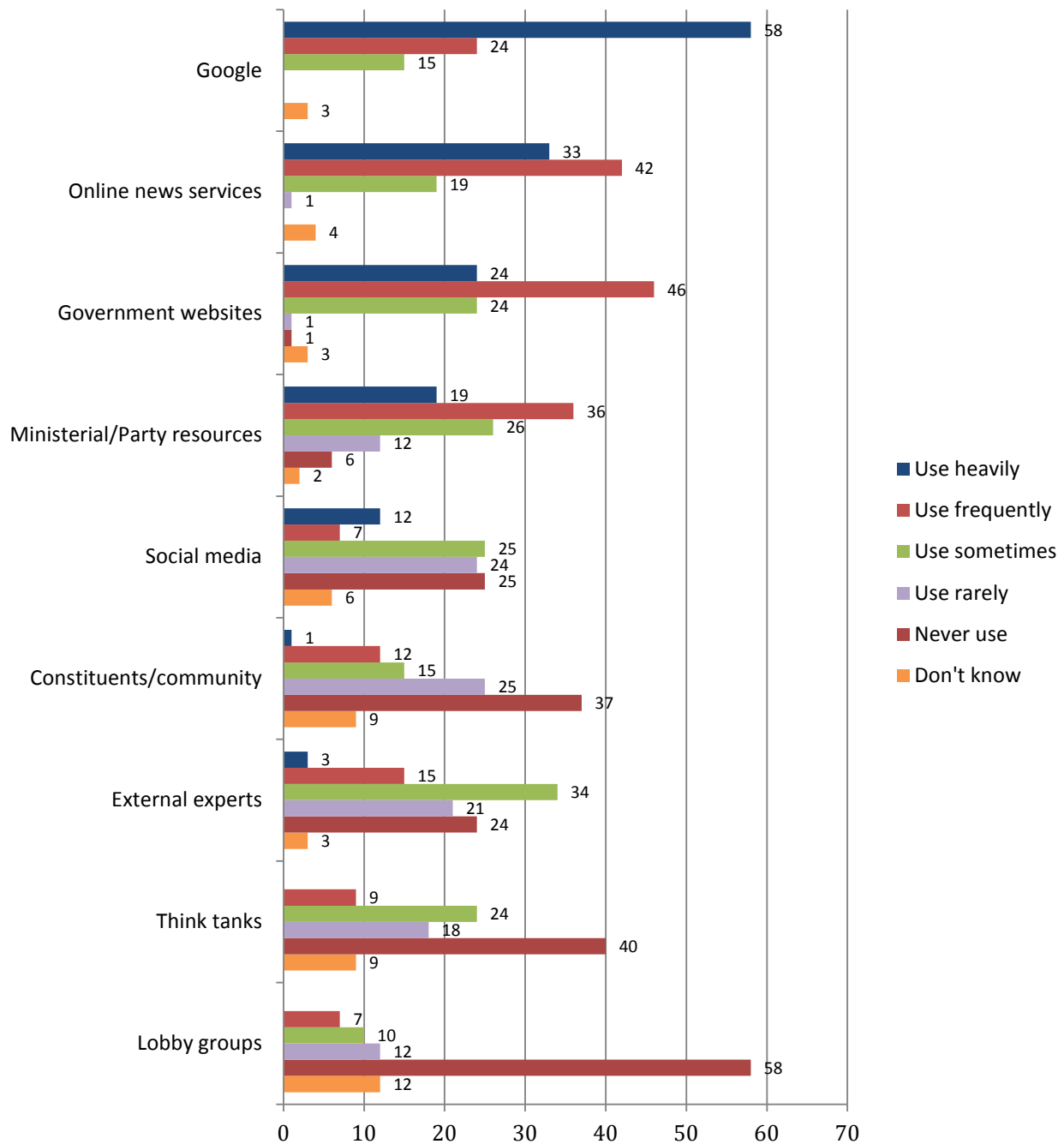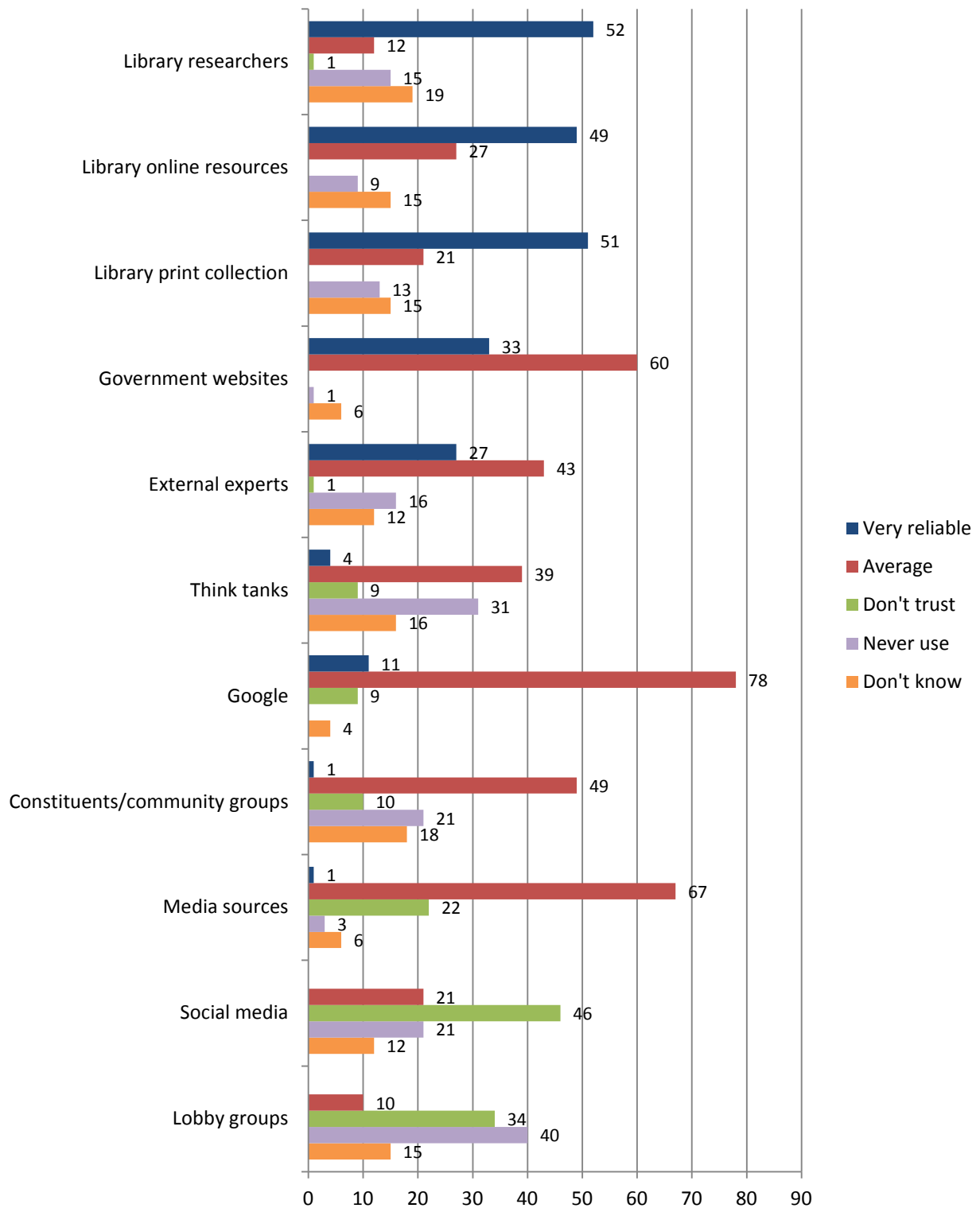
Figure 44: Use of other information sources

Q15: How often do you use the following information sources?
Parliamentary department staff—n=148

How much trust do people have in various information sources?

Parliamentary department respondents tended to have a lower level of trust in Library services than Senators, Members and their staff, but still rated Library services as more reliable than any other source of information. This is shown in Figure 45 below. Figures 46, 47 and 48 show the levels of trust in Library services for each group.
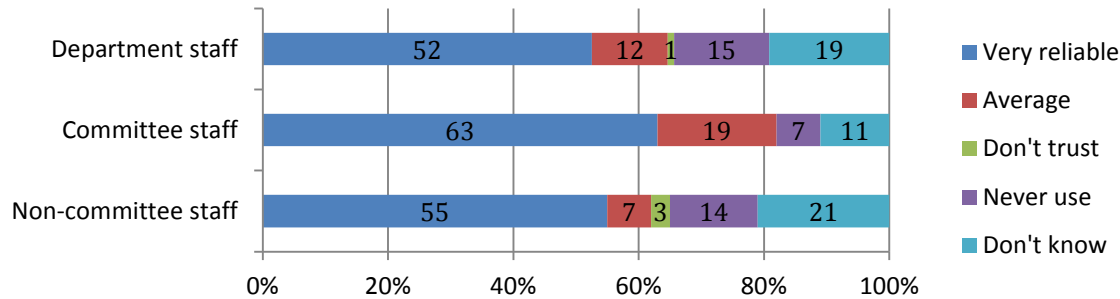
Figure 23: Figure 45: Trust in other information sources

Q17: Please rank the following sources in terms of your overall level of trust in the information source?
Parliamentary department staff—n=67

Research services

The level of trust in the Library's research services is high and consistent when you take away those who have never used the service or who felt they could not give a rating.
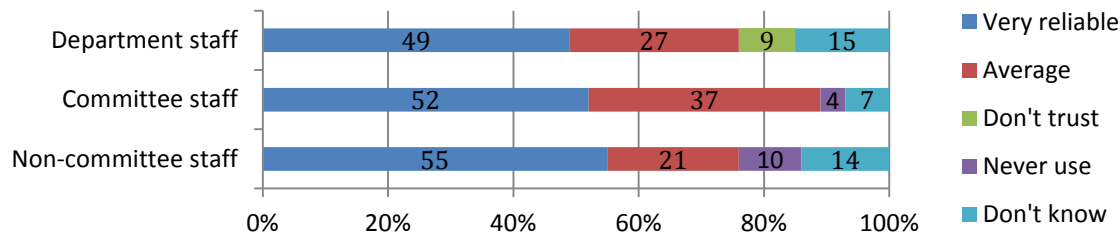

Figure 46: Level of trust in Library research services as a source of information

Q17: Please rank the following sources in terms of your overall level of trust in the information source?
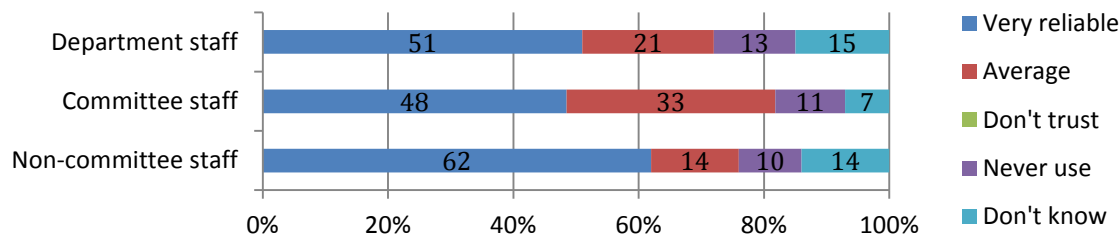Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Online resources

There was a lower level of trust for the online resources with a greater proportion indicating average trust in this information sources. This was consistent for both staff who worked with committees and those who did not.

Figure 47: Level of trust in Library online resources as a source of information

Q17: Please rank the following sources in terms of your overall level of trust in the information source?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Print collection

Figure 48: Level of trust in Library print collection as a source of information

Q17: Please rank the following sources in terms of your overall level of trust in the information source?
Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Where do people begin to search?

Four fifths of Parliamentary department respondents use Google as one of their first information sources. This is followed by Government websites (60%), Parliamentary online services (45%) and news services (36%). Figure 49 below list the information sources that Parliamentary department respondents were most likely to turn to first when searching for information.
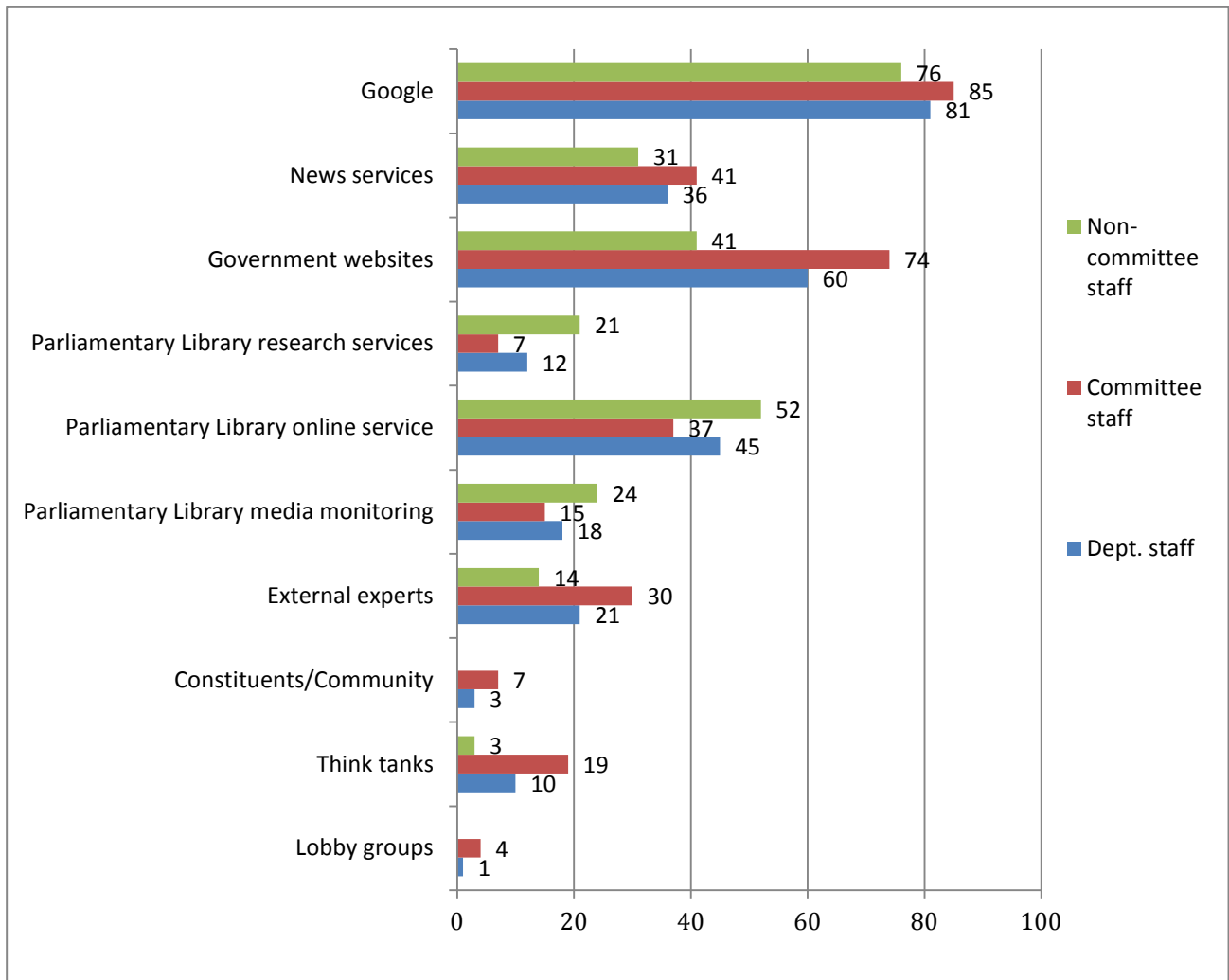

Figure 49: Where do people start when looking for information?

Q16: When needing to research a new topic, which sources would you usually begin with? (Multiple response)
Parliamentary department staff—n=148

7. Communication and access

In 2015 the eNewsletter—*What's New*—is clearly the preferred source of information about Library services with around two thirds of Senators, Members and their staff as well as Parliamentary department staff reporting it as their source. One third or fewer reported staff and colleagues as their source of information about the Library. Qualitative research however suggests that while most people are aware of *What's New*, they do not always read it or only skim the first few lines. *What's New* would probably gain the best readership in a busy environment if was produced often but kept brief with contents and links to information quickly identifiable.
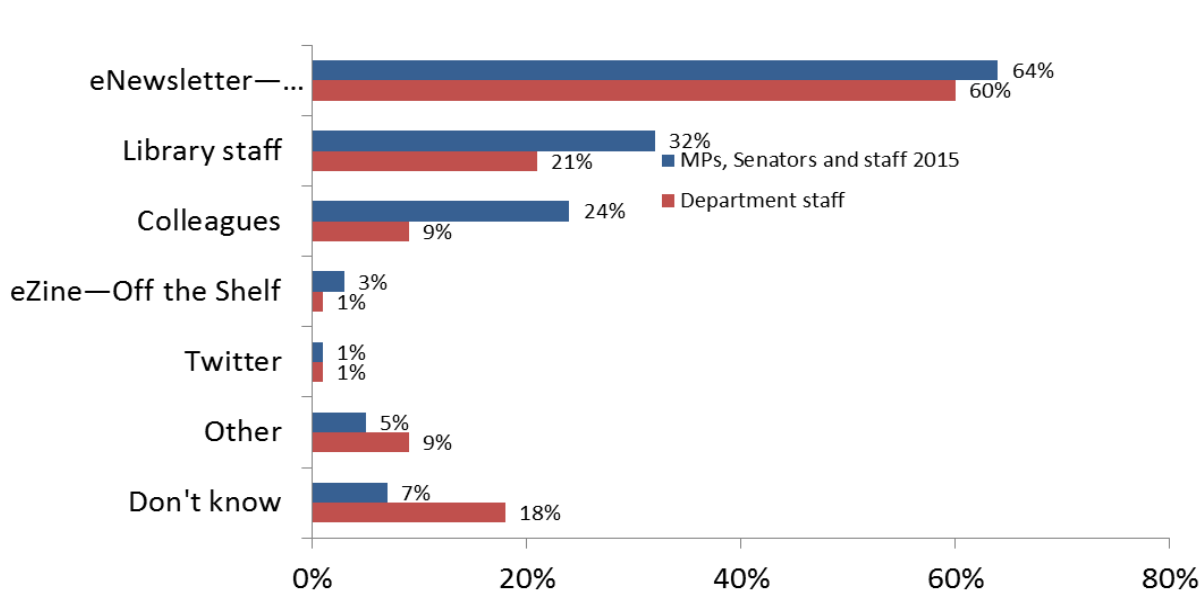

**Figure 50: Where do people start when looking for information?**

Q18c: How do you mainly find out about the Parliamentary Library's publications and services? (Multiple responses)
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Other places that respondents claimed to find out about Library services included:

- search the catalogue and online resources
- Senator and Members Portal
- website
- intranet
- catalogue
- courses
- orientations.

Mobile services

Use of mobile services among Senators, Members and their staff has not increased significantly since 2012 and in fact has dropped slightly. Parliamentary department respondents are much more likely to indicate it is not important to them in their work. Figure 51 below charts this. Some suggestions were made that staff would find remote connectivity more useful that access via mobile services: *"The laptop is where the serious work is done when you're not in the office"*.
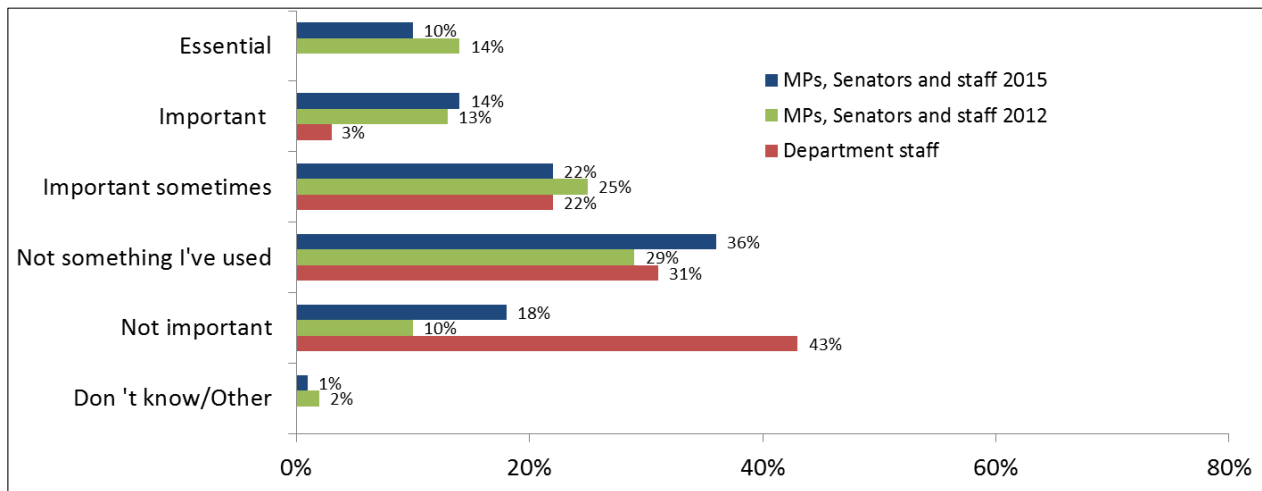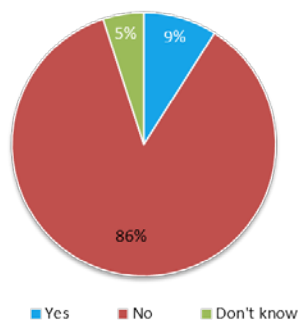
Figure 51: Accessing the Library's services through mobile devices

Q18: How important is it to you to access Parliamentary Library services using mobile devices?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

Twitter

Twitter is not yet a significant communication channel for the Library although those who do use it generally report it being quite useful. NB: Numbers rather than percentages have been used because of the small sample size.

	MPs, Senators and staff	Parliamentary department respondents
Extremely useful	-	-
Very useful	3	1
Quite useful	6	3
Only slightly useful	1	1
Not at all useful	-	-
Don't know	28	-
TOTAL	38	5

Figure 52: Use and usefulness of the Parliamentary Library's Twitter feed

Q18d, 18e: Do you follow the Parliamentary Library on Twitter? How useful is it?
Senators, Members and their staff 2015—n=148; Parliamentary department respondents—n=67

8. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

The Library is highly valued by Senators, Members and their staff, receiving high ratings against satisfaction and willingness to recommend. Although to a lesser extent, it also received a solid satisfaction rating from Parliamentary department staff. Satisfaction among Committee staff was 78 per cent (n=27) and among non-Committee staff was 86 per cent (n=29). The overall satisfaction level of department's staff was brought down by the Parliamentary Budget Office respondents (n=9) and one 'other'. With such small numbers it is not possible to draw firm conclusions.

Maintaining these levels of satisfaction within an environment of changing information needs and budget cuts is significant and evidence of the effort the Library has put into meeting the needs of its clients and minimising any negative impacts.

Having had high satisfaction scores for many years, the Library has what is referred to as 'resilient trust'. This is where an organization has a reasonably stable level of trust built up over a period of time and satisfaction reflects this rather than any recent experience. Care should be taken to maintain this resilient trust as once eroded it can be difficult to rebuild.

Behind this high level of satisfaction there are indications that the impacts of the budget cuts have been felt by all client groups.

The most significant issue raised in the research was a concern expressed by both cohorts of the variability in quality of research services. The issue was raised repeatedly in the qualitative research as well as in the free textboxes in the survey. While the level of concern cannot be quantified, there is no doubt that it is significant and has the capacity to affect resilient trust.

Senators, Members and their staff spoke about research services varying from 'excellent' through to 'poor' and were particularly scathing of responses being provided as a list of links rather than analysis. In most cases this was put down to staff being stretched and time-poor but not in all. There were also strong suggestions made in the qualitative and quantitative research that poor responses could be attributed to individuals. During interviews, Senators, Members and their staff were often concerned by threats to the Library's staffing and other resources. A lack of resources was usually offered as an excuse for any poor research reports.

Parliamentary department respondents raised the same issue in the focus group and in the free boxes in the survey, noting again that while most responses were excellent, some were very poor. They too believed that this could be improved with additional Library resources.

There were two other issues of concern to Parliamentary department's staff, the most common being the timeliness of the Bills Digests. When a Bills Digest is issued in time for Committee discussions it is considered very valuable; when it arrives too late to be included in discussions its value is greatly reduced. It was suggested in the focus group that even a very short but timely Bills Digest would be preferable to one that was too late.

The other issue for Parliamentary department staff is their impression they had that Library staff do not see their work as important as that of Senators, Members and their staff, even when they were doing work on behalf of a committee. They called for greater transparency in the way requests were assigned and prioritised.

The research indicates that the Library is used regularly by most people, although not all. Those who don't use it generally believe they have no reason to use it. Many however don't use the Library to the extent they could because they don't know of the services or how to use them. These people acknowledge that this is despite the Library trying to tell them and help them. Many comments were made throughout the research that now they knew about all these services, they'd be using the Library more.

With a fast-changing workforce within Parliament House and electorate offices, the need to remind people of the services available to them is constant. The contact officer program for new Senators and Members seems to be quickly forgotten as the pressures of the job build. *What's New* is well-known but not necessarily well-read because people are too pushed for time. It is important to catch the attention of readers quickly with the contents up front and linked to further information. It's also important not to rely on *What's New*. All Library clients would appreciate being offered 'refresher' orientation courses or office visits where the whole office could be involved in learning how to use the Library to best meet their needs. There were a few requests also for orientations to be held in capital cities so electorate staff had a better chance of being able to attend.

All Library functions are being used. The research service is seen as the key service and its value-add would be difficult if not impossible to obtain from anywhere else. The news and media service is also used extensively and valued, although many Senators, Members and their staff did not make the connection between it and the Library. The mapping service is the least used AND the least known about but the researchers understand there are plans to change this service and it hasn't been promoted recently.

The issue of balance and impartiality is vexed. Comments were made suggesting researchers should be more partisan ("I'm clearly from a particularly side of politics and I don't want lots of information supporting the other side. I want to know what's out there that supports my view") and others complaining that language was sometimes too partisan and emotive to give to Committees.

Other
Online services such as Parlinfo were often believed to be the responsibility of the Library and numerous comments were made by Parliamentary department staff that they were difficult to use and 'clunky'. While this did not appear to be an area of dissatisfaction in itself, it was an irritation. Parliamentary department respondents also expressed dissatisfaction with the website. It is possible that these issues contributed to this cohort's lower level of satisfaction.

It is worth flagging that some comments were received from Senators, Ministers and their staff about improving remote access to online services—"the serious work is outside normal hours or on the road is done on the laptop, not iPad". It is understood this is not within the Library's area of responsibility.

Recommendations

1. <u>Address the quality control issues in research services</u>. It is understood that the Library has received additional funding to allow it to address capacity gaps and that research services will be targetted. In the meantime it is recommended that a training and quality assurance system be put in place to help identify any staff who might be unaware of the level of analysis expected. A list of links should **not** be provided to a client unless specifically asked for.

   As this is a critical issue, it would be worth considering a feedback system either at the time of responding to the request or as a 'health check' a month or so later.

2. Important to maintain the Library as an <u>employer of choice for highly qualified researchers</u>. It is recommended the options be explored including exchanges with other research Libraries, secondments, or specialized training in certain topic areas.

3. Introduce a research <u>request tracking system</u> to improve perceptions of a lack of transparency and so clients feel secure knowing where their request is in the system. This system could indicate the type of request (2 page summary or a longer, comprehensive document), to whom it has been referred, and what the agreed requirements are). This could be a high-tech solution which allows tracking (i.e. so you know when your request is being looked at) or something as simple as an email confirming what was requested and to whom the request has been referred.

4. All <u>Library staff should be made aware</u> that Parliamentary department staff working for committees are entitled to the same level of service as Senators' and Members' staff.

5. Continue to <u>develop new technologies and channels</u> and to run activities that reinforce the knowledge and proactive nature of the Library, but not at the expense of research services. While channels such as Twitter are still under-utilised, it will probably grow and efforts to be ahead of the game with new technology are appreciated by all clients.

6. Use *What's New* <u>strategically</u>: it is well-known but not necessarily well-read. Keep it short, perhaps with dot points on content and links up front so those who only skim at least know what is in it and easily go to the information they want.

7. Focus on <u>orientation programs and refresher courses</u> and consider conducting some in capital cities to make it easier for electorate staff to attend.

8. Consider <u>office visits</u> where the Member or Senator and their staff can learn together about how the office can use the Library more effectively. These visits could be grouped according to low, medium and high users and there may be some learnings around why offices fall into the different categories and action taken to move low users to medium users, and high users to more self-service if appropriate.

9. Provide a <u>short summary of the research findings to all participants</u> to (a) acknowledge the assistance they gave by responding, and (b) to take advantage of the opportunity to promote the breadth of the Library's services.