



Unique communication
solutions from real insights

Australian Parliamentary Library **Client service evaluation 2021**

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June 2021 (grammatical corrections updated at September 2021)



Parliament of Australia

Department of Parliamentary Services

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1. Executive summary

The 2021 Parliamentary Library client service evaluation followed similar methodology to previous years and as far as possible and wherever appropriate, used the same questions so that direct comparisons could be made.

The research comprised in-depth interviews and two focus groups, followed by a quantitative survey. Face-to-face interviews were held with:

- 48 senators, members and their staff, and
- two focus groups comprising 16 parliamentary committee staff.

The research followed a difficult 18 months with the 2019–20 bushfires and then the 2020–21 pandemic. There was some concern about the appetite of senators, members and staff to be involved in this wave of research, and the decision was made to send fewer requests and reminders to participate. Although this meant numbers were fewer than in previous years, the sample sizes were satisfactory with the survey completed by 126 senators, members and their staff, and 22 committee staff. Details of respondents are provided in chapter 2.

Overall satisfaction and performance

Overall, the Library is performing very well and is highly valued, receiving high ratings in satisfaction and willingness to recommend. With all its services found to be well used, it is providing the services people need and want through a variety of channels and to a high quality. However, it is important to appreciate the research indicates that demand for key services is increasing along with continued requirements and pressures for faster timeframes and some areas for continuous improvement.

Satisfaction among senators, members and their staff remains high (94%) and is consistent with previous years. Most importantly, the significant increase in the proportion of those who were extremely satisfied in 2017 was maintained and 100% would recommend the Library to a colleague. Responsiveness, professionalism and high-quality research were all cited as reasons for satisfaction.

Satisfaction among committee staff is higher than in 2017 at 91% (+9%) but the sample size (n=22) was too small for accurate significance testing. This increase follows a 4% increase in 2017. There has also been a noticeable improvement in comments from committee staff and 95% would recommend the Library to a colleague, reflecting the efforts made by the Library to improve services to this group.

The Library continued to score well against all performance measures for responding to requests. Among senators, members and their staff, confidentiality significantly increased by 10 percentage points to 94%. For quality, accuracy, timeliness and confidentiality, there were significant increases in the number of respondents who indicated *all the time*. Corresponding measures from committee staff were also positive with all measures either remaining stable or increasing, although the sample size was too small for accurate significance testing. For all respondents, there was a slightly lower rating (although not statistically significant) against the measure for keeping them informed on the progress of a response.

Ratings of Library staff remained stable across all measures with a significant increase among those senators, members and their staff who indicated they *strongly agreed* that staff ‘go the extra mile’. Ratings were highest for providing services professionally (97%) and lowest for ‘inform me about services’ (81%).

While the committee staff sample size was too small for significance testing, their ratings of Library staff were also positive with a 15-percentage point increase from 2017 in those saying the Library understood their needs. Committee staff were harsher with ‘go the extra mile’ scoring well below the other qualities at 64%, and also scoring a 5% (n=1) *strongly disagree*.

COVID-19 appears to have had little impact on perceived quality of services. The qualitative research indicated that most people continued to use the Library via email or phone during the pandemic period and found it as responsive and professional as always.

Online services

There was an increase in the use of online services in 2021. Use by parliamentarians and their staff increased significantly (+13%) to 84% and use by committee staff increased by (+9%) to 82%. However, digital and online services were raised as areas of concern this year with respondents pointing to technical issues such as long download times and poor search functionality, design issues affecting respondents’ ability to use services intuitively, and the need for training and online assistance to help them make the most from these services. It is likely that this increase in use and wider experiences and expectations with online services in general has led to the increased concern with these services. Many respondents spoke about their increased demand for Library services and ever-shortening timeframes and flagged their belief that this would only continue. This is likely to put more pressure on online services. While technical and design issues were acknowledged as common to the IT infrastructure within Parliament House and likely outside the remit of the Library, along with having resource and financial implications, it is recommended the Library address the need for training and assistance with these products (e.g. training modules and ‘tip sheets’).

Assistance with the consideration of legislation

The timeliness of Bills Digests was again raised as a concern, although there was a resignation that they will often be too late to be as useful as they could be in the environment that exists. It was recognised that the timeliness of Bills Digests will always be impacted by the time available, the amount of work involved and the need for careful research and checking. Because of these difficulties there was support among respondents for it to be released iteratively to better meet users’ needs. Respondents were asked about other initiatives the Library could undertake to help in the consideration of legislation and they were found to be popular. The top three among senators, members and staff were an early draft or short version (42%), a compilation of key media articles (41%), and an analysis of significant Bill amendments (39%). For parliamentary committee staff the top three were an early draft or short version (41%), an analysis of significant Bill amendments (41%), and being able to register interest in a particular Bill (36%). Another specifically mentioned was summarising stakeholder views on legislation early in the process and making that available before the Bill Digest is completed. The qualitative research and comments in the survey stressed that these options should be in addition to Bills Digests because the quality of the analysis in Bills Digests was what made them highly valued either at the time or as a future reference.

Relationship with committee staff

The 2017 research wave continued to uncover some dissatisfaction among committee staff who believed that the Library didn’t understand how committees worked or how their information needs differed from those of parliamentarians and their staff. At that time, committee staff acknowledged that there had been an improvement (satisfaction rose +4%) but that there were still misunderstandings. The Library continued to target improved relations with committee staff and the 2021 results showed a strong improvement again in satisfaction (+9%). Other measures also improved or remained stable. Their inability to access media monitoring services remained an issue in 2021.

Research services

As in previous years, research services remain at the core of most people’s experiences of the Library — being used by 97% of parliamentarians and their staff and 91% of committee staff. They continue to be rated very highly and their value-add would be very difficult, if not impossible, to gain elsewhere.

This year there were a number of comments about using research services differently from in the past. They discussed “talking things through” with a researcher to “check” their understanding of an issue and to ask whether there were other sources they should consider. This was seen as a very valuable service.

Previous waves of research drew criticism of requests not being timely and the quality being variable. While there were still a few comments in 2021 in this regard they were much fewer, and requests being given unrealistic deadlines was often acknowledged. However, comments calling for additional research staff were stronger than in previous research and there is still room for improvement in keeping people informed of the progress of their requests and in co-ordinating responses where they require input from different teams.

Media services

Media services (media monitoring, online newspaper subscription and EMMS) were highly used and valued by parliamentarians and their staff, scoring 94%, 88% and 86% and did not attract many negative comments. Those criticisms made included technical issues or lack of knowledge of how filters are applied and can be adjusted, the difficulty getting West Australian media in a timely manner, and a desire for in-language foreign media to be considered when covering topics relevant to Australia. While not all issues can be addressed by the Library and some have significant resource and financial implications, it is recommended that consideration be given to acknowledging the issues and addressing where possible.

Outreach services and communication

Approximately two-thirds of committee staff and half of senators, members and their staff have experienced a visit or contact by the Library and/or Library lectures, seminars, roundtables or webinars. The Library’s outreach services were rated very highly with 78% of both groups indicating they were *extremely* or *very satisfied* with the services and there were no dissatisfaction scores. In addition, the ‘Power user’ fact sheet developed by the Library was very well-received when shown to people.

Many people expressed the continued need for a ‘refresher’ induction or for a one-on-one visit to discuss their library use and whether they had other information needs the Library could meet. This year there were requests for online courses covering orientation, services in general and how to use specific online services. There were also requests for written ‘tipsheets’.

Emails from the Library (including *What’s New*) remain the main channel for finding out about Library services at 71% for parliamentarians and their staff (+15% from 2017) and 73% for committee staff (+11% from 2017). While many admitted to only scanning it, around a quarter of committee staff and a third of senators, members and their staff (a significant increase from 20% in 2017) found it *very* or *extremely useful*. There is an opportunity to use it to promote services e.g., including tips on using online services.

The qualitative research and survey comments suggest a growing acknowledgement of the work the Library puts into communication and the responsibility of others to access this information. Ideas to improve communication were much in line with Library efforts to date and may just need further implementation or refinement.

What is impartial and balanced?

The Library continues to perform very strongly on ‘balance or impartiality’ and ‘confidentiality’ and there were virtually no issues raised again in 2021. For many, these aspects of the Library service were assumed and appear to be hygiene factors for the Library where their absence may lead to dissatisfaction, but their presence does not necessarily lead to satisfaction.

advice

Suggestions for improvements

Senators, members and their staff and committee staff were again asked in the client evaluation about their ideas for improving Library services. Suggestions included:

- Have simple instructions on how to search and locate speeches or different references in Hansard, and simple instructions on how to search for journal articles etc.
- More detailed library presentations/online lectures.
- A dedicated data sheet for electorates, like the Qld Statisticians office does for each state seat in Qld — providing a snapshot of industry, jobs, employment rates with comparisons to state averages.
- Make advice public where that advice is of wider public interest and can be released without identifying the client.
- More existing user learning experiences, training and online training module for all new starters that explains all the resources and services available, how to use them and supporting ‘tips sheets’ for reference and as quick easy reminder of how to do something.
- More international comparisons and analysis.
- Help with social media and email campaigns in identifying fake news and fact checking.

Recommendations

1. Continue to address the issue of committee staff believing their needs are not being understood by the Library. Activity to date has been much appreciated and is likely to improve with committee staff being given access to media services.
2. Many respondents asked for better and more regular training in different aspects of Library services from general refreshers (what’s available and why it might be useful to them) to the specific (how to use different online services, how to ask the research team for a well-targeted response). There were many comments of how this could be done via YouTube and online modules for the more complex services, or via ‘tips sheets’ or more comprehensive written instructions, or by more visits to offices to offer help.
3. While only a few respondents criticised media monitoring services, they were strong in their criticisms. There was widespread unawareness of how people could ask for help to set up filters which could be addressed by online training as outlined above. It would be worthwhile contacting the offices of Western Australian senators and members to discuss issues with timeliness of the West Australian and any alternatives.
4. Use *What’s New* strategically: it is well-known and reasonably well-read although not consistently. It will always be a low priority during busy times: keep it short, perhaps with dot points on content up front so those who only skim at least know what is in it. Preferably issue on Thursdays and possibly using a ‘Your week to come’ approach. Consider including ‘tips’ for using the Library and its services more effectively.

5. The 'Power user' fact sheet was very well-received in the qualitative research with many suggesting it would be a good poster for offices.
6. Continue face to face, phone and digital outreach services, particularly visits to Canberra offices, committee secretariats and electorate offices. Consider offering all offices a contact person they can ring when they're not sure how to access a service and consider each contact officer having a program of phone calls to offices asking if they needed any assistance.
7. If IT services are being reviewed and resources and funding allow, consider improvements to the useability of the website and online services (particularly search functionality).
8. Consider issuing Bills Digests iteratively with preliminary information such as early drafts or short versions, a compilation of media articles, and analysis of significant Bill amendments and disallowable instruments, and a system allowing people to register their interest in particular Bills.
9. Consider ways to achieve effective coordination across research teams and other areas of the Library to achieve a more coordinated and relevant response and avoid the client needing to seek input from the different areas individually.
10. Continue checking and discussing to clarify the requirement of the client request and turnaround timeframe/trade-offs, as well as keeping the client informed on receipt and progress of the request.
11. Consider the perceived knowledge gaps and how they may be addressed. At the core of the Library is the expert knowledge and relevant analytical capability.
12. Provide a short summary of the research findings to (a) acknowledge the assistance people gave by responding, and (2) to take advantage of the opportunity to promote the breadth of the Library's services.

2. Introduction

Background

An evaluation of the services provided by the Parliamentary Library and the needs of its clients is undertaken once in each parliament. The information collected helps assess client service needs and plan for new or enhanced services and their delivery to ensure high standards and quality services are maintained.

Previous evaluations 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 can add value.

While the Library has a defined client base, that base changes. Since the 2019 election, the Library has welcomed 47 new senators and members through a series of orientation and outreach programs for them and their staff. Following the election, returning senators, members and their staff were also invited to orientation programs. New parliamentarians were provided with a contact officer—a personalised service to help forge relationships and provide the Library with a better understanding of the new parliamentarians' needs and interests. The Library continued its electorate office visit program to encourage two-way communication about how the library could meet its customers' needs up until COVID-19 travel restrictions applied.

Business-as-usual for the Library and its clients underwent significant change in March 2020 when Parliament was adjourned due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Parliamentary sittings were shut down and operations, including those of parliamentary committees, continued with the use of technology. The Parliamentary Library provided a remote service to its clients.

The fieldwork for the 2021 client service evaluation was conducted between December 2020 and May 2021 when business had returned to normal, but the impact of the changes brought about by COVID-19 were still being keenly felt.

Even without the impact of COVID-19 and an uncertain future because of it, the Library and its users are facing a time of enormous change in information and technology and a focus on digital delivery is apparent for everyone in Parliament House. More information is being provided online through curated self-help products accessible for clients at home, at the office or on the road.

The value of the analysis and advice provided to clients depends on the professional skills and knowledge of the Library's staff, including their communication skills, understanding of parliament and of how to manage relationships with senators, members and their staff.

As in 2017, the 2021 research has also included parliamentary committee staff working with committees from both Houses and in their role assisting senators and members. This has provided an additional layer of information and perspective that has been highlighted throughout the report.

The report provides information in a spirit of continuous improvement so that the Library can, despite the pressures of working during a pandemic, 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.

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.

Specifically, the objectives of the evaluation were to determine:

- client satisfaction with Library services
- areas where the information and research needs of the current Parliament are not being adequately 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 (where applicable) the extent to which research is tailored to the specific work and context of the client
- clients’ changing information needs and future challenges, and
- any impact of initiatives taken to implement the findings of the 2017 evaluation.

Research methodology

The research design comprised a qualitative stage followed by a quantitative study. The qualitative study involved face-to-face interviews with 48 senators, members and their staff and 16 parliamentary committee staff. This was an increase in qualitative interviews compared to previous evaluations.

The quantitative survey was completed overall by 126 senators, members and their staff, and an almost identical survey was completed by 22 committee staff. These figures were lower than in 2017, reflecting the impact of a difficult eighteen months preceding the fieldwork and, in recognition of this, a lower active follow-up for participation. Sample sizes achieved in previous years are shown in [Table 1](#) below.

Table 1: Sample sizes achieved in each evaluation

Research year	Qualitative	Quantitative
2021	48 senators, members and staff 16 parliamentary committee staff	126 senators, members and staff 22 parliamentary committee staff
2017	46 senators, members and staff 9 parliamentary committee staff	160 senators, members and staff 34 parliamentary committee staff
2015	29 senators, members and staff 8 parliamentary committee staff	148 senators, members and staff 27 parliamentary committee staff
2012	38 senators, members and staff	132 senators, members and staff

For the purposes of this report, the findings from senators, members and their staff are analysed separately from committee staff, although both are drawn upon in the Executive Summary and in the Conclusions and Recommendations.

As far as possible and wherever appropriate, questions were identical to those asked in previous surveys to allow direct comparisons. Some questions however were dropped as they were considered no longer relevant, and others were added.

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, and included one meeting with the Library’s executive staff, a short discussion with the Joint Standing Committee on the Parliamentary Library and another meeting with other relevant Library staff. Based on this information, Uncommon Knowledge put together discussion guides for the in-depth interviews and focus group, and a questionnaire for the Library’s consideration and approval.

Stage 2—In-depth interviews and focus groups

To gain the depth of qualitative insight needed, the researchers undertook 48 in-depth personal interviews with a mix of senators, members and their staff 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 senator or member. Some interviews were with key staff only at the member or senator’s request. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face in Parliament House or by phone, the choice being made by the interviewee.

In addition, two focus groups with eight participants in each were held with parliamentary department staff who worked to Senate and House of Representative committees. These were held 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 same time to add to the sample of survey responses (thus eliminating the need for clients to complete responses at two stages via two research instruments).

Stage 3—Online survey

The online survey was designed to reflect the Library’s current concerns and as far as possible, to 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. Another link to a similar survey was sent to parliamentary committee staff. The surveys were open for four weeks and during this time two reminders were sent out by the Librarian.

A breakdown of the research participants is shown in [Tables 2 and 3](#) on the following page.

Table 2: Senators, members and their staff (n=126)

Age	n=	%	Party/Independent	n=	%	Length of service	n=	%
24 or younger	11	9	Liberal Party	35	28	Less than 6 months	3	2
25–34	36	29	National Party	8	6	Between 6 and 12 months	10	8
35–44	17	13	ALP	54	43	Between 1 year and beginning of 46 th Parliament (July 2019)	32	25
45–54	28	22	Greens	11	9	Before start of 46 th Parliament (July 2019) and less than 5 years	32	25
55–64	22	17	Other	18	14	Between 5 and 10 years	28	22
65 or over	9	7				Between 10 and 20 years	15	12
Rather not say	3	2				More than 20 years	6	5
Position	n=	%	Constituency	n=	%			
Senator	3	2	Mainly urban	62	50			
Member	16	13	Mainly rural	27	22			
Staff of senator	44	35	Equally urban and rural	35	28			
Staff of member	63	50						

Table 3: Parliamentary committee staff (n=22)

Age	n=	%	Position	n=	%	Length of service	n=	%
24 or younger	1	5	House of Representatives committee staff	11	50	Less than 6 months	4	18
25–34	3	14	Senate committee staff	11	50	Between 6 and 12 months	0	0
35–44	6	27				Between 1 and 2 years	1	5
45–54	8	36				Between 2 and 5 years	4	18
55–64	3	14				Between 5 and 10 years	7	32
65 or over	0	0				Between 10 and 20 years	5	23
Rather not say	1	5				More than 20 years	1	5

3. Overall satisfaction and performance

Key points

Satisfaction among senators, members and their staff remains high (94%), consistent with previous years. Responsiveness, professionalism and quality research were all cited as reasons for satisfaction. As in previous research, there were some comments about timeliness in the research, but these were fewer. There was only 1% dissatisfied (scored against *quite dissatisfied*).

Satisfaction among committee staff is higher than in 2017 at 91% (+9%) but the sample size (n=22) was too small for accurate significance testing. This increase follows a 4% increase in 2017. As in 2017, there were no dissatisfaction scores. There has been a noticeable improvement across the board in comments from committee staff reflecting the efforts made by the Library to improve services to this group.

The percentage of people who would recommend the Library remains high at 100% for senators, members and their staff and 95% for committee staff.

COVID-19 appears to have had little impact on perceived quality of services, although respondents were more likely to say performance had improved when considering the longer period and not just the period of COVID-19. The qualitative research indicated that most people continued to use the Library via email or phone and found it as responsive as always.

The Library continued to score well against all performance measures with some significant increases.

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. [Figure 1](#) below shows 94% satisfaction among senators, members and their staff again in 2021. There were no responses against *extremely dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* and a 1% score against *quite dissatisfied*. It is worth noting that the increase in *extremely satisfied* seen in 2017 has been maintained in 2021.

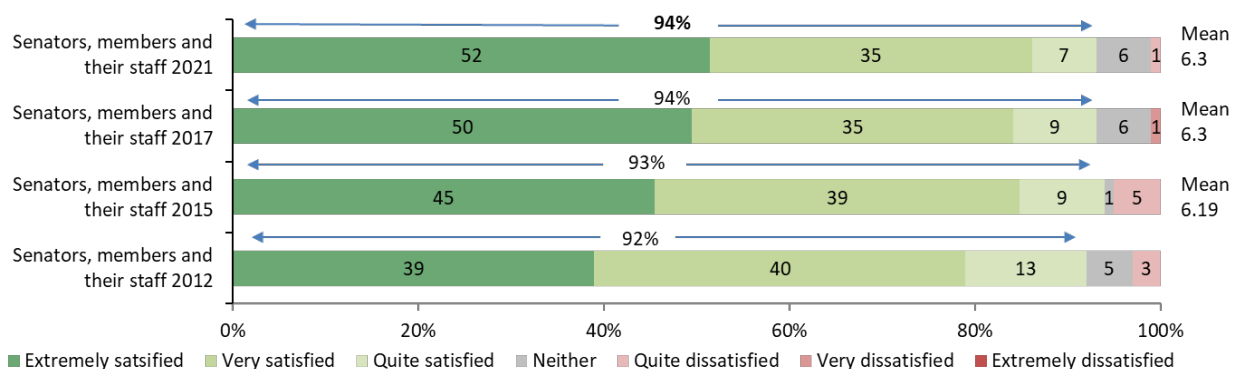


Figure 1: Satisfaction with Library services

Q12. Based on your current experiences (within the last 1 to 2 years), which of the following best describes your overall level of satisfaction with the Parliamentary Library services?

Senators, members and their staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=160; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=132

As raised in previous waves of research, in cases of high satisfaction over a long period of time, it is possible that some of the satisfaction is ‘residual’, having 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 or service. This is possibly still the case although the 2021 question was asked specifically about respondents' experience over the last one to two years.

Figure 2 below shows the trend line for satisfaction since 2002. Research in 2012, 2015, 2017 and 2021 used the same 7-point scale. Different scales were used in the years before 2012 making accurate comparisons difficult. What is clear, however, is that satisfaction has remained strong over a long period of time and has trended upwards overall. To maintain such ratings, an organisation needs to keep developing and evolving so that it continues to meet its customers' needs and if possible foresee their future needs and prepare for them.

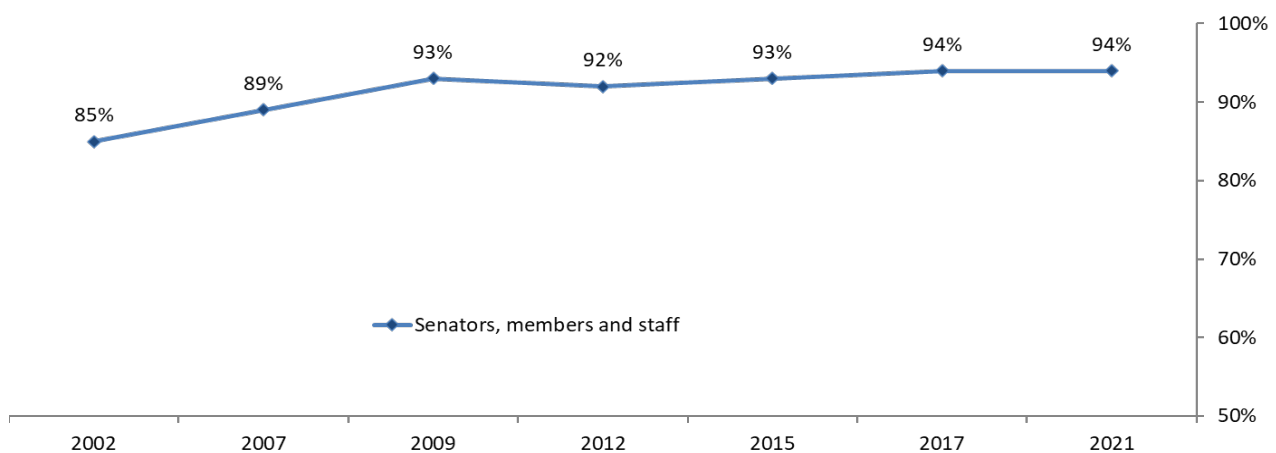


Figure 2: Satisfaction trend since 2002

Q12. Based on your current experiences (within the last 1 to 2 years), which of the following best describes your overall level of satisfaction with the Parliamentary Library services?

Senators, members and their staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=160; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=132

What drives satisfaction ratings?

Parliamentarians and their staff who gave a satisfied rating described staff (in research teams and across the Library) as having broad knowledge, being very helpful, courteous and responsive, prompt, diligent and comprehensive researchers who are proactive in their work and deliver a high-quality product. A willingness to negotiate when a request is beyond the scope of library resources was noted, along with the ability to communicate well with well-targeted, clear advice and in talking you through anything complex. The Library and its staff were seen as authoritative, trustworthy and described as an invaluable service that makes a significant and ongoing contribution to informing policy analysis and legislative deliberation. Strong relationships with the Library and staff were noted and contributed to a high quality of responses, having a good knowledge of expectations and being alert to relevant news and information.

The reasons given for being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied or dissatisfied were from a small sample base and focussed mostly on issues with timeliness. For example, indicating that it is great material when received, but feeling the time delays on getting answers is often large.

Another aspect related to the depth of responses and while many parliamentarians and their staff valued that depth, some of the less satisfied felt responses often went into things too deeply and long windedly for what was required, or the responses were sometimes jumbled and didn't give clear summations of their

conclusions. It was suggested that in these instances shorter answers, even when the Library has consumed all the evidence, would allow the Library to give more answers to more people, quicker and then allow for expansion if that is required. Two respondents suggested a bias towards caution in research responses and being scared to offer a view, including on evidence, for fear of being seen to be partisan.

Would clients recommend the Library?

The percentage of senators, members and staff who would recommend the Library remains high (100%), one percentage point higher than in 2017. Figure 3 below shows the figures over time.

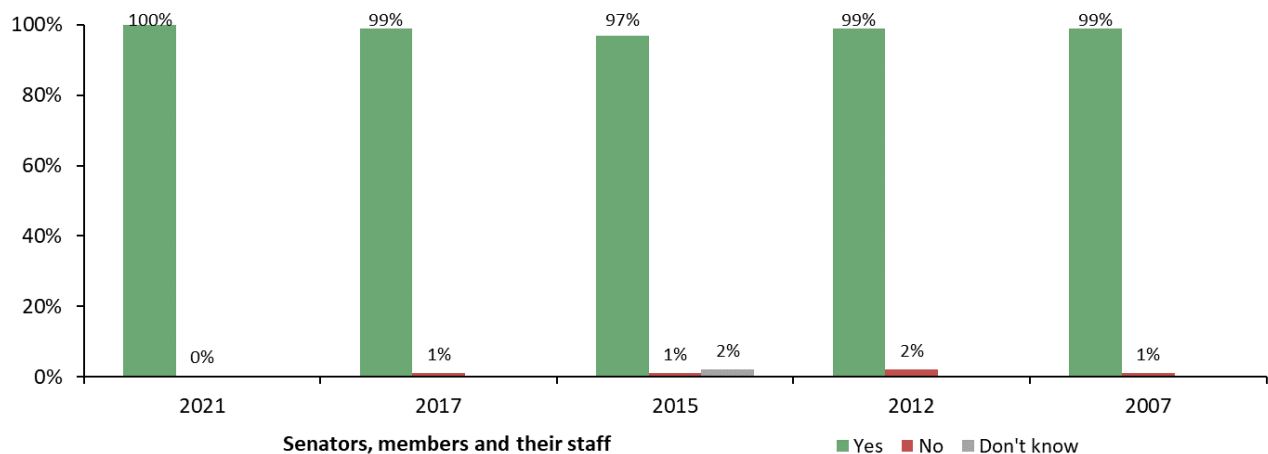


Figure 3: Likelihood to recommend the Library

Q20: Would you recommend the Parliamentary Library to a colleague?
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=159; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=131; 2007 n=67

With willingness to recommend scoring higher than satisfaction, the obvious question is why more people are prepared to recommend the Library than claim to be satisfied with its services. This has been a consistent pattern over the last few surveys. In previous waves of research, 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, and this was not asked in 2021. Drawing on the qualitative research to answer the question, it would be reasonable to assume that where people were *dissatisfied* or *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, it was often because of a specific experience. However, because these respondents generally agreed that when the research was good, it was very good, or because they considered the Library under-resourced, they were still prepared to recommend the Library.

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

In 2021 only clients who had worked in Parliament House since before the 46th Parliament were asked whether they believed there had been a change in the Library’s performance. Most continued to indicate performance had either improved or remained the same (85%), and 7% indicated a decline. All respondents were asked whether they believed the Library’s performance had changed within the pandemic period (i.e. within the last year) and the results were similar with 81% saying it had *improved* or *remained the same*, and 7% indicating a *decline*. These results were similar to those from previous waves of research as shown in Figure 4 on the next page.

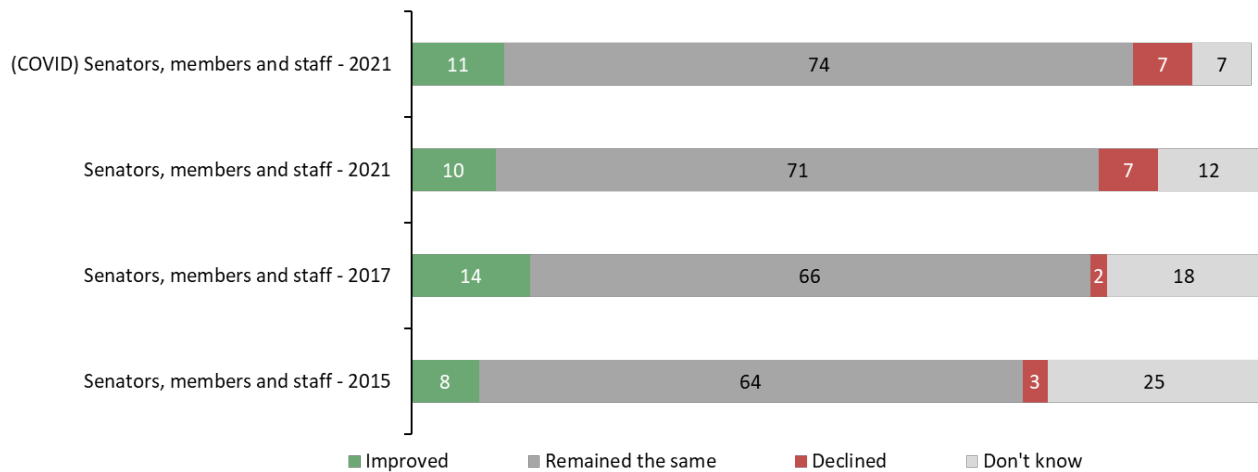


Figure 4: Has Library performance changed?

Q16: Do you think the Parliamentary Library's overall performance has DECLINED, REMAINED THE SAME or IMPROVED (a) for the period you have had dealings with the Parliamentary Library (b) specifically for within the period of the pandemic (i.e. in the last year) Senators, members and their staff 2021 n=81, Pandemic period n=80; 2017 n=160; 2015 n=148

Reasons for saying Library services had improved or remained the same included:

- the Library continuing to provide excellent research services and help with policy development during a stressful time [COVID-19]
- the Library's growing resources and users' growing capability and knowledge of Library resources
- proactive engagement on redistribution analysis.

Reasons for saying service had declined included:

- demand is starting to impact on resources (i.e. timeliness, senior researchers with political salience and expertise in emerging areas such as climate science/economics).

Possible improvements and key things to change in next 12 months

In planning for the future, senators, members and their staff were asked if there any areas the Library should be looking to develop, do things differently or improve. They were also asked if the Library was to make one change over the next 12 months that would positively impact on their work, what would it be. In both instances similar feedback was provided.

Among those who provided ideas, there were key themes for improvement with comments about the need for online services enhancements and in training (including online training or more intuitive online products) dominating the responses.

- **Improving and staying current with the online services and related search functionality, along with further training and simple how to tips and instructions** — Some specific mentions were improving digital services and their platforms and search engines, presenting information on key topics in things like dashboards, simple instructions on how to search and locate speeches, different references in Hansard, journal articles, past lectures, topics, etc. and more training of parliamentarian staff and tip sheets (e.g. 'when you know something is possible but can't remember how to do it').

- **Continued outreach combined with introduction and refresher training (including online modules, the power user sheet, hints and tips and simple guides)** — Some specific mentions were an easy, concise, dot point reference of the services and a link to that service, a better understanding of how library staff can help with research for speeches or articles, more user learning experiences and refresher sessions on different topics, as well as introductory sessions, an orientation package and online module for new staff members to explain the resources and services available and how to best utilise them (including media resources), teleconferencing with electorate offices on how to navigate the Library and its usefulness for electorate office staff (including volunteer staff who can do a lot of research and attend meetings), greater one-on-one engagement and promotion of the outreach services and the opening hours (e.g. during sitting weeks).
- **Areas where there were perceived possible knowledge gaps or need for further research and analysis** — Some specific mentions were more amendments being given analysis, more international comparisons and analysis, further expertise in social policy issues, energy science (climate change, hydrogen, solar, wind) and associated economics and in communications, infrastructure and related markets (e.g. satellites, mobile infrastructure, 5G, emergency drones), the future face of employment, aged care policy and legislation, state-specific research expertise to accompany key topic areas, Indigenous and gender issues, corporate data and company searches, how issues are reflected in foreign media, social media and email campaign analysis in identifying fake news and fact checking.
- **Bills Digests and additional aspects to support legislation consideration in a timely manner** — Some specific mentions were summarising stakeholder views on legislation early in the process and making that available before the Bill Digest is completed, more amendments being given analysis, sending Bill Digests to all senators' and members' staff direct, and commentaries on all lodged amendments as soon as possible after they are lodged.
- **The need for more staff resources to meet the need for greater capacity and quick turnaround, particularly in the areas of research and Bills Digests and other support for legislation consideration** — Some specific mentions were more staff and research support capacity for faster turnarounds on research and Bills Digests as timeframes are often very short and the Library needs to be able to meet them (e.g. “because those briefs are absolute gold, but they aren't always done for a range of reasons but I gather resourcing is an issue that weighs heavily” and “need more staff in the science team in particular”).
- **A continued requirement and appreciation for discussing and clarifying requirements regarding a request with Library staff and what will meet the particular need** – Some specific mentions were more conversation at outset to ascertain if the question is on point or target and to help structure questions and expectations before research commences, and assistance with or a guide to drafting requests to researchers.
- **Fact sheets with specific data on each electorate, more mapping, presenting information on key topics such as dashboards** – Some specific mentions were a dedicated data sheet for each electorate with a snapshot of industry, jobs, employment rates with comparisons to state averages (e.g. “like the Qld Statisticians office does for each state seat in Qld. A brilliant piece of research that is heavily used by all state MPs), more GIS Mapping, and presenting information on key topics such as dashboards.
- **Further presentations, online lectures, podcasts and expert sessions** – Some specific mentions were podcast interviews with Library researchers and other informed people on topical issues or areas of desired knowledge, recording of sessions for later use and development of expert groups who can deliver sessions for parliamentarians or committees.

- Media subscriptions and monitoring improvements including support in setting or learning to set filters and enhanced foreign and related media monitoring** — Some specific mentions were subscription to provide the current day edition of the Western Australian, inclusion of foreign media in media monitoring to identify how issues are being reflected, considering the possibility of a digest service showing key issues covered in the Asia region papers and the in-language ethnic papers in Australia (noting potential major resource capacity and funding implications in delivering this), and summaries of domestic and international media on key topics, with some overarching analysis.

Other mentions included: making Library advice public and in allowing the quoting of the library as a source; the Library gaining a higher profile outside of Parliament House; a client facing job tracker to enable a client to quickly evaluate how many jobs they have lodged and as a private database of enquiries to determine if a request on something has already been made (noting potential technical, privacy and other implications); an interest in audio books; that cybersecurity could become an issue and affect confidence in confidentiality; and a suggestion for training or coaching in areas like social media and digital marketing and communication

While not all issues can be addressed by the Library and some have significant resource and financial implications, it indicates areas for consideration in service improvement and future planning.

Library performance against its performance measures

As in previous years, the Library is seen to perform well on all measures of service delivery. Confidentiality (90%) and balanced/impartial (83%) have the highest rating for *all the time*; and timeliness (66%), and keeping informed (62%) are rated lowest, although when combined with *most of the time* the ratings are all similar. This can be seen in [Figure 5](#) below. Keep you informed was the only measure to receive a *rarely* score (1%) and there were no *never* scores.

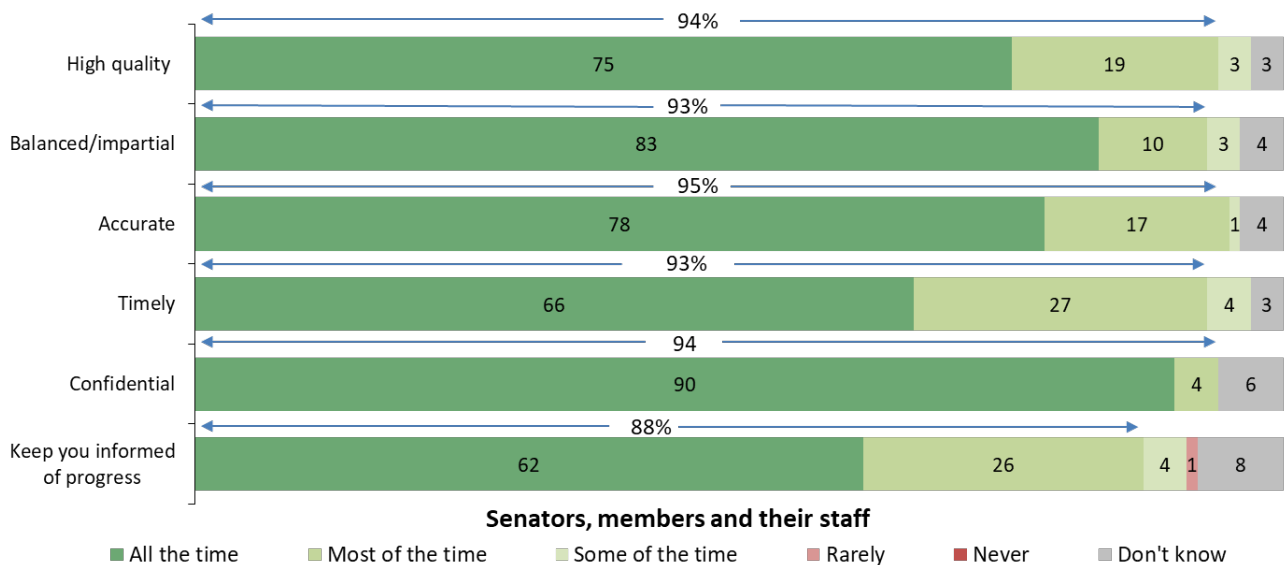


Figure 5: Perceived performance of Parliamentary Library by senators, members and their staff
Q21: How does the Parliamentary Library perform against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Senators, members and their staff 2021 n=126

The reasons given for positive ratings related to providing a quality service in a timely and professional manner, asking questions to clarify what information is required, effectively discussing complex issues and

determining the time sensitivity that may affect the depth of information, informing which researcher was looking into which aspects of the queries and not just answering the questions posed but drilling down and finding the answerable questions within it and sometimes the questions that should have been posed. As an example of the feedback, “I got provided a report in 2019 into an issue then asked the Library team to revise that report in 2020 to access additional statistical information. They contacted me initially to talk through the needs and again for the review to ensure they were providing what I needed and to better steer me to data that was more applicable.”

The reasons given for less positive ratings related to responses not being as quick as desired (while noting the ‘exceptional expectation management’ of the Library staff), information not being always available (e.g., at the State level), having a request ‘go into the ether’ (although they did appreciate that researchers generally call to clarify a request after it is sent in), receiving advice once that was felt to be a little undercooked (while acknowledging there may not have been enough time for the researcher to wrap their head around the topic) and the quality appearing to decline on more controversial issues.

As can be seen from the comparison figures in [Figure 6](#) below, the 2021 scores showed improvement against each measure, with increases for confidentiality, accuracy, timeliness and quality all being statistically significant. Although timeliness has improved significantly, it remains a concern for the Library as does the new measure of keeping people informed of the progress of their enquiries.

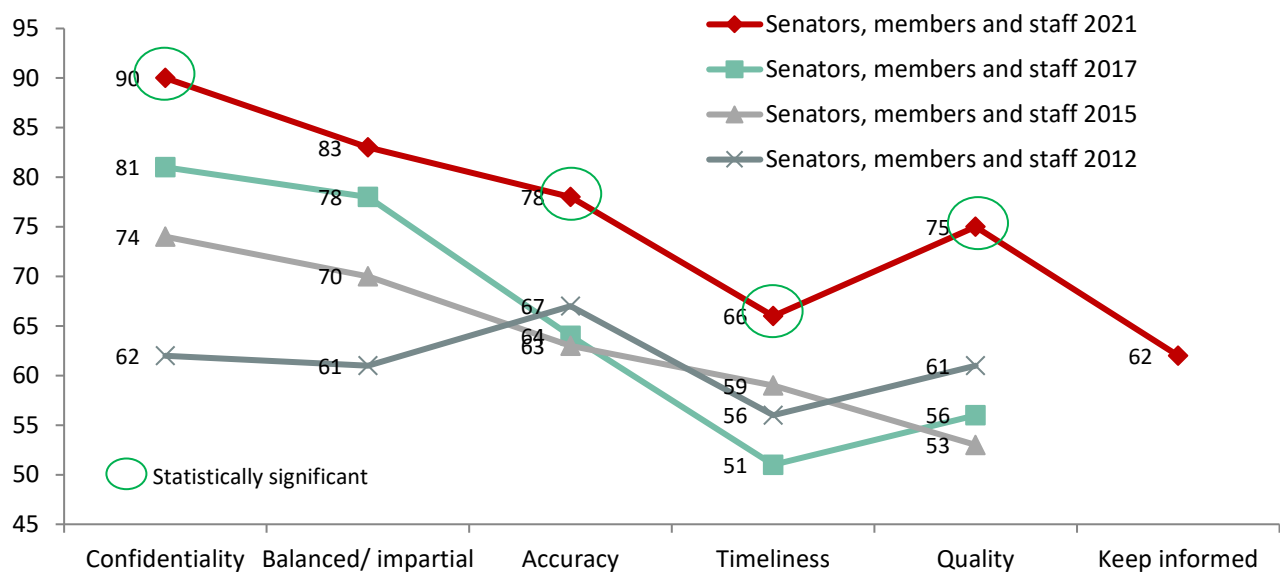


Figure 6: Scores of all the time against the Library's performance measures

Q21: How does the Parliamentary Library perform against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=156; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=131

Library staff

Library staff were highly regarded by the majority of respondents. When compared with 2017 and looking at responses against *strongly agree*, Library staff performed as well, if not better, on all measures. [Figure 7](#) on the next page charts the 2021 ratings from senators, members and their staff.

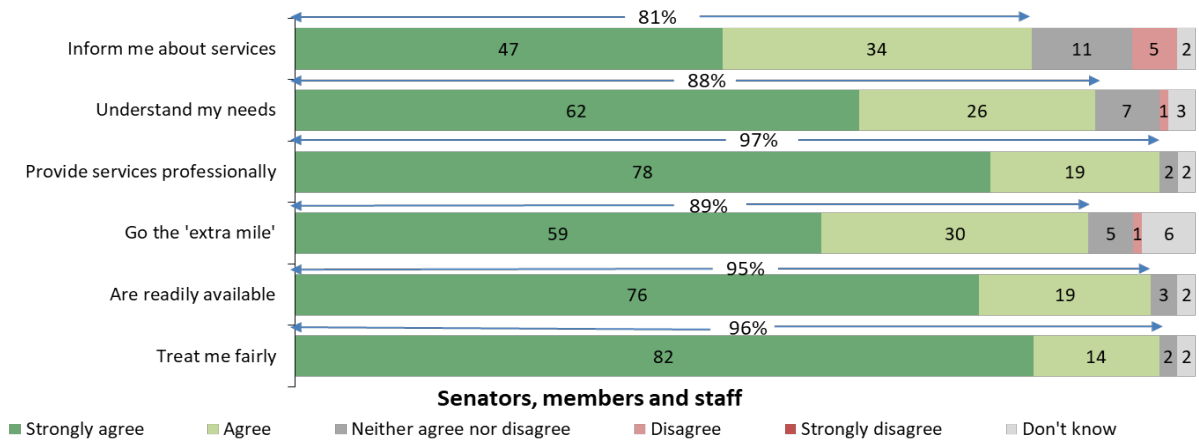


Figure 7: Evaluation of Library staff by senators, members and their staff

Q23: In your experience, do Library staff ...
Senators, members and their staff 2021 n=125

Figure 8 charts the yearly comparisons for those who responded *strongly agree* or *agree*. All have increased apart from understand my needs, however none of the movements are statistically significant.

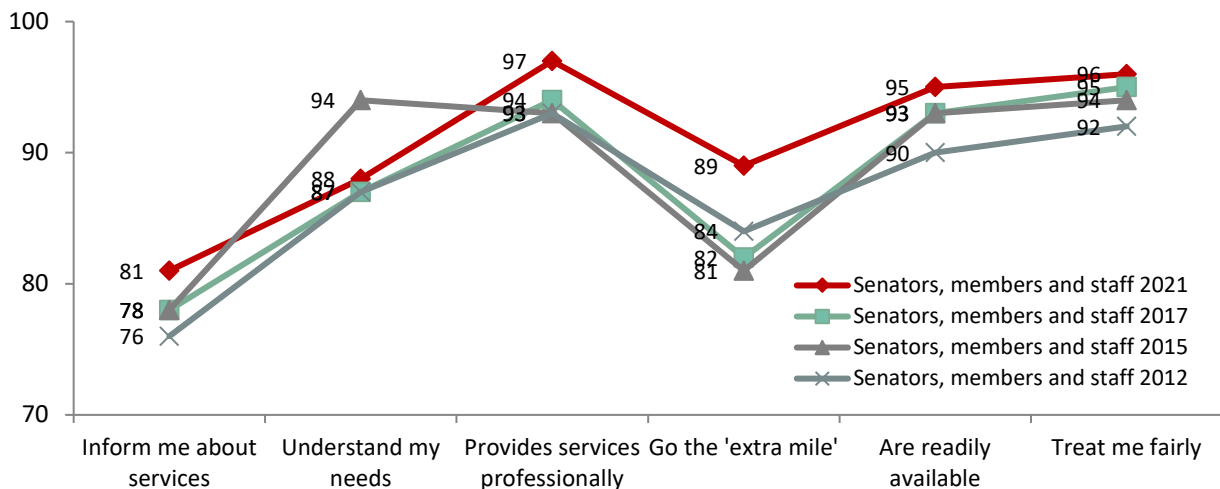


Figure 8: Yearly comparisons of *strongly agree* and *agree*

Q23: In your experience, do Library staff ...
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=125; 2017 n=156; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=117

Reasons given for the ratings of the Library staff by senators, members and their staff are consistent with those received throughout the research where the majority are positive. They related to Library staff expertise, professionalism and genuine interest reflecting in the quality of the service and response. For example — “Library staff have been nothing short of amazing with the services they provide.” “Every interaction I have had---even when pinged with a late notice---is prompt, professional and polite. Love the library!” “The library staff are fantastic when it comes to customer service. They are always willing to go above and beyond to get you information on time and will give you options if what you need isn't possible within a certain timeframe.” “Expertise and genuine interest. You can tell they are interested because of the quality of the response.” “Service is very good as are the library tours.” “The[y] have handled sensitive LGBTQIA+ issues very sensitively.”

Reasons given for less favourable ratings related to not feeling fully informed of Library services. For example — “Not sure whether they inform me of everything.” “Library doesn't necessarily proactively reach out, but I don't necessarily read their emails.”

Parliamentary committee staff

Satisfaction

In 2012 and 2015 similar research to that undertaken with senators, members and staff was undertaken with parliamentary department staff, and in 2017 and 2021 only those people working in committee offices (both Senate and House of Representatives) were surveyed. In this report, the 2021 results are compared with 2017 and the parliamentary committee staff component from the 2015 research. This group was unable to be extracted from the 2012 data.

While there continues to be a trend of lower scores among this group compared with senators, members and their staff, the 2021 figures shown in [Figure 9](#) below are very encouraging. Unfortunately, the sample size in 2021 was too small to allow for accurate significance testing.

There was an overall increase in satisfaction levels, particularly among *very satisfied*. Looking at *extremely*, *very* and *quite satisfied*, the score was 91%, an increase of nine percentage points from 2017 and 13 percentage points from 2015. There were no scores of *dissatisfied*. Also of note is that the score of 91% is only three percentage points below that of senators, members and their staff, the closest the two groups have ever been.

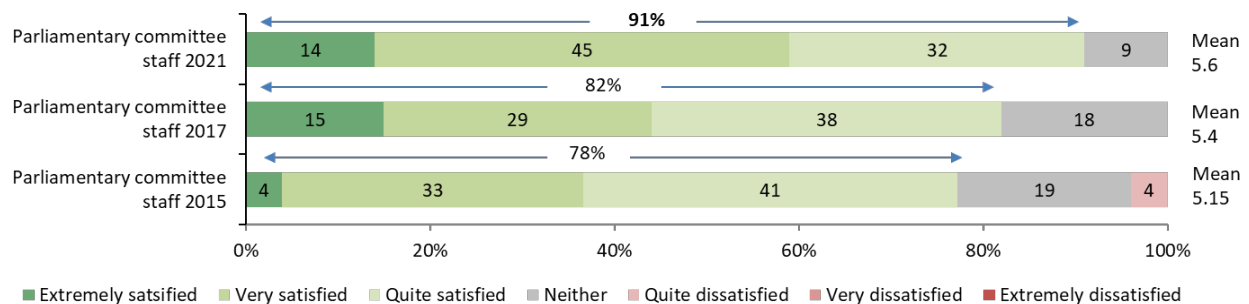


Figure 9: Satisfaction with Library services

Q12: Which of the following best describes your overall level of satisfaction with Parliamentary Library services?
Parliamentary committee respondents 2021 n=22; 2017 n=34; 2015 n=27

What drives satisfaction ratings?

Responsiveness, professionalism, expertise and quality research were all cited as reasons for satisfaction and comments made show a strong acknowledgement of the work done by the Library to improve communication with parliamentary committee staff. For example — “Library is more willing to support committees than in the past.” “The output is always of a high quality, and the database of information is very impressive. The Library staff have reached out to us proactively on a number of occasions to offer assistance when a new referral is made.” “Staff are excellent and responsive. They have strong expertise.” “The research services I have received have been professional and useful.” “Parliamentary Library collection is very good, and it is extremely useful to have parliamentary and committee proceeding reference material on the shelves where they can be browsed.” “The library prepared a research paper for my committee which was very high quality. I also have borrowed books from the library and the librarians are always helpful.”

Comments regarding lower satisfaction made in 2017 and previous years were driven by the timeliness of Bills Digests not meeting their needs, the variable quality in research services and the belief that Library staff do not fully understand the role of parliamentary committee staff and the pressures under which they work. Although there were some comments along these lines made in the qualitative research, they were noticeably fewer and less strident. The one comment from the respondent who reported being *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* was about the quality of the online experience and the challenges and preference to effectively search for information by topic — “The written products are well done but hard to find, and if I’m in a rush I don’t have time to navigate the website. I don’t need to know the distinction between digest, Flagpost, research papers etc. I would prefer to go by the topic and not have to know which type the document it is. Also, the browse by topic feature didn’t work the last time I tried to use it.”

Would clients recommend the Library?

In 2021, 95% of committee staff said they would recommend the Library and 5% (n=1) said they would not. In 2017, 100% of parliamentary committee respondents said they would recommend the Library to a colleague compared to 2015 where 4% said they wouldn’t. With such small sample sizes, comparisons cannot be made accurately. This can be seen in [Figure 10](#) below.

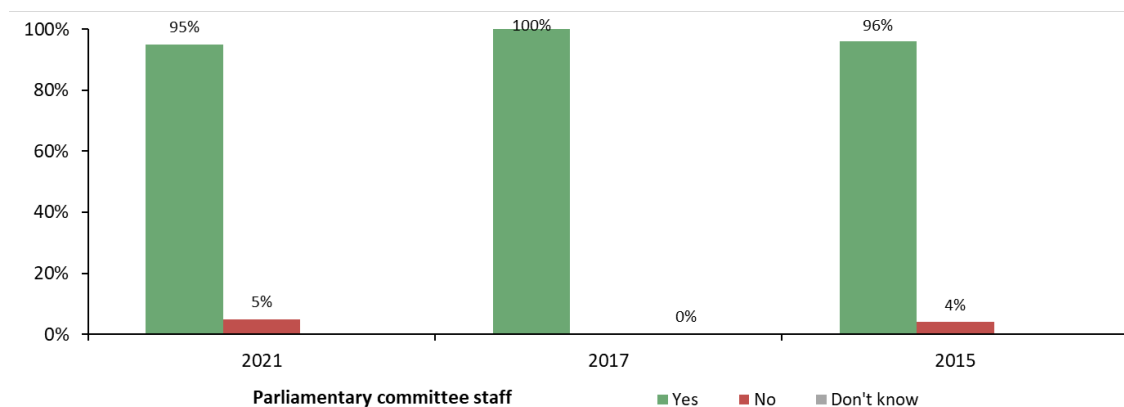


Figure 10: Likelihood to recommend the Library
Q20: Would you recommend the Parliamentary Library to a colleague?
Parliamentary committee staff 2021 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

The pattern of a higher rating for willingness to recommend than for satisfaction appears with parliamentary committee staff as it has with senators, members and their staff. Drawing on the qualitative research again, 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 service and because when it was good, it was very good, they were still prepared to recommend the Library.

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

In 2021 only parliamentary committee staff who had worked in Parliament House since before the 46th Parliament were asked whether they believed there had been a change in the Library’s performance. While most (68%) said it had *remained the same*, 16% felt it had *improved* and another 16% *didn’t know*. Reasons given for feeling that overall performance improved in the last few years related to the Library’s better and increased engagement with committee staff.

All parliamentary committee staff were asked whether they believed the Library’s performance had changed within the pandemic period: most (57%) thought it had *remained the same* but 43% *didn’t know*. Similar

patterns in the Library’s perceived performance (excluding COVID-19 impacts) were seen in previous waves of research as shown in [Figure 11](#) below.

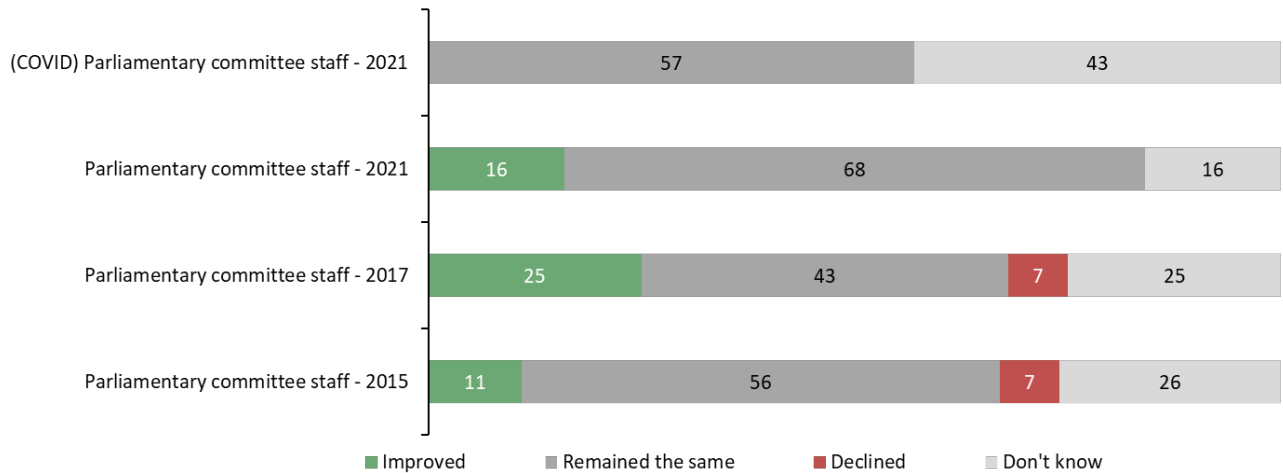


Figure 11: Has Library performance changed?

Q16: Do you think the Parliamentary Library’s overall performance has DECLINED, REMAINED THE SAME or IMPROVED (a) for the period you have had dealings with the Parliamentary Library (b) specifically for within the period of the pandemic (i.e. in the last year)
Parliamentary committee staff 2021 n=19, Pandemic period n=17; 2017 n=28; 2015 n=27

Possible improvements

Parliamentary committee staff were asked to suggest improvements in how the Library could operate, with the dominant themes being the following:

- **The need for continued communication and understanding between committee and Library staff, more engagement in the early stages of enquiries and tailoring services and responses to the needs of committees.** For example — “Proactive contact from relevant staff when inquiries get launched.”
- **Continued briefing to committees and access to training on how to use the Library and its resources effectively.** For example — “Keeping in contact with new committees and reminding us of what things you can offer.” “The Library could provide a briefing to committees outlining its services and how they have been used by committees in the past”
- **Providing a liaison person in the Library for committee staff.** For example — “A committee liaison person in the library who could be the conduit for me to approach so I don't have to figure out which exact person might be help me with each piece of work. I don't really understand the work segregation of the library staff and I just have a topic or need...”, “Make it easier to know who to contact when needing to reach out.”
- **Easier to access and use of online services.** For example — “Generally improving access to the Library’s resources etc. through an improved website would be good.”
- **Provision of Bills Digests for Bills referred to a committee and so they are timely.** For example — “Bills Digests on any Bill referred to a committee (including private members Bills) and quickly!”, “Earlier delivery of Bills Digests.”
- **Committee staff making their case strongly for equal access to media portal as senators, members and their staff enjoy with their work being on behalf of the parliamentarians in committees.**

Library performance against its performance measures

The Library was seen to perform very well on all measures of service delivery. Looking at ratings for *all the time*, balanced/impartial (59%), accuracy (55%) and confidentiality (55%) were all high, followed by quality (50%), keeping clients informed (41%), and timeliness (36%). These scores can be seen in [Figure 12](#) below.

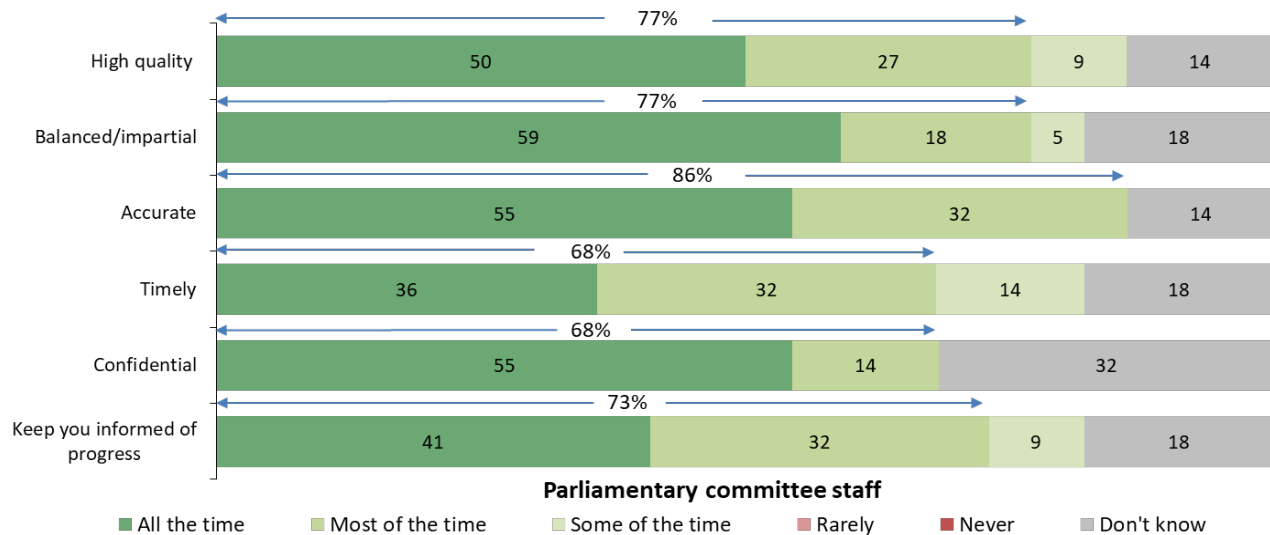


Figure 12: Perceived performance of Parliamentary Library by parliamentary committee staff

Q21: How does the Parliamentary Library perform against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Parliamentary committee staff 2021 n=22

As can be seen from [Figure 13](#) below which compares 2015 and 2017 and 2021, scores either remained the same or improved on all measures except timeliness which at 36% was a three-percentage point drop following its improvement from 22% in 2015 to 39% in 2017. The qualitative research suggests that issues with timeliness are most likely to be in relation to Bills Digests.

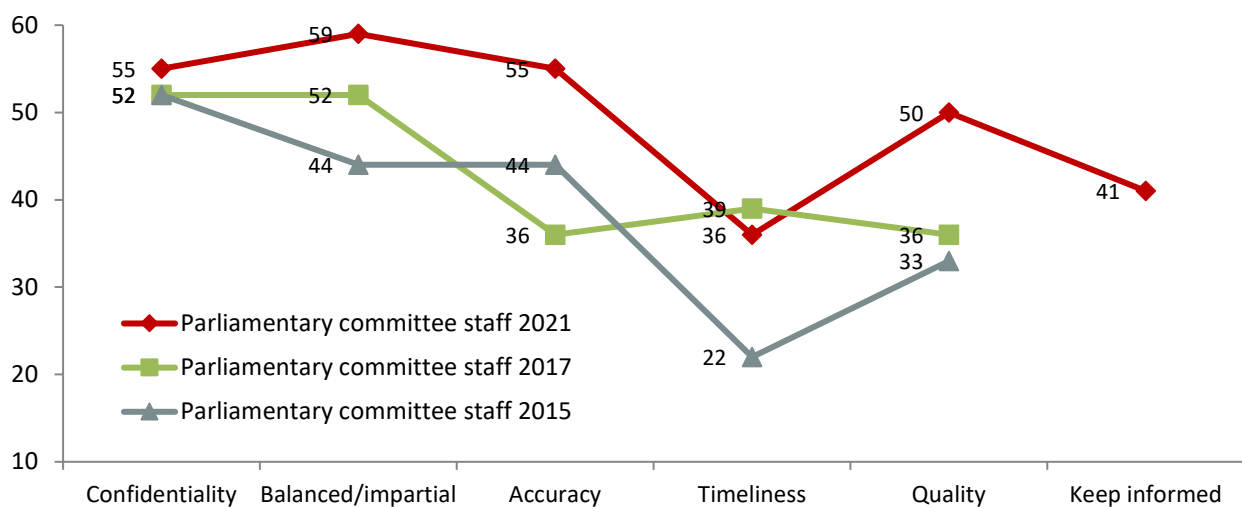


Figure 13: Scores of 'all the time' against the Library's performance measures

Q21: How does the Parliamentary Library perform against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Parliamentary committee respondents 2021 n=22; 2017 n=33; 2015 n=27

Reasons given for the perceived improvements in most of the performance measures were with regard to service, expectations management and written products. For example — “Service has improved a lot”, “Everything I’ve received has been good”, “I always get great communication and clear expectations from library staff”.

Lower performance measure ratings related to some continued challenges and frustration felt by a small number of committee staff in the process of briefing and gaining research request responses that meet their needs and especially when it involves more complex requests or a comprehensive and coordinated response from across different areas of the Library. For example — “The written products are fine, and are very well done, but have been quite hard to extract. The process for soliciting committee work is poor and frustrating for me and I don't like to engage with the Library now for having written resources produced.”

Library staff

The data from parliamentary committee staff tells a similar story to that from senators, members and their staff, but with lower figures. The larger number of *don't know* ratings is different from the ratings of senators, members and their staff and suggests reticence on the part of the respondents, lack or low level of experience with the Library or a lack of clarity with regard to the level of service they can expect from the Library. Parliamentary committee staff were also more likely to indicate they agree, rather than strongly agree compared to senators, members and their staff.

The ratings of parliamentary committee respondents are shown in Figure 14 below, and Figure 15 on the next page shows the yearly comparisons for those who responded *strongly agree* or *agree*.

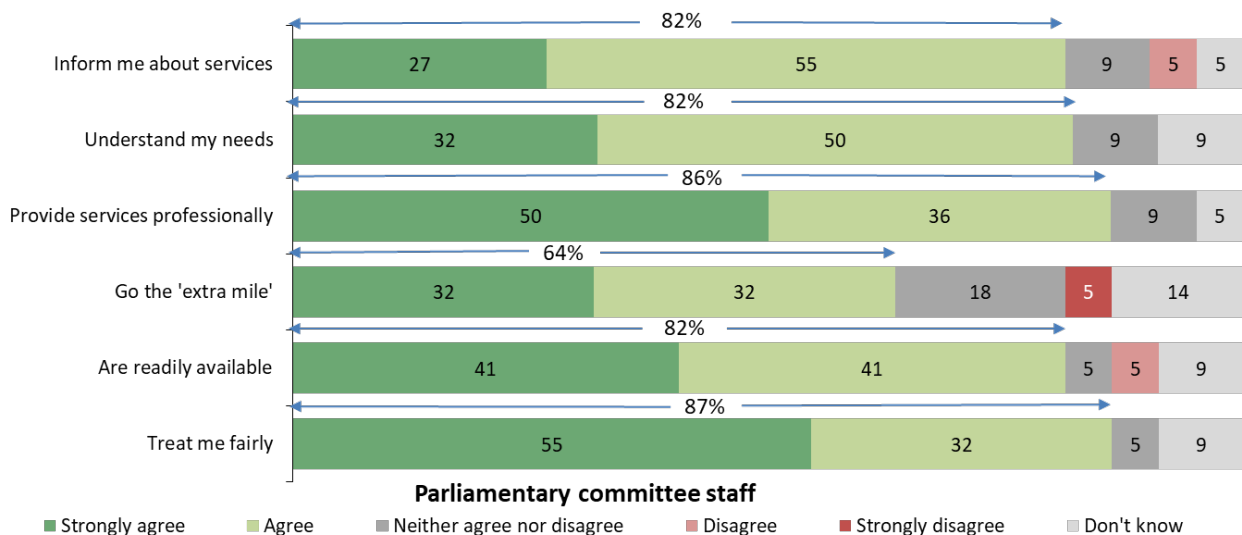


Figure 14: Evaluation of Library staff by Parliamentary committee respondents

Q23: In your experience, do Library staff ...
Parliamentary committee respondents 2021 n=22

The perceived improvement in the scores given by committee staff is evident in Figure 15 on the next page. While the pattern is similar, all scores have increased or remained stable. The score for go the extra mile is the lowest (64%) but a huge increase of 52 percentage points from 2017, suggesting a very positive response to the Library’s efforts to improve the relationship with and responsiveness to parliamentary committee staff.

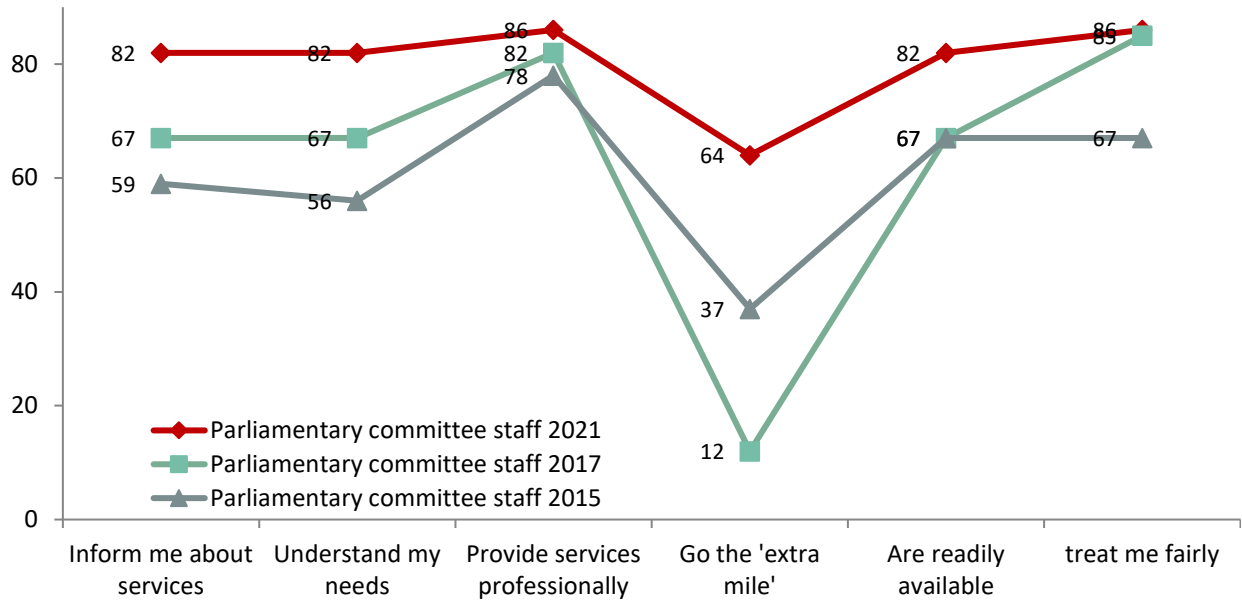


Figure 15: Yearly comparison of combined 'strongly agree' and 'agree'

Q23: In your experience, do Library staff ...

Parliamentary committee respondents 2021 n=22; 2017—n=34; 2015 n=27

4. Use of Library services

Key points

One third (34%) of senators, members and their staff used the Library more than once a week during sitting weeks (same as 2017) and 26% used it more than once a week during non-sitting weeks (-2% from 2017). As in previous years, people spoke of making urgent requests during sitting weeks and longer more complex or involved requests during non-sitting weeks.

Use by committee staff was similar: almost one third (32%) of committee staff used the Library more than once a week during sitting weeks and the same number during non-sitting weeks.

The number of senators, members and their staff who thought their use of the Library had changed over the last 1–2 years fell significantly from 2017 (-24%). The proportion of committee staff who felt their use of the Library had changed was stable at approximately a third (32%). It is possible that the COVID-19 period has impacted respondents' ability to assess this.

Library services were well used by parliamentarians and their staff and by committee staff: research services (97% and 91%), publications including Bills Digest (92% and 91%), other online resources (84% and 82%), newspaper clipping archive (80% and 95%), and Library collection (80% and 91%). Those services available only to parliamentarians and their staff were also well used: media monitoring (94%), online newspaper subscriptions (88%), and EMMS (86%).

The following were well used by parliamentarians and their staff but much less so by committee staff: data and statistics analysis (89% and 59%), mapping (80% and 36%) and daily chambers clips (80% and 51%).

Use of Library services has either remained stable or increased since 2017. Significant increases in use have been seen by parliamentarians and their staff in relation to media monitoring (+11%), mapping (+14%), daily chamber clips (+14%) and other online resources (+13%). There have been no significant decreases.

Use of Library services has either increased or remained stable since 2017. Seeing significant increases have been media monitoring (+11%), mapping (+14%), daily chamber clips (+14%) and other online resources (+13%). There have been no significant decreases.

Senators, members and their staff

Senators, members and their staff reported using the Library more in sitting weeks than non-sitting weeks, although use varied. The qualitative research suggested that the use was more related to the type of information being sort in sitting weeks compared with non-sitting weeks. Some senators, members and their staff thought they were more likely to make many short requests during sitting weeks and perhaps fewer but more complex enquiries during non-sitting weeks and the results would offer support to this hypothesis.

Figure 16 on the next page compares usage patterns of senators, members and their staff between sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks in 2021, 2017, 2015 and 2012. Direct comparisons to 2012 cannot be made because three additional response options have been included since 2015 following feedback from the qualitative research. As in 2017, usage in 2021 was shown to still be slightly higher during sitting weeks than non-sitting weeks.

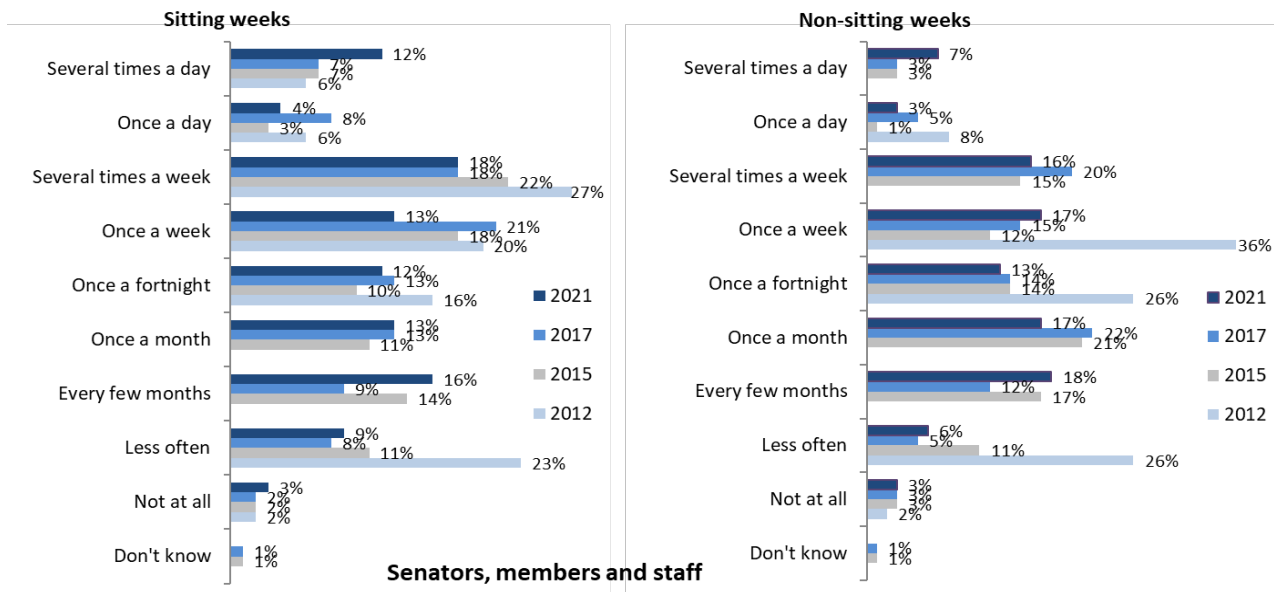


Figure 16: Reported usage by senators, members and their staff during sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks in 2015 (left) and 2012 (right)

Q8. Excluding media monitoring, which of the following best describes how often you use the Parliamentary Library (research, information and online services) during (a) sitting weeks and (b) non-sitting weeks?

Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=154; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=128

Change in work patterns and Library use

2021 shows a change from the previous pattern with a significant decrease in the number of people reporting a change in the way they use the Library. Only 21% of senators, members and their staff reported a change in work patterns, 24% fewer than in 2017. These comparisons are graphed in Figure 17 below.

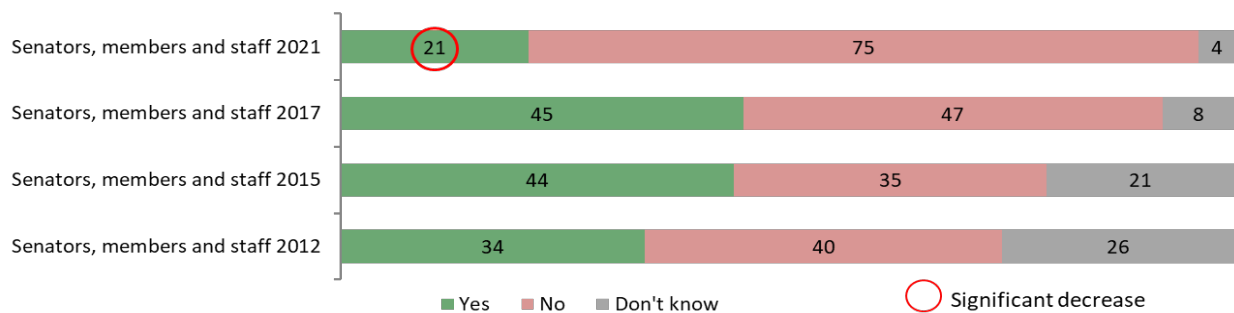


Figure 17: Reported change in use of the Library over the last 1-2 years

Q6: Including any impact of COVID-19, has your use of the Library changed over the last 1-2 years?

Senators, members and staff (worked in PH more than 3 years) 2021—n=81; 2017—n=38; 2015—n=98; 2012—n=130

Interpretations of Figure 17 should be considered with some caution. The last one to two years have been extraordinary (2019–20 bushfires followed by 2020-21 pandemic) and it is likely that respondents found this question difficult to assess. Also, in 2017 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 were now playing within the parliament. These reasons do not necessarily reflect changing work practices and their effect on the way they use information in general or the Library in particular. That said, there were other reasons given for change such as developing a better understanding of the different resources offered by the Library.

Use of different Library services

Research services remain the most often used services with 97% of senators, members and their staff using these services to some degree. The most heavily used service however is the online media subscription which 50% of respondents indicated they used heavily, followed by media monitoring which is used heavily by 44% of respondents. Mapping services were the least used. **Figure 18** below shows the different levels of use of the different Library services. **Figures 19–29** show comparisons with previous years.

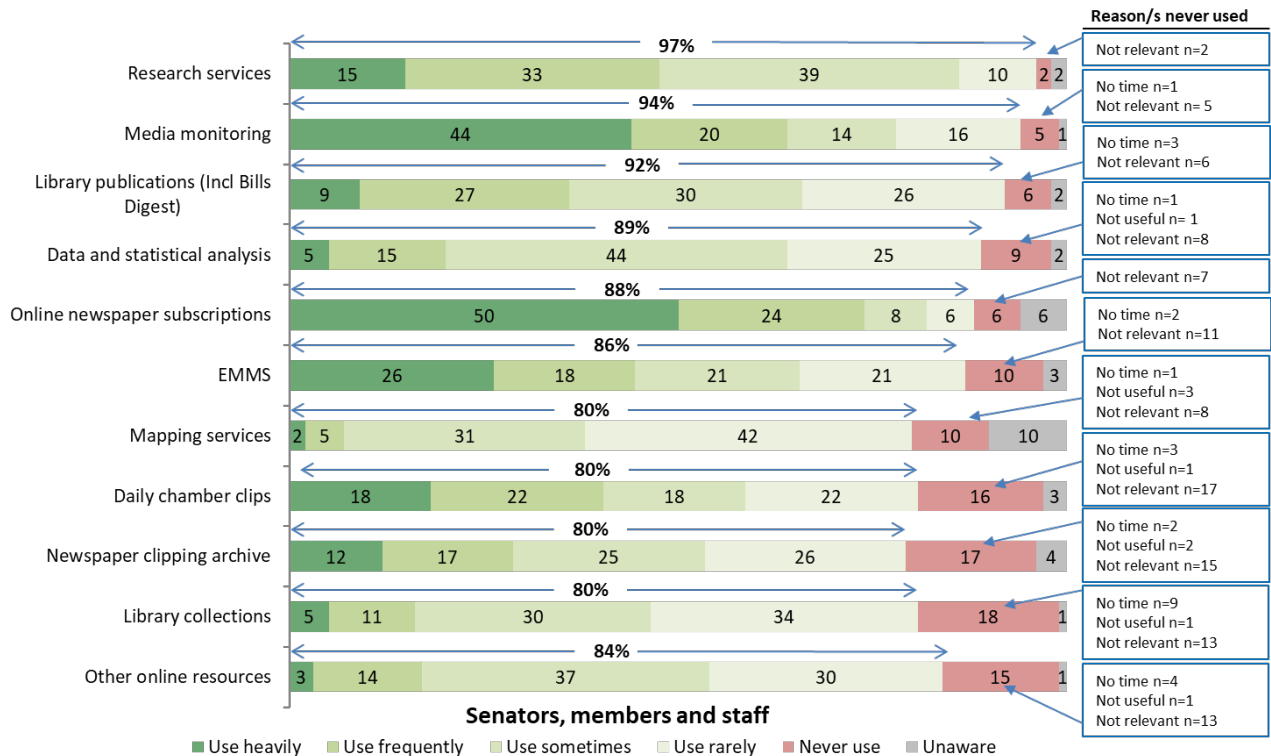


Figure 18: Frequency of use of specific Library services by senators, members and their staff 2021

Q10: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126

Research services

The results indicate research services were being used in 2021 at a similar level to previous waves with 97% reporting they used research at some time compared with 94% in 2017, 96% in 2015 and 99% in 2012.

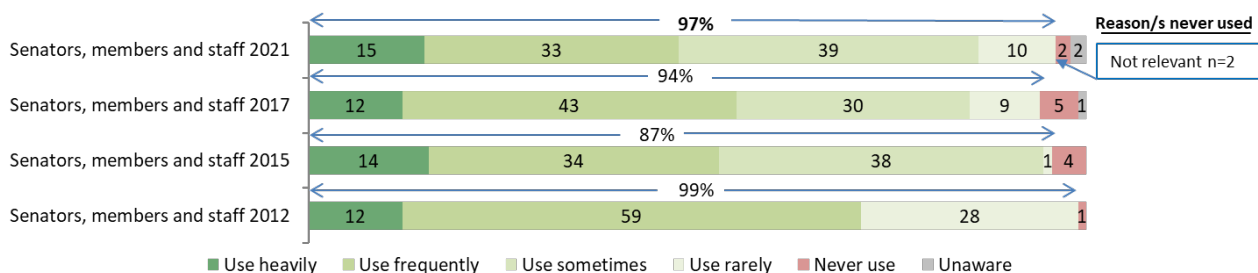


Figure 19: Use of research services

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=124; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=118

Data and statistical analysis

Use of data and statistical analysis services was asked for the first time in 2021 and while only 5% of respondents said they used the service heavily, it was used to some degree by 89% of senators, members and their staff.

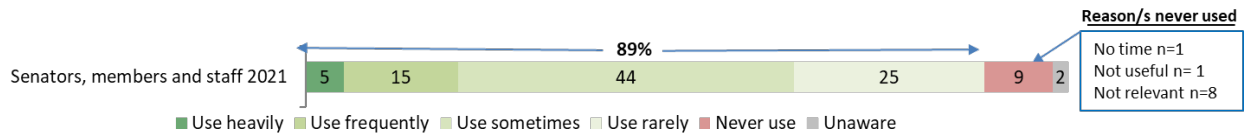


Figure 20: Use of data and statistical analysis

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?
 Senators, members and staff 2021 n=121

Media monitoring

Most parliamentarians and their staff used media monitoring services at some point and there has been a steady and significant increase in frequency of its use indicated in 2021.

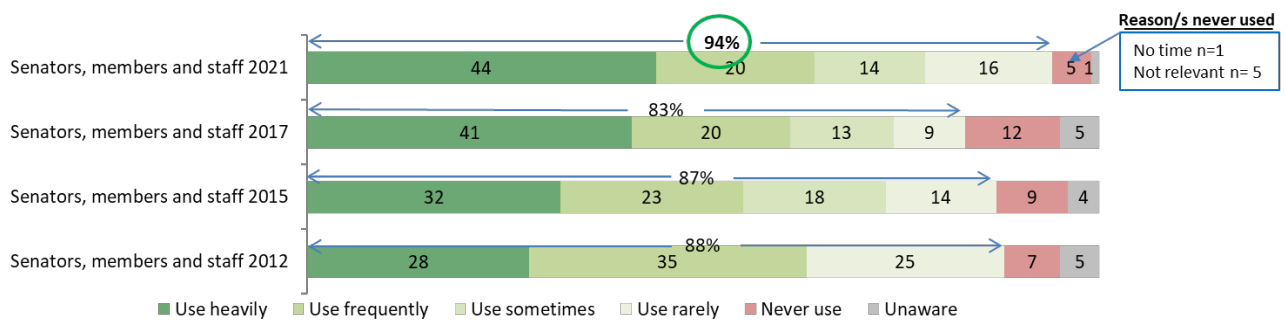


Figure 21: Use of media monitoring

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?
 Senators, members and staff 2021 n=124; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=118

Online newspaper subscriptions

Use of the online media subscriptions provided by the Library was asked for the first time in 2021 and 88% of respondents indicated they used them at some time. The qualitative research however suggested many people used their own subscriptions and were surprised (and perhaps confused) that the Library provided these.

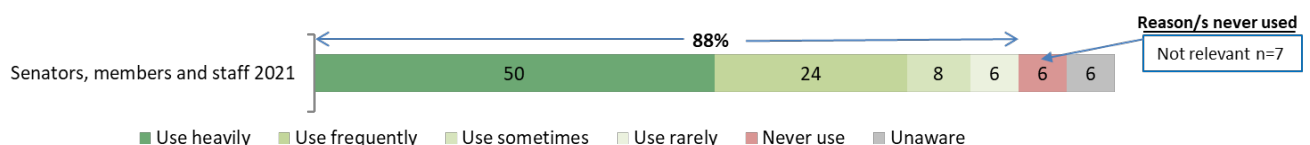


Figure 22: Use of online media subscriptions

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?
 Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126

Mapping services

The number of senators, members and their staff in 2021 who reported using the mapping service at some time significantly increased (+14%) from 2017, and there was a corresponding decrease (-10%) in those who said they *never used* mapping services. These figures should be viewed with the understanding that many respondents (particularly senators and their staff) would have little reason to use these services *heavily* or *frequently*. There will tend to be times of peak and lower need in the cycle of a parliamentary term.

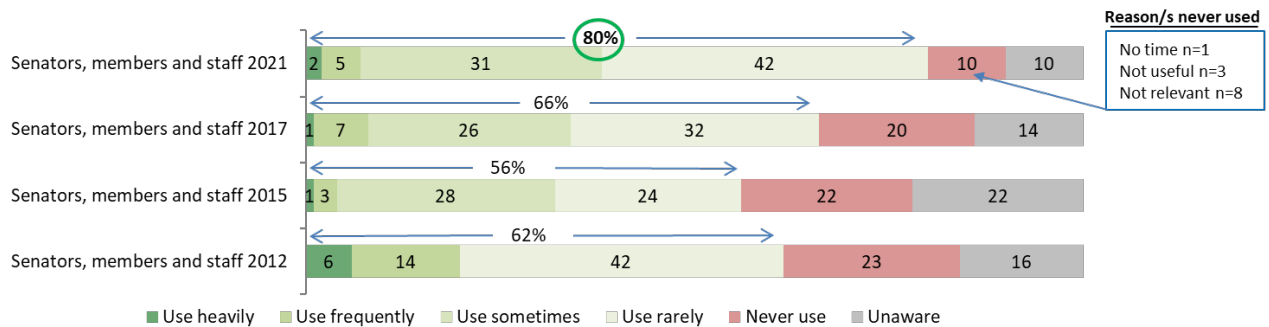


Figure 23: Use of mapping services

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=118

○ Significant increase

Daily chamber clips

Use of the daily chamber clips increased by +14% with most of the increase (+8%) seen in the *use heavily* category. The qualitative research however suggests some confusion with what the daily chamber clips entail.

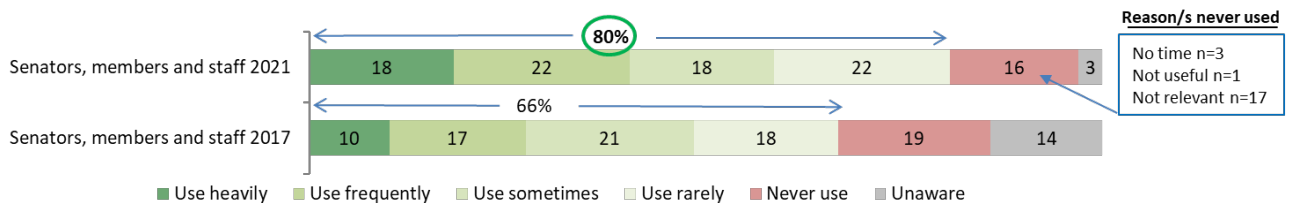


Figure 24: Use of Daily chamber clips

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155

○ Significant increase

Newspaper clipping archive

Use of the newspaper clipping archive has remained steady at 80% but the number using the service *heavily* has dropped (-9%). The qualitative research however suggests that the service is not well-known by that name, and if used, is used by only one or two people in an office.

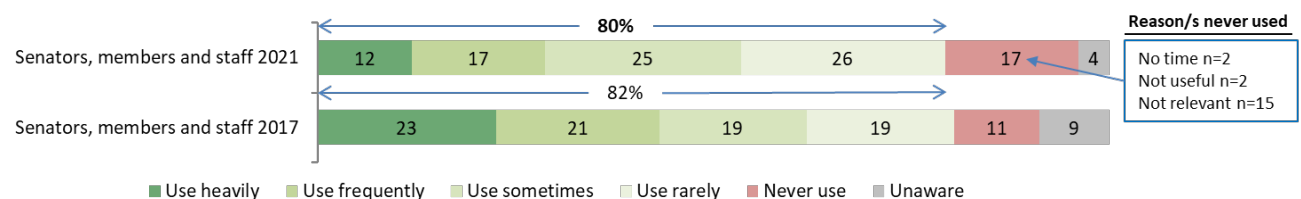


Figure 25: Use of Newspaper clipping service

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=118

Library publications (including Bills Digests)

Use of Library publications (including Bills Digests) by parliamentarians and their staff has increased slightly since 2017 (+5%). Qualitative research suggests there has been a reluctant acceptance of Bills Digests coming out later than needed in many cases. This is discussed later in this report.

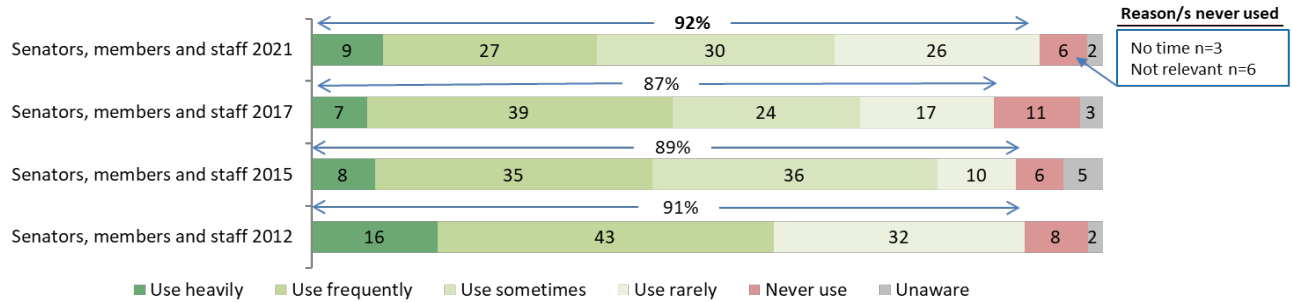


Figure 26: Use of Library publications (including Bills Digests) services

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=118

Other online resources

Use of other online resources has increased significantly (+13%) since 2017. This increase has probably contributed the increase in comments this year about the need for improved functionality (download times, search functions) and training.

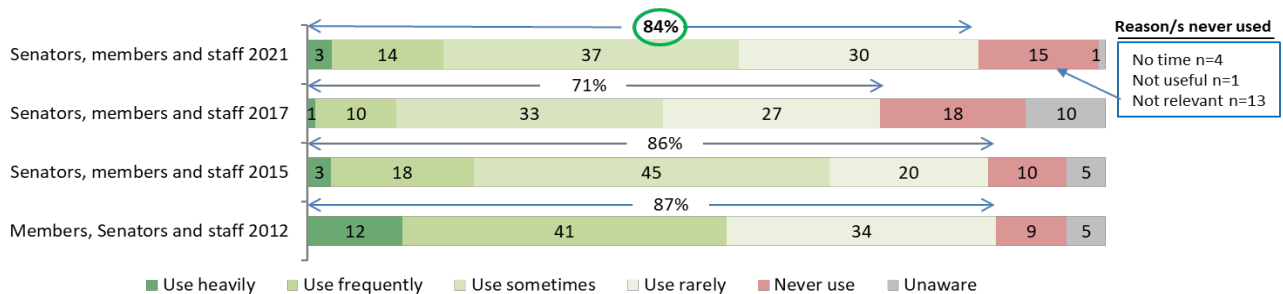


Figure 27: Use of online resources

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=118

○ Significant increase

Library collection

Use of the Library's print collection has remained steady since 2015.

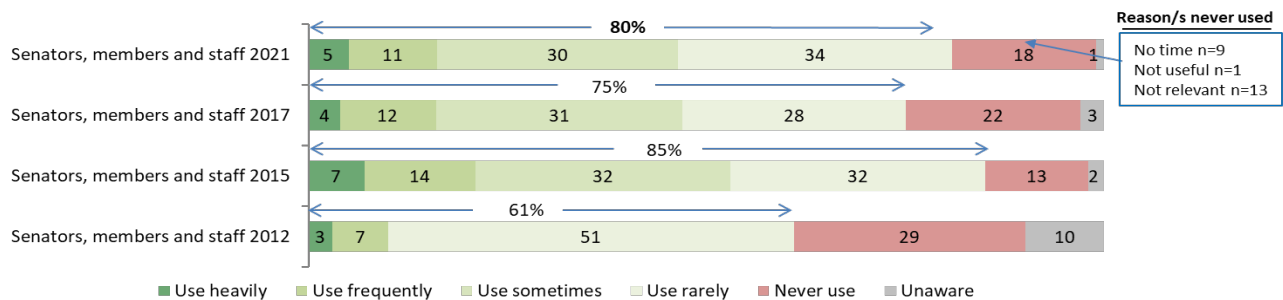


Figure 28: Use of Library print collection

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=118

EMMS

Use of EMMS remains stable and *heavily or frequently used* by two-thirds of parliamentarians and their staff.

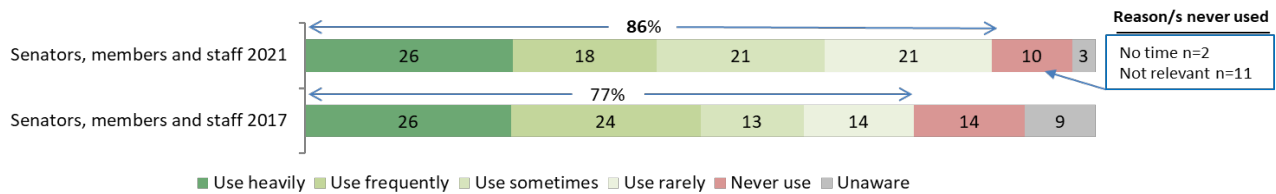


Figure 29: Use of EMMS

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=118

A number of reasons were offered for why particular services were not used with most citing ‘not having the time to use the service’ or ‘unaware of the service’. Other reasons offered included having no need for the service and not knowing how to use the service. There was a strong theme in both the qualitative research and the comments made on the survey that respondents would appreciate more and ongoing training on the different services offered by the Library, or ‘tips sheets’ on the different services. While senators and members remained relatively constant during the period of a parliament, there is a high turnover among staff and a constant need for training.

Parliamentary committee staff

The pattern of Library use among parliamentary committee staff in sitting and non-sitting weeks is similar to that seen among senators, members and their staff with only small differences between sitting and non-sitting weeks, as can be seen in [Figure 30](#) below. However, the data suggest that the Library was being used more by committee staff than it has in the past. Almost one third (32%) of committee staff used the Library more than once a week during sitting weeks and the same number during non-sitting weeks. In 2017 the figures were 26% and 23%.

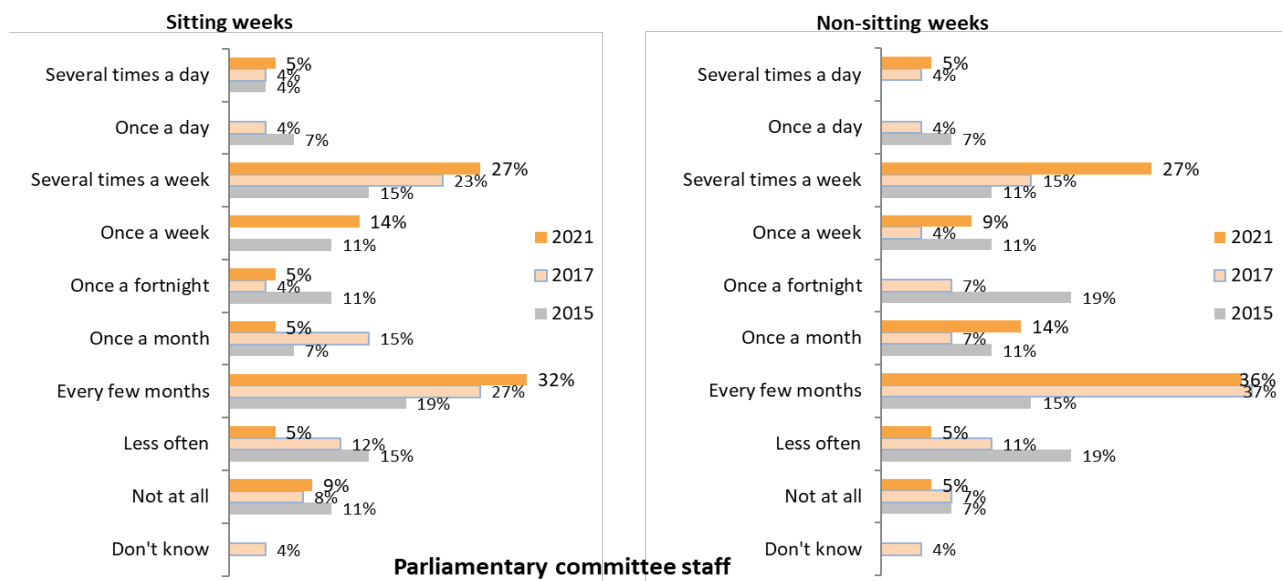


Figure 30: Reported usage by parliamentary committee respondents in sitting and non-sitting weeks

Q8: Which of the following best describes how often you use the Parliamentary Library during sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks?

Parliamentary committee staff 2021 n=22; 2017 n=27; 2015 n=27

Change in work patterns and Library use

Committee staff reported little change from 2017. Around one-third of respondents reported *no* change in their use of the Library, slightly less than what was recorded in 2017. The sample size for committee staff respondents is very small and should be viewed with caution. These comparisons are graphed in [Figure 31](#) below.

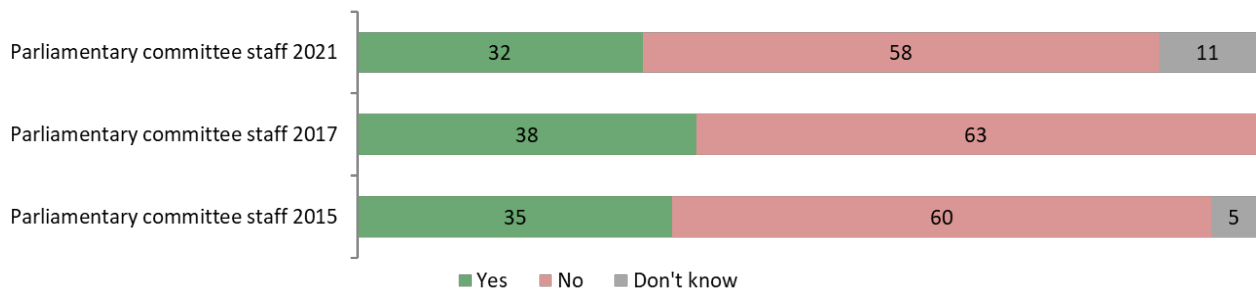


Figure 31: Reported change in use of the Library over the last three years

Q6: Including any impact by COVID-19, has your actual use of the Library changed at all over the last 1–2 years?
Parliamentary committee staff respondents (worked in PH more than 3 years) 2021 n=22; 2017 n=8; 2015 n=20

Use of different Library services

The newspaper clipping archive (68%) and library publications (including Bills Digests) (68%) were used most frequently by parliamentary committee staff when considering *heavy*, *frequent* and *sometime* use. If you add *use rarely* newspaper clipping archive (95%), library publications (91%), library collections (91%) and research services (91%) were most often used. Other online resources are also quite well used (82%), while data and statistical analysis and mapping services (as in 2017) were the least used. This can be seen in [Figure 32](#) below. [Figures 33–40](#) show comparisons with previous years.

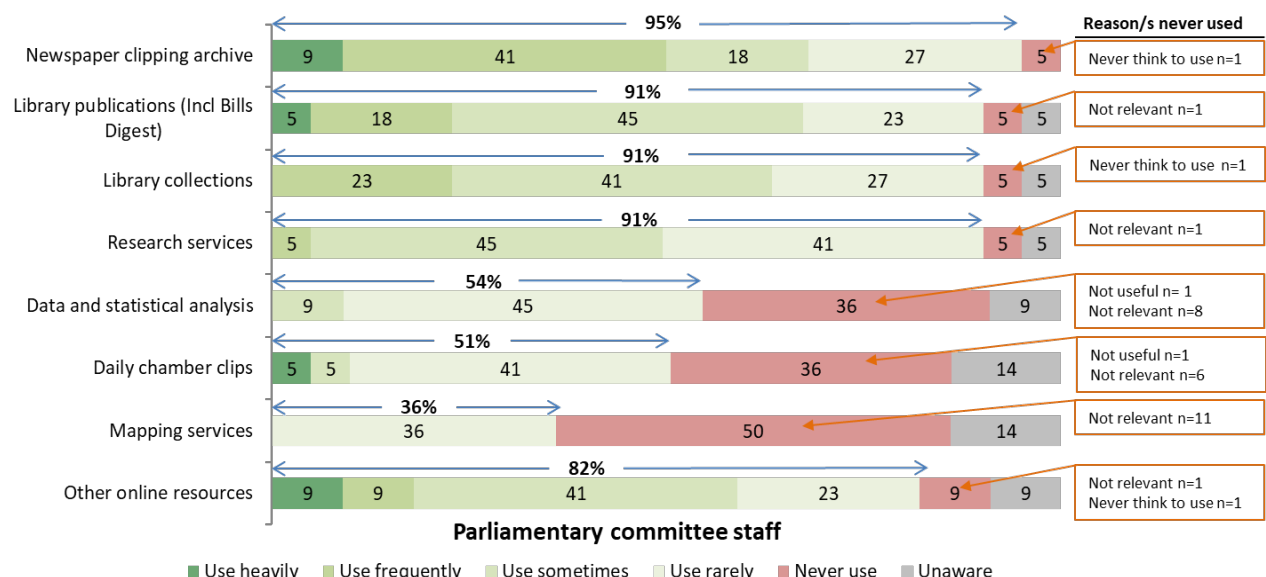


Figure 32: Frequency of use of specific Library services by parliamentary committee respondents

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?
Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021 n=22

Research services

Parliamentary committee staff reported a slightly lower level of research services use than senators, members and staff (91% compared with 97%), although 50% reported using the services *sometimes* or *frequently* which is an +11% increase since 2017 (the sample size is too small for significance testing).

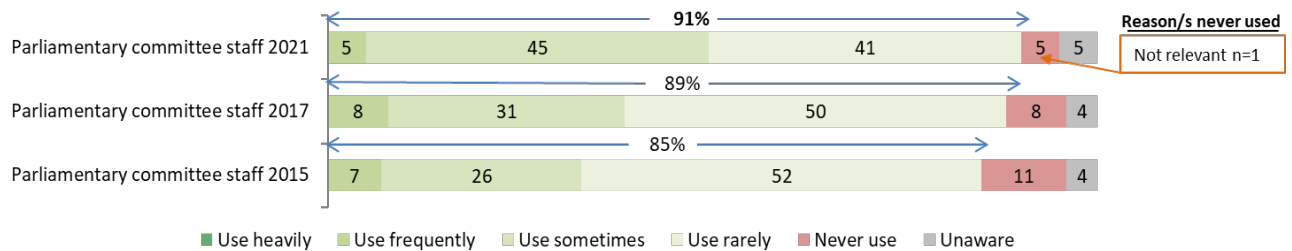


Figure 33: Use of research services

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

Mapping services

No respondents reported using mapping services heavily, frequently or sometimes in 2021. There has been a 18% increase since 2017 in those who said they never used mapping services. This increase corresponds with a 36% decrease in those who said they were unaware of the service.

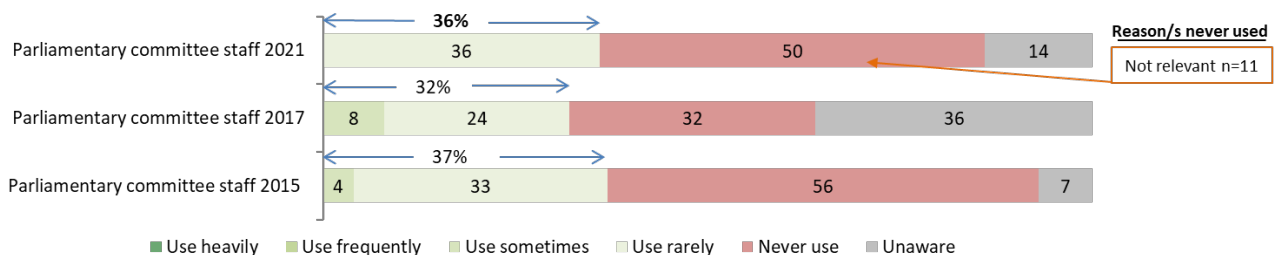


Figure 34: Use of mapping services

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

Library publications (including Bills Digests)

Use of the Library publications (including Bills Digests) is at 91%, a small increase from 2017. This increase is seen in the *sometimes* category (+10%).

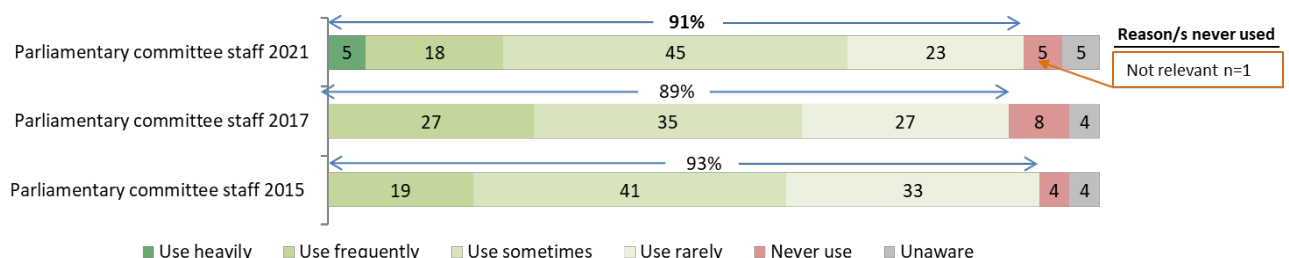


Figure 35: Use of Library publications (including Bills Digests) services

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

Other online resources

More than half (59%) of committee staff reported using online services *sometimes, frequently or heavily*. If *rarely use* is included, 82% of parliamentary committee staff respondents use the online resources. There has been a small increase in the number who said they never used the services (+5%) and those who were unaware (+5%).

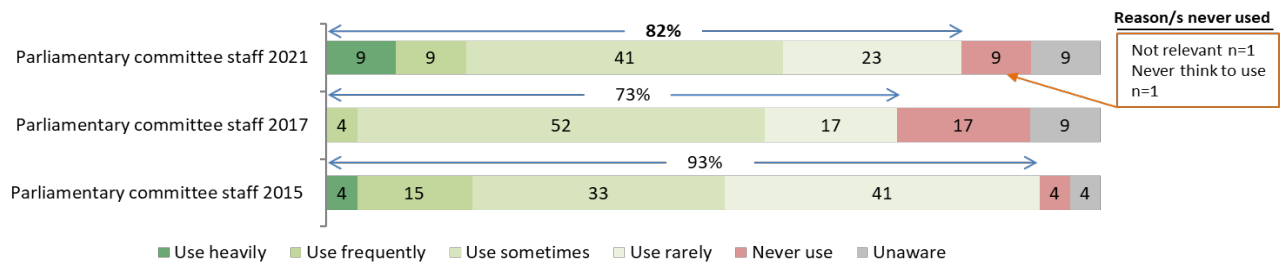


Figure 36: Use of online resources

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

Library collection

The Library collection was used by 91% of committee staff making it one of their most often used services, as it was in 2017 and 2015. The number who said they *never* used the collection dropped to 5% in 2021 (-2%) and a further 5% were *unaware*. With such a small sample 5% is one respondent so the information should be treated with caution.

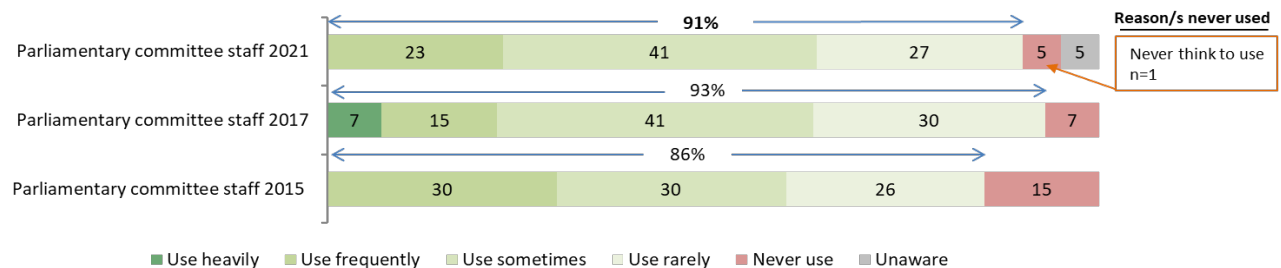


Figure 37: Use of Library print collection

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021—n=22; 2017—n=22; 2017—n=26; 2015—n=27

Newspaper clippings archive

Most committee staff (95%) used the newspaper clipping archive and two-thirds (68%) reported their use as *heavy, frequent or sometimes*, an increase of +12%. The increase can be seen primarily in *frequent* use (+17%).

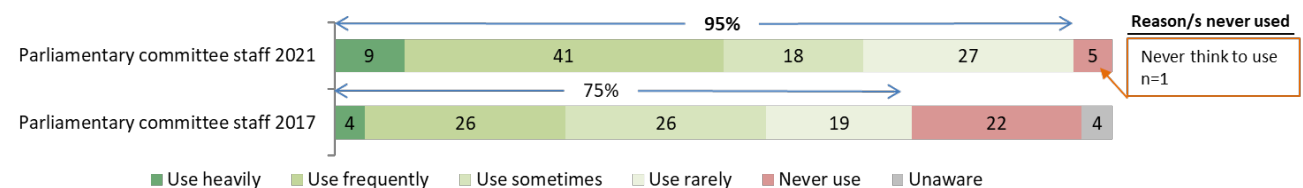


Figure 38: Use of newspaper clipping archive

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021—n=22; 2017—n=22; 2017—n=26; 2015—n=27

Daily chamber clips

Use of the daily chamber clips has increased slightly to 51%. The number of respondents unaware of the daily chamber clips has dropped by 26% but the number who say they never use the service has increased by 20%. The qualitative research suggests some confusion with what the daily chamber clips entail.

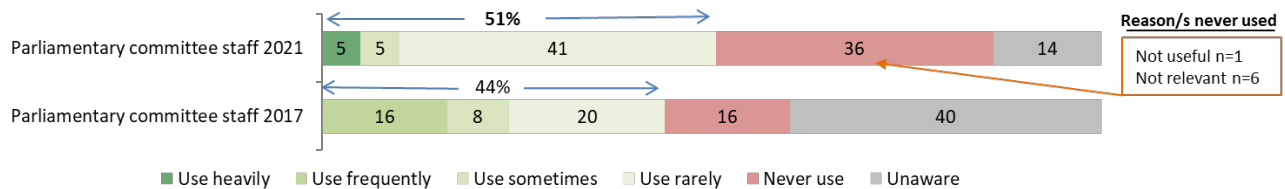


Figure 39: Use of Daily chamber clips

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

Data and statistical services

While around half (54%) of committee staff respondents reported using data and statistical services, no respondents indicated using them *frequently* or *heavily*, and 36% *never use* the data and statistical services.

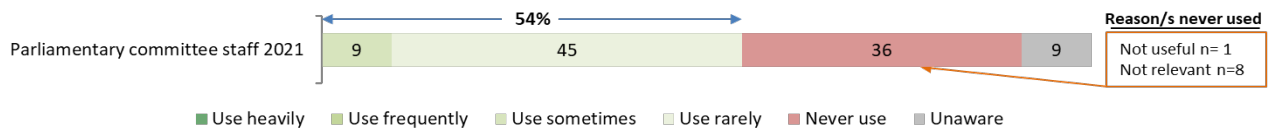


Figure 40: Use of data and statistical services

Q9: How often do you use the following Library services?

Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

A number of reasons were offered for why particular services were not used, 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 an ongoing need to try to address knowledge gaps and this is likely to be a constant requirement as staff changes occur.

5. Qualities of Library services and preferences

Key points

Qualities of Library services scored highly from both senators, members and staff and committee staff. Importantly, trust in the Library as a source of information was high at 99% among senators, members and staff and 95% among committee staff. There was also high regard for the standards of scholarship and expertise at 96% for parliamentarians and staff and 91% among committee staff. The only qualities to receive disagree scores were for ‘produces relevant and useful papers and publications’ where 1% of senators, members and their staff disagreed and ‘provides useful and easy to use online and digital services’ where 4% disagreed. Dissatisfaction with digital and online services was also raised in the qualitative research with complaints made mostly about inadequate search functions and slow response times.

Bills Digests remain an important and useful tool for many respondents, particularly senators, members and staff with 47% rating them *very* or *extremely useful*. For committee staff, Bills Digests are only useful when they relate to the subject of the committee enquiry, however 59% considered them *quite, very* or *extremely useful*.

All respondents were interested in other ways the Library could assist the consideration of legislation, however the qualitative research made it clear that other options must be IN ADDITION to the analysis that to many defines the value of the Bills Digests. Among parliamentarians and staff and committee staff, the most popular options were an early short version with key aspects of the bill (42% and 41%), a compilation of key media articles (41% and 23%), an analysis of significant amendments (39% and 41%) and disallowable instruments (24% and 27%), being able to register an interest in particular bills (37% and 36%), and oral briefings (20% and 23%). Treating Bills Digests as iterative documents is likely to be well-received.

Both groups also showed a strong preference for papers that were a ‘quick guide including a summary of Library analysis (e.g. 5–15 pages)’. Qualitative research suggested the importance of the summary with enough other material to provide depth and breadth to the subject, although all noted that there were times and topics where longer or shorter pieces were preferred.

Qualities of Library services

Qualities of Library services scored highly from both senators, members and staff and committee staff. Trust in the Library as a source of information was the highest quality at 99% among senators, members and staff and 95% among committee staff.

The only qualities to receive *disagree* scores were for ‘produces relevant and useful papers and publications’ where 1% of senators, members and their staff *disagreed* and ‘provides useful and easy to use online and digital services’ where 4% *disagreed*.

These are shown in [Figure 41](#) on the next page. Dissatisfaction with digital and online services was also raised in the qualitative research with complaints made mostly about inadequate search functions, slow response times and overall usability.

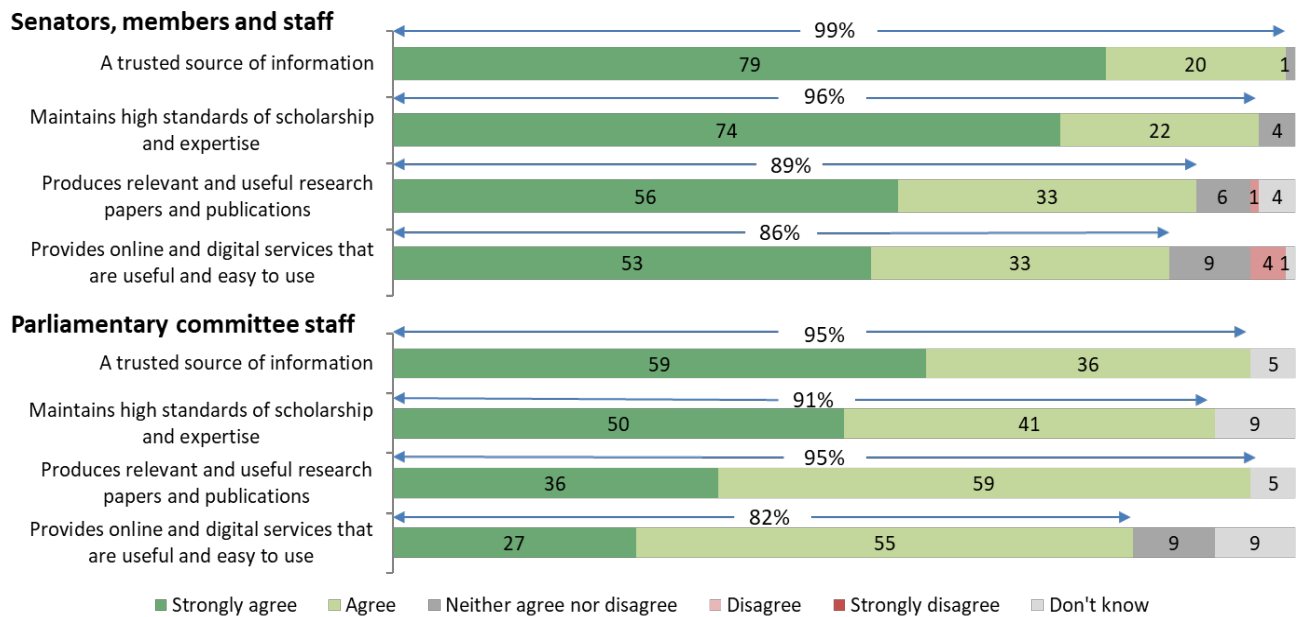


Figure 41: Qualities of Library services

Q25: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Library?
Senators, members and staff n=126; Parliamentary committee staff 2021 n=22

Reasons given by senators, members and their staff for positive ratings related to the easy to use services and the quality and breadth of the research, advice, publications and access to get journals, papers and reports. For example — “The services are easy to use, provide quality research and advice and the publications always stimulate consideration.” “The library resources and ability to get journals, papers and reports from across the globe is astounding.”

Reasons for lower ratings among senators, members and their staff related to having to go elsewhere for some information, a perception that there is too much emphasis on legislation and not enough on policy or papers are not relevant to their area of interest, or they have had issues with Library online services due to a lack of familiarity, a difficulty in logging on to different online services or in the performance of search functions in finding what is required. For example — “Sometimes have to go elsewhere for information (e.g. academics, superannuation fund investors).” “Too much emphasis on legislation and not enough on policy.” “As my use of Parliamentary Library services is limited, I am unfamiliar with how the online systems work and it would take me more time to find what I need online than it does for me to call, speak with a staff member and explain what I am looking for and receive their advice as to whether the Parliamentary Library actually has what I am looking for.” “I have trouble knowing what the digital services are and where they are on the website.” “Only gripe is with the cumbersome nature of the search with either long load times or unintuitive responses (e.g. searches for media on a date).” This last comment was in reference to the media monitoring platform.

Among parliamentary committee staff the reasons for positive ratings related to the good reputation of the Library and the quality and usefulness of the reading resources and being able to trust those resources. Lower ratings tended to again relate to the online and digital services. For example — “The online and digital services, like all of those in this parliament, are serviceable but generally not great.”

Areas of knowledge

Respondents were asked whether there were areas of knowledge that they felt were lacking in the Library services. Only 6% of senators, members and staff and 5% of committee staff felt there were areas where the Library could seek to increase expertise. Almost half of parliamentarians (42%) and two-thirds of committee staff (68) didn't know. Suggested area for additional expertise included state-specific knowledge, the future of employment, energy science and economics, and communications infrastructure and markets.

Bills Digests

In 2021, almost one quarter of parliamentarians and staff and committee staff reported either not using Bills Digests (14%) or not knowing about them (9%). Two-thirds of parliamentarians and staff and committee staff found them *quite, very or extremely useful*. This is shown in [Figure 42](#) below.

Qualitative research and comments made in the survey strongly suggest that Bills Digests would be considered more useful if they were timelier. Government members and their staff were less likely to use them or find them useful, and committee staff tended to find them useful only when they related to the topic of their committee. The timeliness of Bills Digests will always be impacted by the time available, amount of work involved and the need for careful research and checking. Given these difficulties, respondents were asked about other initiatives the Library could undertake to help in the consideration of legislation. This is shown in [Figure 43](#) on the next page.

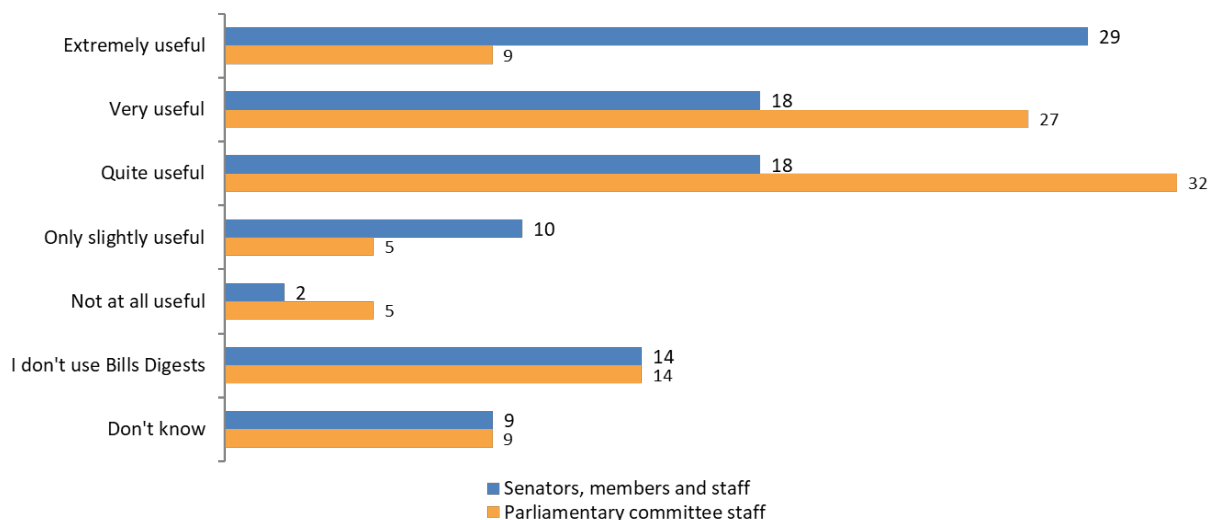
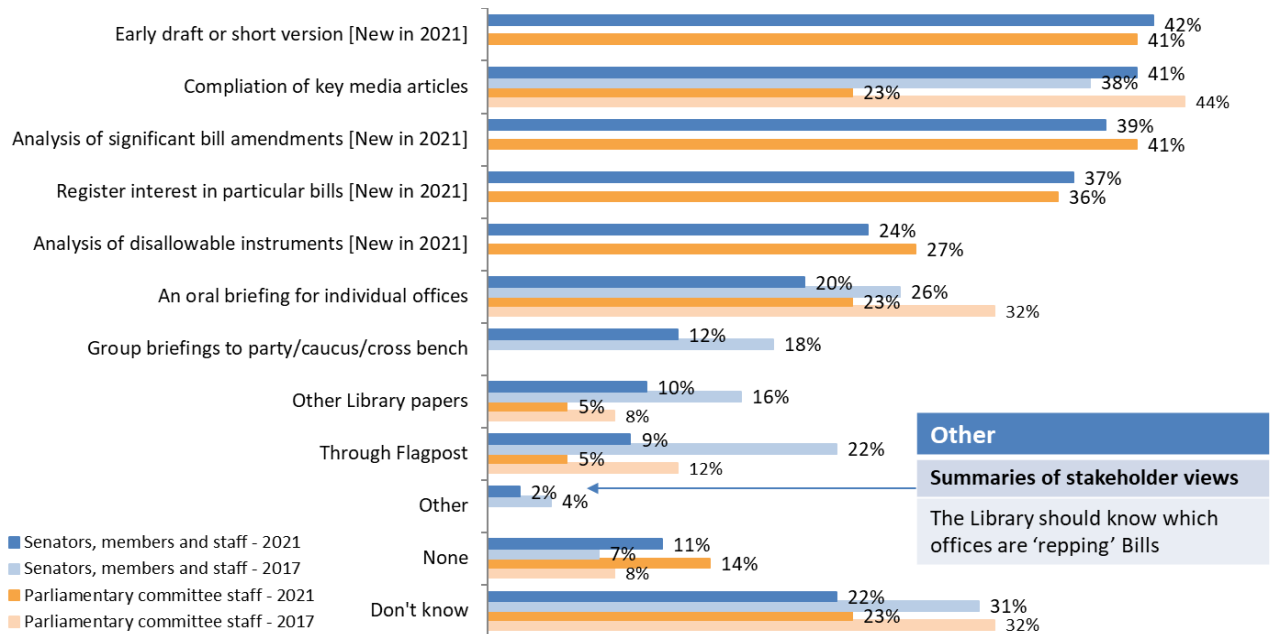


Figure 42: Usefulness of Bills Digests

Q34: How useful do you find Bills Digests?

Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021 n=22

The top three suggestions from senators, members and staff were an early draft or short version (42%), a compilation of key media articles (41%), and an analysis of significant Bill amendments (39%). For parliamentary committee staff the top three were an early draft or short version (41%), an analysis of significant Bill amendments (41%), and being able to register interest in a particular Bill (36%). Interviews also found the NZ example of a 'debate pack' was viewed positively. However, comments made in the interviews and survey stressed that these options would be in addition to Bills Digests because the quality of the analysis in Bills Digests was what made the highly valued. There is a strong case for considering Bills Digests as iterative documents and releasing sections as they become available.



Other
Summaries of stakeholder views
The Library should know which offices are 'repping' Bills

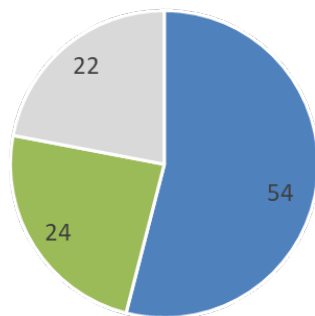
Figure 43: Other options to assist the consideration of legislation

Q35: Are there any other ways the Library could help in a timely manner with your consideration of legislation?
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=140. Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021 n=22; 2017 n=25

Lectures, seminars, roundtables and webinars — delivery preferences

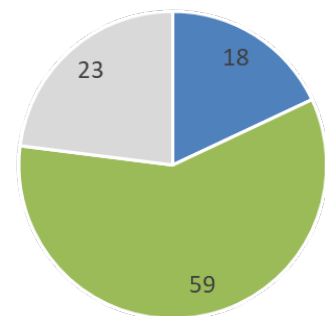
While there was a strong preference for online delivery of seminars, roundtables and webinars over face-to-face delivery in Parliament House (54% versus 24%) among senators, members and their staff, this was the opposite among committee staff where 59% preferred face-to-face delivery and only 18% preferred online. Both groups have considerable *don't know* scores, but that included comments such as 'either', 'neither' and 'don't care'. This is shown in [Figure 44](#) below.

Senators, members and staff



■ Online ■ F2F in PH ■ Not sure

Parliamentary committee staff



■ Online ■ F2F in PH ■ Not sure

Figure 44: Lectures, seminars, roundtables and webinars - delivery preferences

Q31: The Library provides lectures, seminars roundtables or webinars on topical issues. Which of the following do you prefer?
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; Parliamentary committee staff 2021 n=22

The qualitative research suggests those who indicated a preference for online were driven by a need to be at their desks rather than away from the office and those who preferred face-to-face spoke about the importance of being able to ask questions and meet the presenter. The qualitative research also found a strong preference for online presentations to be recorded or podcast so they could be watched or listened to at a later date. The point was often made, however, that this ‘intention’ would not always be realised. One respondent to the survey noted that they have not found it easy to find past lectures using the current search engine.

Accessing documents

In 2021 respondents were asked about the different ways they accessed documents and their main method to determine whether publications should be prepared as ‘digital first’ or ‘print first’. Results were similar for senators, members and their staff and for parliamentary committee staff, with both groups showing a strong current practice for accessing material via PCs or laptops. This is shown in [Figure 45](#) below. Most (71%) only indicated one or two different ways they accessed Library publications.

Qualitative information suggests that some staff will still print documents for senators and members, especially if they anticipate documents being read on a plane or in a car. It is important to note that the questions asked how respondents accessed documents and not how they would prefer to access them. It is possible that with a re-wording of the question, the score for mobile devices could be higher. What is clear is that a ‘digital first’ approach will meet the needs of the majority with the capacity to print the information.

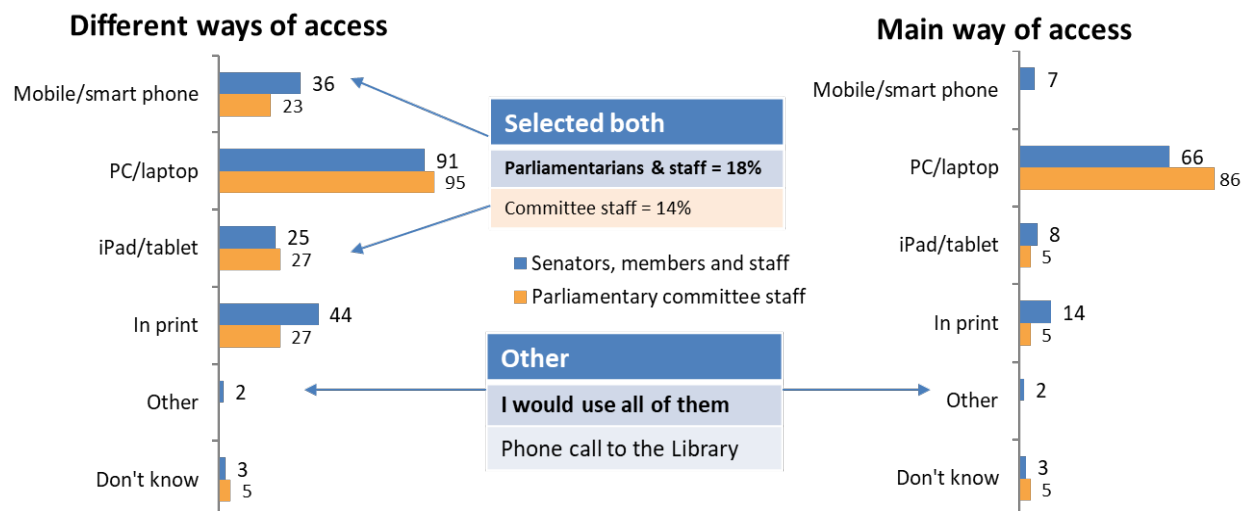


Figure 45: Ways of accessing documents

Q32: Thinking about the Library’s publications like the research papers, quick guides, Bills Digests and Flagpost blogs, which of the following describes (a) the different ways you personally access them and (b) the main way you personally access them?

Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; Parliamentary committee staff 2021 n=22

Respondents were also asked about their preference for different types of information products. Results were similar for senators, members and their staff and for committee staff, with both groups showing a strong preference for a ‘quick guide including a summary of Library analysis (e.g. 5–15 pages)’. This is shown in [Figure 46](#) on the next page. Qualitative research suggested the importance of the summary with enough other material to provide depth and breadth to the subject. Respondents also discussed there being times where an extensive paper was preferred and also times where the 1–2 page document was sufficient.

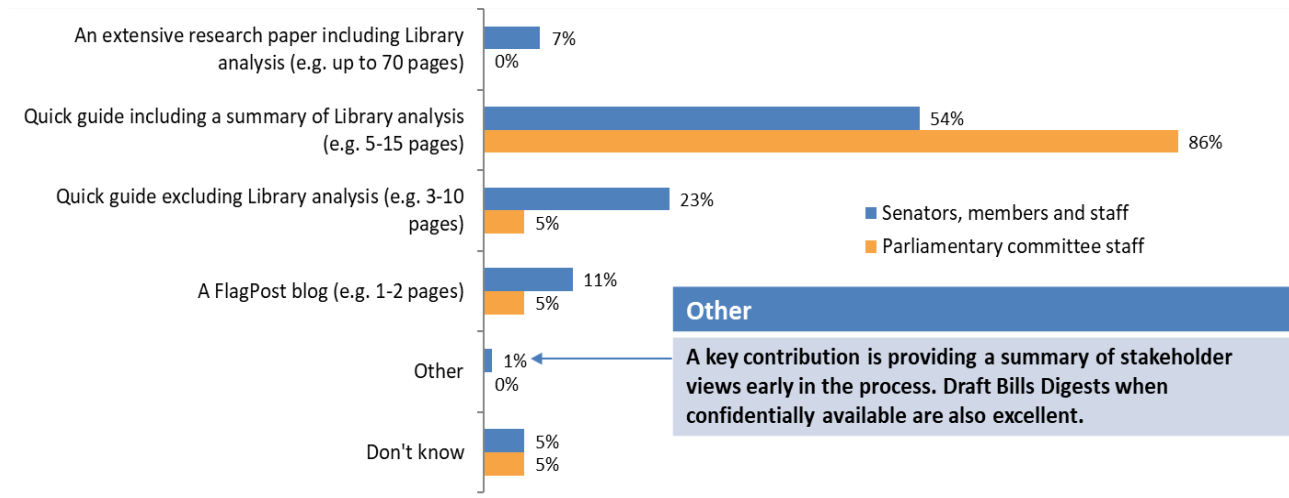


Figure 46: Preferences for the delivery of information

Q33: The Library produces research papers and information on key topics. Which of the following would most often meet your needs? Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; Parliamentary committee staff 2021—n=22

Media monitoring

Senators, members and their staff were asked if they had any suggestions for changes or additions to the news and media monitoring services that are provided through the Parliamentary Library. 72% said they had *no* suggestions, 15% indicated they *didn't know* and only 13% had suggestions.

Most suggestions centred around technical issues or desire for training and assistance. There were a small number of comments related to some dissatisfaction with the platform, its search functions and a preference for an alternative, and on expanding the coverage of the media monitoring.

Some examples of the technical issues included — “EMMS is a great service but frequently stops working. Very annoying when you are trying to download something. That being said, when I've needed to source things not on EMMS (regional radio) the helpline has been great and super quick to get the material for me.” “Difficult with logging into different media (e.g., newspapers) is an issue. Would be great to have just one login for all that carried across.” “Knowing what the alert is for. Sometimes it just says ‘personal’ and not the phrase it relates to.” “Some newspaper subscriptions don't give you access to their websites unlike others.”

Some examples of desired training and assistance included — “More training on how to get the most out of these services.” “Filters were not picking up domestic violence in a useful way, but I was unaware of assistance provide by library to set filters.”

The few suggestions on expanding the media monitoring service included such things as earlier access to the current day edition of the West Australian, enhanced coverage of foreign media (e.g. in the Asia-Pacific) and in-language papers in Australia and the forwarding of Crikey emails on weekends and public holidays.

Committee staff again raised issues with their lack of access to media monitoring and made a strong case for having equal access to the staff of senators and members.

6. Outreach and communication

Key points

Approximately two-thirds of committee staff and half of senators, members and their staff have experienced a visit or contact by the Library and/or Library lectures, seminars, roundtables or webinars. The Library’s outreach services were rated very highly – 78% of both groups indicated they were *extremely* or *very satisfied* with the services and there were no *dissatisfaction* scores.

Emails from the Library (including *What’s New*) remain the main channel for finding out about Library services at 71% for parliamentarians and their staff (+15% from 2017) and 73% for committee staff (+11% from 2017).

Around three quarters of respondents read *What’s New*, however many admitted to only scanning it. Around a quarter of committee staff and around a third of senators, members and their staff (a significant increase from 20% in 2017) found it *very* or *extremely useful*. There is an opportunity to use it to promote services, including tips on using online services.

The qualitative research and survey comments suggest a growing acknowledgement of the work the Library puts into communication and the responsibility of others to access this information. Ideas to improve communication were much in line with Library efforts to date and may just need further implementation or refinement.

Outreach services

Figure 47 shows that approximately two-thirds of parliamentary committee staff and half of senators, members and their staff had experienced a visit or contact by the Library. The result was similar for those who had attended Library lectures, seminars, roundtables or webinars. Just over a quarter of senators, members and their staff have had the Library visit or contact the electorate office. The qualitative research suggested that some people found it difficult to recall the outreach activities because of the impact of COVID-19.

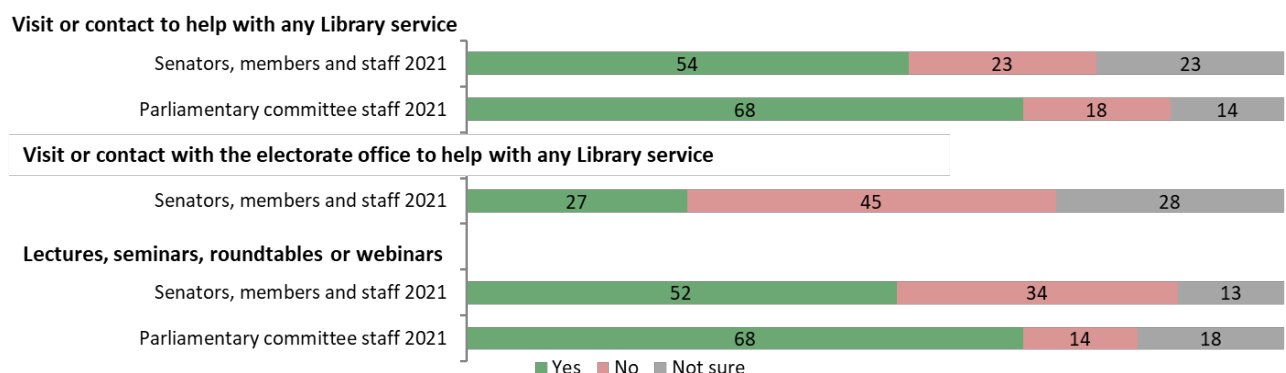


Figure 47: Outreach services

Q28: Please indicate if you have experienced the following Library activities (whether initiated by the Library or your office).
Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; Parliamentary committee staff 2021 n=22

Both senators, members and their staff and parliamentary committee staff gave very high satisfaction ratings and no dissatisfaction scores with the Library outreach activities they had experienced (Figure 48).

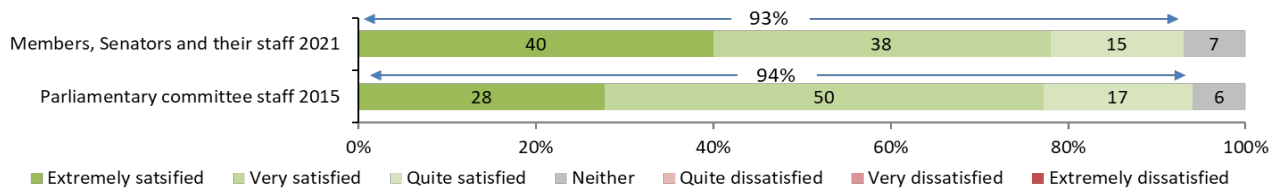


Figure 48: Satisfaction with outreach services

Q29: Please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with all Library activities above that you experienced. Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; Parliamentary committee staff 2021 n=22

Satisfaction with outreach services was driven by the appreciation and value of relationships formed, and the value of the information delivered through seminars and webinars. Suggestions for improvement included the need for seminar topics to be of political policy interest to justify the time spent being involved and the need for written information (e.g. tips sheets) to be left following one-on-one training.

Finding out about services

Emails from the Library including the eNewsletter *What’s New* continue to be the most common way for almost three-quarters of the parliamentarians and their staff (71%) and committee staff (73%) to find out about the Library’s publications and services. This has been an increase of +15% for senators, members and staff and +11% for committee staff. For senators, members and staff the next most common way was library.parl.net (28%) followed by colleagues (25%) aph.gov.au (24%) and Library staff (22%). For parliamentary committee staff *What’s New* was followed by Library staff (27%), colleagues (18%) and library.parl.net (14%). *What’s New* is clearly still a very important communication channel for the Library. This is shown in [Figure 49](#) below.

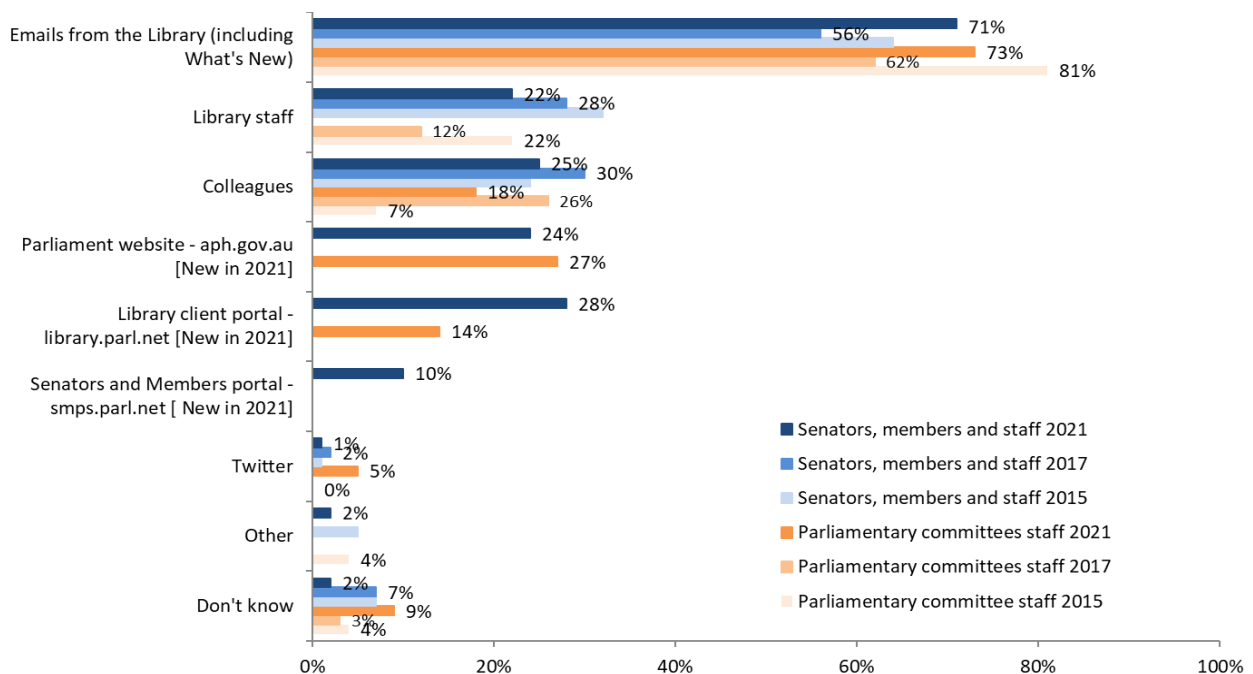


Figure 49: Where do people start when looking for information?

Q37: How do you mainly find out about the Parliamentary Library’s publications and services? (Multiple responses) Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=160; 2015 n=148. Parliamentary committee staff respondents 2021 n=22; 2017 n=34; 2015 n=67

While almost three-quarters of respondents found out about Library services through *What's New*, the qualitative research suggests that few read it always or completely but rather skimmed it when they had time. Figure 50 below shows that around a third of senators, members and their staff (a significant increase from 2017) and around a quarter of parliamentary committee staff find it *very* or *extremely useful*. This increases to 64% and 82% respectively when including *quite useful*.

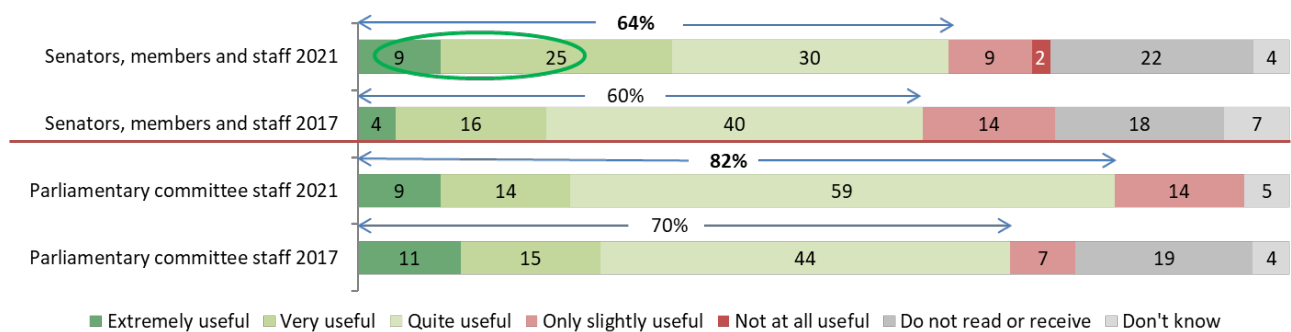


Figure 50: Usefulness of What's New

Q38: How useful do you find the What's New email newsletter from the Parliamentary Library?
 Senators, members and staff 2021 n=126; Parliamentary committee staff 2021 n=22

○ Significant increase

Respondents were asked what would make *What's New* more useful to them. Most did not provide a comment or indicated other ways they were more likely to keep up to date (e.g. via ParlInfo alerts).

An aspect raised related to finding a way to keeping it as short and targeted to the different audiences as possible. For example — “It's a very long email and I'm often quite time poor and have to wait for after hours to really look through it. Maybe a different layout or consideration of what is essential? Really, I just want the Bills Digests.” “Bite sized bits about how the Library can help people across different roles at different times (e.g. a quick plug about budget offerings). Make it a bit more task focused.” “Bit bland – doesn't grab my interest on a busy day.” “Often isn't relevant to committee work.”

Another aspect raised related to the timing of *What's New* so that it is released on Wednesday or Thursday each week or having one general email released at that time and separately covering the Bills for the week to come. For example — “It's published a bit late in the week. It would be good if it came out on a Wednesday or Thursday before a sitting week, although I also appreciate the Library is trying to take into account the relevant legislation on the weekly program. Maybe one email for general matters and one specifically covering Bills?” “Maybe don't send it out last thing on Friday.”

Comments also indicated that there is an opportunity to use it to promote the Library's services, including tips on using online services. For example — “Short descriptions of each publication.” “Include tips for navigating the portal.” “More information and tips about available services.” In addition, a 5 minute podcast was suggested by one respondent.

Promoting the Library's services

As mentioned earlier in the report, respondents in this wave of research were more likely to acknowledge the work the Library does to promote its services. Some also suggested it is for themselves to make more of an effort to find out and make more use of the opportunities, support and updates provided by the Library. Nevertheless, respondents were asked about any ideas they had for promoting the Library's services. Ideas to improve communication were much in line with the Library's existing services and efforts to date.

Ideas provided by senators, members and staff included:

- **Direct contact and personal briefings with offices both in Parliament House and electorate offices.** For example — “Contact with offices, flyers, email.” “I would offer personal briefings for each office at a time of their choosing and set up a text alert service.” “Direct contact is probably the only way to reach those people who are unlikely to read the circulars. I would recommend starting with Opposition and crossbench staff who are more likely to use your services than government members who have departments.” “Personal briefings for each office at the beginning of each parliamentary term.”
- **A short regular email newsletter.** For example — “I find the short regular email newsletters best, small bites often.” “Communicate changes via an email newsletter once a week or fortnight.”
- **An introduction or induction kit or online module for new staff.** For example — “Hmm tricky for staff based in Electorate Offices. We like in-person training but cannot get to Parliament House often. Perhaps a good induction kit for new staff to train up new staff easily.” “It would be good to offer an introduction to new staff (not just at Parliament House).” “An induction pack or online module summarising and making clear links with how the Library and its products and services can assist with work...”
- **A guide to the Library and its services based in terminology used by non-librarians.** For example — “Provide a guide to the library, its contents and services with an index. The subject terms could be gathered from the terminology used most by non-librarians, and a variety of synonyms for terms should be used to enable staff to find what they need in the library...”
- **A central point of contact for the Library or a contact person.** For example — “Establish the Central Enquiry Point as the point of contact for the range of services the Library offers.” “Set up a contact person for each subject area who checks in at regular intervals to remind me how the Library can help.”
- **A how to guide, tips or template for making research requests.** For example — “Maybe a how to guide – how to ask for a research paper, what time frames are required etc.? Or an online template for this?”

Ideas provided by parliamentary committee staff included:

- **Visits and contacts from various Library teams, especially when a new committee is established.**
- **Introduction and update information sessions, online modules or podcasts, briefing sessions and Library tours designed for parliamentary library staff.** For example— “It would be good to understand how the library's services can be applied to committee work specifically.” “Make an information session part of our induction; invite the relevant Secretariat to a briefing meeting (1/2 hour perhaps informal get together) showcasing what the relevant research group can offer.” “The library tries to make us fit into its timetable, and our calendars are all over the place and change quickly. The library has long introduction events which aren't very clear on what level of knowledge you need to have to attend (e.g. induction or longer-term staff). I would like targeted overviews and seminars where library come to us in Reps or Senate committees to do the overview. I think new people may be more likely to attend.” “The Library tours always worked best for me.” “Perhaps a 5 minute podcast?” “Day in the library programs.”
- **Using existing committee office forums.** For example — “The Department of the House of Representatives has regular forums etc, and the committee office in particular has specific training sessions (Committee Office Debrief/Inside Committees). The Library could present at some of those...”
- **Online training and easy guide and access for the Library portal** – For example “Online training on how to navigate the portal and what is where. Put the portal and an easy guide on RepsNet.”

7. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

At a high level, the Library is performing very well—it is providing the services people need and want through a variety of channels and to a high quality—however it is important to appreciate that the research suggests that demand for key services is increasing along with faster timeframes.

The Library is highly valued by senators, members and their staff, receiving high ratings against satisfaction and willingness to recommend. There are, however, some clear areas for potential improvement which have the capacity to affect resilient trust (particularly over the longer term):

- Digital and online services not being as technically efficient or intuitive as needed.
- Bills Digests not being as frequent or timely as needed or wanted.

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 don't use the Library to the extent they could because they don't know all the services that would be useful to them, or how to use them. There is acknowledgement that this is despite the Library trying to tell and help them.

All Library functions are being used:

- Research is seen as the core and its value-add would be difficult if not impossible to get elsewhere.
- News and media services are widely used and valued. There continues to be selected media that is felt to be missing (timeliness of the West Australian, some regional media and foreign media)
- Use of media monitoring, mapping services, daily chamber clips and other online resources has increased significantly, and this has possibly contributed to some dissatisfaction with the technical aspects of these and user knowledge.

Library papers are highly valued, particularly when they respond to a current issue and preempt questions. This is especially the case for minor parties and independents who do not have party resources to draw on.

As seen in previous years, the issue of timeliness of research services remains, however there seems to be a growing acceptance of some timeframes being unrealistic and any drop in quality is usually because of the timeframe or the way in which the question was put. There is scope to help improve the quality of the questions asked and associated expectations. Unlike in previous years, there were few reports of requests never being responded to or falling off the radar.

The timeliness of Bills Digests continues to be an issue, although there appears to be an acceptance now that they will often be too late to be as useful as they could be. Suggestions for other methods to assist consideration of legislation (including the example of a NZ Debate Pack) were popular and desired, but only if in addition to Bills Digests. There is scope for the Bills Digests to be issued iteratively.

The contact officer program seems to be quickly forgotten as the pressures of the job build: those staff who attended orientations were very grateful. Many people expressed the need for a 'refresher' or for a one-on-one visit to discuss their library use and whether they had other information needs that could be met by the Library. This year there were requests for online courses covering orientation, services in general and how to use specific online services. There were also requests for written 'tips sheets'.

There were many more comments this year about technical and online services being unsatisfactory, particularly because of inadequate search functions and download times. Respondents spoke of their desire for training in these products or preferably more intuitive functions or online assistance. While the technical and design aspects of online services cannot be addressed by the Library in the immediate term, improved training would be beneficial.

In 2015 many senators, members and their staff said they didn't use the Library as often as they would like "because we know how busy they are – we try to just use them for the really important things". This was less frequently raised in 2017 and not at all in 2021. In 2021 comments calling for additional research staff were stronger suggesting the potential for frustration in the future.

Recommendations

1. Continue to address the issue of committee staff believing their needs are not being understood by the Library. Activity to date has been much appreciated and is likely to improve with committee staff being given access to media services.
2. Many respondents asked for better and more regular training in different aspects of Library services from general refreshers (what's available and why it might be useful to them) to the specific (how to use different online services, how to ask the research team for a well-targeted response). There were many comments of how this could be done via YouTube and online modules for the more complex services, or via 'tips sheets' or more comprehensive written instructions, or by more visits to offices to offer help.
3. While only a few respondents criticised media monitoring services, they were strong in their criticisms. There was widespread ignorance of how people could ask for help to set up filters which could be addressed by online training as outlined above. It would be worthwhile contacting the offices of Western Australian senators and members to discuss issues re timeliness of the West Australian and any alternatives.
4. Use *What's New* strategically: it is well-known and reasonably well-read although not consistently. It will always be a low priority during busy times: keep it short, perhaps with dot points on content up front so those who only skim at least know what is in it. Preferably issue on Thursdays and possibly using a 'Your week to come' approach. Consider including 'tips' for using the Library and its services more effectively.
5. The 'Power user' fact sheet was very well-received in the qualitative research with many suggesting it would be a good poster for offices.
6. Continue face to face, phone and digital outreach services, particularly visits to Canberra offices, committee secretariats and electorate offices. Consider offering all offices a contact person they can ring when they're not sure how to access a service and consider each contact officer having a program of phone calls to offices asking if they needed any assistance.

7. If IT services are being reviewed and resources and funding allow, consider improvements to the useability of the website and online services (particularly search functionality).
8. Consider issuing Bills Digests iteratively with preliminary information such as early drafts or short versions, a compilation of media articles, and analysis of significant Bill amendments and disallowable instruments, and a system allowing people to register their interest in particular Bills.
9. Consider ways to achieve effective coordination across research teams and other areas of the Library to achieve a more coordinated and relevant response and avoid the client needing to seek input from the different areas individually.
10. Continue checking and discussing to clarify the requirement of the client request and turnaround timeframe/trade-offs, as well as keeping the client informed on receipt and progress of the request.
11. Consider the perceived knowledge gaps and how they may be addressed. At the core of the Library is the expert knowledge and relevant analytical capability.
12. Provide a short summary of the research findings to all staff to (a) acknowledge the assistance they gave by responding, and (2) to take advantage of the opportunity to promote the breadth of the Library's services.

If there is any message I would like to convey it is this: please don't change anything! Certainly not for my benefit anyway. Maybe pay Library staff more...

"Having the APH library behind you is like having a super power."

I will use your services. That's on me now. Although I didn't know I had access to these resources. My first visit back to Canberra will include a visit. Thank you.