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Australian Parliamentary Library Client service evaluation 2024

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June 2024



Parliament of Australia
Department of Parliamentary Services

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1. Executive summary

The 2024 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 one mini-focus group, followed by a quantitative survey. Interviews were held with:

- 74 staff from the offices of 52 parliamentarians, and
- 1 focus group discussion with 5 parliamentary committee staff.

Interviews were conducted via video conference or telephone, based on interviewee preference. While interviews were mostly one-on-one, there were some conducted with two or even three people in attendance. The committee staff focus group was conducted at Parliament House. A survey was completed for each person as part of the interview and focus group discussion.

At n=195, the sample size for parliamentarians and staff was greater than in 2021 (+69). Incomplete surveys were included where applicable. The 2024 sample profile differed from previous rounds of research with fewer parliamentarians and more electorate-based staff. The sample for committee staff was n=16. Characteristics of respondents are provided in chapter 2.

Overall satisfaction and performance

Overall, the Library continues to perform very well and is highly valued as evidenced by high ratings throughout the evaluation. With all its services well-used, it is providing the services people need and want through a variety of channels and to a high standard. However, it is important to appreciate the research indicates that demand for key services continues to increase — the data suggest almost half (46%) of parliamentarians and their staff use the Library more than once a week during sitting weeks (+12% from 2021) and 38% during non-sitting weeks (+12% from 2021). Conversely, committee staff appear to have used the Library less often than previously, although the sample size is too small to draw conclusions. Along with increased use, the research noted continued demand for faster timeframes and more responsive and user-friendly digital services.

Satisfaction among parliamentarians and their staff remains high (96%) and is consistent with previous years. The significant increase in the proportion of those who were extremely satisfied in 2017 has been maintained through to 2024 and there were no dissatisfied responses. Responsiveness, professionalism and high-quality research were all cited as reasons for satisfaction. There was also a significant increase (+18%) in those who had been around since before the 47th parliament and who indicated the Library's performance has improved (28%), while 63% said it has remained the same and 9% didn't know. For the first time no-one indicated a decline.

Overall satisfaction among committee staff has also remained high and stable, with no dissatisfied committee staff responses, however it remains a little lower than parliamentarians and their staff. While committee staff made many positive comments and appreciated the efforts the Library has made to meet their needs, there was still a strong sentiment that the Library considered committee staff to be a lower priority than other clients.

Importantly, the very high level of trust in the Library as a source of information and in having high standards of scholarship and expertise was maintained. The Library also continued to score well with parliamentarians and their staff against all performance measures for responding to requests — *high quality* (92%), *balanced* (95%), *accurate* (92%), *timely* (90%), and *confidential* (92%). *Keep you informed* (82%) and *usefulness and ease of use of digital services* (78%) received the lowest ratings. This was consistent with comments made. The feedback from committee staff was similar.

Ratings of Library staff also remained stable and high across all measures with no significant differences from 2021. Ratings were highest for *providing services professionally* and lowest for *go the extra mile*.

Library services use and priorities

The Library services continue to be well used and in fact comparatively more often in 2024 by parliamentarians and their staff overall—with almost half (46%) using the Library more than once a week during sitting weeks (+12% from 2021) and 38% more than once a week during non-sitting weeks (+12% from 2021). Whereas committee staff appear to be using the Library a little less frequently than previously, although the sample size is too small to draw conclusions.

There were some significant decreases in the level of use of specific services which could be attributed, in part, to the change in sample composition (with more electorate-based staff):

- 10% decrease in those who considered themselves to be heavy users of research services
- 11% decrease in users of Library publications
- 9% decrease in users of EMMS
- 15% decrease in users of statistical and data analysis
- 10% decrease in users of daily chamber clips, and
- 16% decrease in users of mapping services.

When asked to rank their top 3 priority services for the next 12 months, all services received some level of ranking. However, the greatest concentrations of priorities were on research services, media services (e.g. Isentia Mediaportal, online newspapers and EMMS) and Bills Digests. The next tier down in priority for parliamentarians and their staff were statistical and data related services (e.g. dashboards and data visualisation, mapping and statistical and data analysis), whereas it was research publications and library collections for committee staff.

Resources used for research and how Library services are accessed

The Library research service is the second most popular resource used by parliamentarians' offices in researching information for papers, speeches, etc. (72%), beaten only by Google (78%). Close behind are Government websites (71%) and media sources (71%). Google was also the first place most people went. Committee staff were most likely to use Google and Government websites, followed by Government or academic reports and the Library research service. Some parliamentarians and staff (15%) and some committee staff have used artificial intelligence (usually to 'test and try it out') and many spoke of possibly using it in the future. At the same time people were aware of current potential risks in its use.

Online services

The range of digital services offered was cited as a reason for perceived improvement in the Library in 2024 and there was a desire to use self-serve options quickly and easily. However, digital and online services were

again generally raised as areas of concern with respondents pointing to poor search functionality, design issues affecting respondents' ability to use services intuitively, access issues when outside of the Parliament House IT system, and the need for training and online assistance to help make the most of them.

Research services

As in previous years, research services remain at the core of most people's experiences of the Library, being used by 92% of parliamentarians and their staff and a similar proportion of committee staff. Of note, however, was a significant drop in the number of parliamentarians and staff who said they used research services heavily (-10%), however this is possibly a reflection in the change in the sample's composition. Research services continue to be rated very highly and their value-add would be difficult, if not impossible, to gain elsewhere. The value of discussing research enquiries with the researchers as a way of understanding the issue better and being able to frame exactly what information clients needed, was often raised.

Previous waves of research drew criticism of requests not being timely and this was heard again in 2024, although there was an acknowledgement that desired timeframes could be unrealistic. There was also an acknowledgement that the quality of research responses had improved with more analysis and less 'cut and paste' although some felt this was variable. Comments calling for additional research staff were strong again, and respondents were unsure of the Library's ability to respond to what they believed would be a massive increase in enquiries leading up to the next election given the number of Independents in this Parliament. There is still room for improvement in keeping people informed of the progress of their requests.

Assistance with the consideration of legislation

After research services, Bills Digests were considered the next priority for the Library by both parliamentarians, their staff and committee staff. Three quarters (75%) of parliamentarians and their staff indicated they were quite, very or extremely useful, 5% indicated slightly useful and the remaining 20% indicated they didn't use them (either because their office had little involvement in legislation or because looking at these was the job of others in the office) or were unsure. Of those who used them at all, 62% use them heavily or frequently, 27% use them sometimes and 9% use them rarely. The timeliness of Bills Digests was again raised as a concern, although around three quarters agreed they were available when needed and contained the right amount of information. It was recognised timeliness will always be impacted by the time available, the amount of work involved and the need for careful research and checking. Because of this the Preliminary Bills Digests were considered almost as useful. Responses varied when it came to prioritising the content in the Bills Digests, however a high-level overview of key issues and background information were overall the highest first-tier priorities. Disallowable Instruments Updates were identified as quite, very or extremely useful by 38% of parliamentarians and staff, a further 9% considered them slightly or not at all useful and 54% don't use them or were unsure. Of those who had used them at all, 26% use them heavily or frequently, 49% use them sometimes and 23% use them rarely. Committee staff feedback was similar.

Media services

Isentia Mediaportal and online papers were highly used and valued by parliamentarians and their staff, scoring 89% and 90%, respectively. EMMS saw a significant drop at 77% (-9%), however some respondents were unaware of recent improvements and those who were, were generally very positive. Those who criticised media services spoke of technical issues, particularly when trying to access early morning grabs and there being no Library assistance available before business hours that start at 8.30am. Committee staff also used some media services highly and appreciated having access now, although there was some frustration expressed with the approval process to gain access.

Outreach services and communication

There was acknowledgement of the Library's communication and that the Library's outreach services were very good — it was just that they quickly forgot, didn't have time to attend or weren't aware of or properly looked at the communication. 86% of parliamentarians and staff indicated they were quite, very or extremely satisfied with Library outreach services, as did committee staff.

However, despite the Library's efforts, there continued to be a lack of knowledge about the full range and details of Library services and products and how they could be used. This was evident among those early in their careers or new to their jobs, as well as among those more experienced. *"I don't use it because it's not relevant to my job...or maybe I just don't know how it could be relevant to my job."* There was recognition from many that the Library seemed to improve the more you got to know it and what it could do for you.

The only significant difference from 2021 was a 13% fall in the number of parliamentarians and staff who indicated they had attended a lecture, seminar, roundtable or webinar (39%).¹ There was an increased indication of committee staff attendance. There was a small increase in parliamentarians and staff who recalled an electorate office visit (35%, +8%) and in those who had experienced a visit or contact to help with a Library service (58%, +4%).

Many people expressed the continued need for induction kits and training, along with a 'refresher' induction or for one-on-one in person or online visits to discuss their library use and whether they had other needs the Library could meet. There were also calls for an 'account manager' to check in on offices and their needs every few months. As in previous years there were calls for online courses covering orientation, services in general and how to use specific online services, and requests for written 'tipsheets'.

The qualitative research showed many people were unaware of the training offered by the Library but keen to take advantage of it. Suggestions for training were wide and varied, ranging from more of what is currently provided to training in various aspects of their jobs (understanding parliamentary procedure, how policy is developed, setting up office systems etc).

Emails from the Library (*What's New*) remain the main channel for finding out about Library services at 70% for parliamentarians and their staff and 80% for committee staff. This was followed by the Library's website (45% of parliamentarians and staff, and 53% of committee staff). There is a significant opportunity to use these channels strategically to promote services e.g., including tips or 'deep dives' on using specific online services. The 'Power user' fact sheet/poster was also referred to positively by a few, but many had never seen it. Like with the training, there was a level of ignorance of the Library communication, particularly in electorate offices.

Relationship with committee staff

The 2024 research wave again uncovered some dissatisfaction among committee staff who believed that the Library considered them to be the lowest of priorities. Those who responded to the research acknowledged that the Library had put a lot of work into better understanding committee staff needs, but the low response rate suggests some dissatisfaction. In addition, while their access to media services was a noted improvement, it wasn't universal and the need to prepare a business case for access was seen as an

¹ Note the Library's internal figures indicate the overall attendance at lectures and seminars in the current parliament continues at similar levels to the 46th parliament.

unnecessary roadblock by some (a business case is required for access to EMMS to comply with the Library's exemption under the *Copyright Act*).

Respondents' suggestions for improvements

Parliamentarians and their staff and committee staff were again asked in the client evaluation about their ideas for improving Library services. Feedback related broadly to:

- Expanding capacity or service (e.g. mapping team, broadening the scope of digital media subscriptions and improvement to the Isentia app (noting this is a 3rd party platform), self-tracking of loans and status, grants information, fact checking)
- More outreach, training and information for new people and for ongoing follow-up
- Library emails (e.g. weekly on what's happening next week and how the Library could help, separate emails that look at one service or area of interest in-depth, reminders of Bills Digests and summaries)
- Masterclasses on specific topics using the expertise of people in the Library
- A Library key contact or account management
- Improvements in research request responses (e.g. including more analysis and summaries of research that match the need and ultimate use of the information)
- Equal consideration of committee work when prioritising.

Recommendations

Improve online systems

1. Improve the useability of the website and online services (particularly search functionality) as a priority. Good training will not fully overcome online services' shortcomings and 'clunkiness'. Failing to address this effectively will impact satisfaction and trust in the longer term.
2. Consider how staff working outside of the Parliament House network can access online services reliably and an on-call service for media staff having difficulties accessing articles and clips before 8:30 am (AEST/AEDT) (resources permitting).
3. The Library should leverage any initiatives by the Department's Information Services Division to improve access to information for off-network clients such as ministerial staff (noting relevant cyber security constraints).
4. Consistent with client requests, the Library should implement an alerting service for new publications (including Bills Digests).

Improve communications and outreach

5. Continue outreach services, particularly visits to electorate offices and committee secretariats. Many respondents asked for better and more regular general and specific training and information in different aspects of Library services for new staff and for constant refresher follow-up.
6. Use *What's New* (Library weekly email), the Library website and the 'Power User' fact sheet strategically. Consider including 'tips' for using the Library and its services more effectively, having links to feature training articles/blogs such as 'How to frame your research question,' and promote these. Also consider specific topic and service communication.

7. Consider offering all offices a contact person/account manager 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. Many appeared to desire a stronger relationship with the Library.

Request service management and quality assurance

8. Renew the Library's focus on mechanisms, protocols and training to ensure consistency in the quality of the service and responses to client requests. Ensure receipt of client requests are acknowledged; library staff should check and discuss clients' requirements and turnaround timeframe/trade-offs, and keep the them informed of the progress of the request.

Legislative support

9. The Library should continue to focus on ways of ensuring timeliness of Bills Digests. It should also note feedback about the importance of providing a high-level overview of key issues and ensure that this is given priority in drafting Bills Digests.
10. The Library should investigate the most effective way to support clients' consideration of disallowable instruments.

Address perception of committee staff

11. There appears to be a gap in the Library's and Committees' shared understanding of research services which should be addressed. Committees' observations that their requests are not given equal prioritisation with direct client requests was raised in 2021 and activity to date has been appreciated. However, further work is still required. The Library should work with committees to better understand their needs. This likely involves:
 - a. developing a shared understanding or framework about the types of research and specialist services the Library is best placed to assist with, and those that are within the remit of the committee (noting that this boundary will not always be clearcut)
 - b. investigating whether some committee needs cannot be met under the current service model, and whether any new initiatives are required (noting this may have resource implications) and
 - c. ensuring mechanisms and protocols are adhered to to ensure consistency in the quality of the service and responses to requests (recommendation 8).

2. Introduction

Background and context

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 for more than two decades. This 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 and how it can add value.

While the Library has a defined client base, that base is in constant change. Since the 2022 election, the Library has welcomed 53 new parliamentarians through a series of orientation and outreach programs for them and their staff. Following the election, returning parliamentarians and their staff were also invited to induction programs reflecting their new roles. 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 client needs.

The 2022 election saw a change to the composition of the Parliament with the large number of Independents and small parties meaning fewer parliamentarians and their staff able to rely on party support systems and therefore more offices needing the services of the Library to a greater extent.

The fieldwork for the 2024 client service evaluation was conducted between February and May 2024. The Library and its users continue to face enormous changes in information and technology and the need to focus on digital delivery was clear. More information is being provided online through curated self-help products accessible for clients at home, at the office or on the road.

The 2024 sample profile differed from previous rounds of research with fewer parliamentarians and more electorate-based staff. Positions held were not included in previous research however in 2024 electorate officers and office managers were half the sample (52%) and chiefs of staff, senior advisers, policy advisers and research officers were 36% of the sample. This appears to have had an impact on comparisons between 2024 and 2021 in areas such as use of research services but not generally in core performance measures.

Unlike in previous research, very few people interviewed worked in Canberra, including chiefs of staff and media and policy officers – 57% of respondents worked in the electorate office/capital city office during sitting weeks and this rose to 86% in non-sitting weeks. In the post-COVID environment, we have also seen a marked increase in the number of people working from home or away from a parliamentary office. This was apparent in the research in two ways: firstly, the interviews suggested staff were more distanced from the activities of Parliament House (including the Library) and relied heavily on information being pushed out to them because they 'didn't know what they didn't know', and secondly there were staff not regularly connected to Parliament House IT systems and therefore struggling to use online services. While the need for highly secure IT systems is understood and appreciated, some respondents felt disadvantaged by not being able to access online services through their personal devices.

The 2024 research also appears to reflect an attitude of less enthusiasm or positivity which has been noted by other researchers nationally — difficult financial times, international unrest, and many ‘crises’ being discussed in the media seem to take their toll. This has come through in many of the results where there have been slight (not significant) decreases in results, including movement from *extremely* to *very* or *always* to *most of the time*. That said, there have been very few significant changes from the high results of 2021.

Since 2017, the client evaluation has also included staff working with parliamentary committees from both Houses, providing an additional layer of information. These responses are covered in Chapter 7.

In most cases in this evaluation report, research from 2015 has been removed from comparative tables and figures to make the charts easier to analyse and because its value is less relevant in 2024.

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

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 the Library’s services
- areas where the information and research needs of the 47th Parliament are not adequately being met by the Library
- the extent to which balanced, impartial, confidential, consistent and timely services are perceived to be provided
- the quality and scope 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 2021 evaluation..

Research methodology

The evaluation design comprised a qualitative stage followed by a quantitative study. The qualitative study involved face-to-face interviews with 74 staff of parliamentarians and 5 parliamentary committee staff. This was an increase in qualitative interviews with Parliamentarians and their staff compared to previous evaluations (but a decrease in those with committee staff). A survey was completed for each interviewee during the discussion and this was combined with responses from an online survey.

In total 211 clients completed the survey — 195 parliamentarians and their staff, and an almost identical survey was completed by 16 committee staff. The sample size for parliamentarians and their staff was greater than in 2021, but the figures for committee staff were lower and too small for comparative purposes. Sample sizes achieved in 2024 and previous years are shown in [Table 1](#) below.

Table 1: Sample sizes achieved in each evaluation

Year	Qualitative	Quantitative (includes surveys completed during interviews)
2024	74 staff of parliamentarians 5 parliamentary committee staff	195 parliamentarians and staff 16 parliamentary committee staff
2021	48 parliamentarians and staff 16 parliamentary committee staff	126 parliamentarians and staff 22 parliamentary committee staff
2017	46 parliamentarians and staff 9 parliamentary committee staff	160 parliamentarians and staff 34 parliamentary committee staff
2015	29 parliamentarians and staff 8 parliamentary committee staff	148 parliamentarians and staff 27 parliamentary committee staff
2012	38 parliamentarians and staff	132 parliamentarians and staff

For the purposes of this report, the findings from parliamentarians 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 were dropped as they were considered no longer relevant, and others were added to address new or emerging information and evaluation needs.

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 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 74 in-depth interviews with mostly the staff of parliamentarians from 52 offices across the parliament ensuring:

- a balance of parties and independents
- high, medium and low users
- longer term and newer users.

Interviews were conducted either by Teams or by phone, with the choice being made by the interviewee.

In addition, a focus group with 5 participants was held with parliamentary department staff who worked to Senate and House of Representative committees. This was held in Parliament House.

The discussion guide for the in-depth interviews was semi-structured to enable the qualitative insights to be obtained 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 an interview and a survey).

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 4 weeks and during this time two reminders were sent out by the Director, Client Relations.

A breakdown of the research participants is shown in [Tables 2](#) below.

Table 2: Sample composition

Parliamentarians and their staff (n=195)

Position	n=	%	Party/Ind	n=	%	Length of service	n=	%
Senator	0	0	Liberal Party	62	31	Less than 6 months	18	9
Member	4	2	National Party	12	6	Between 6 and 12 months	30	15
Staff of senator	67	33	ALP	71	35	Between 1 year and beginning of 47 th Parliament (July 2022)	53	26
Staff of member	130	65	Greens	19	9	Before start of 47 th Parliament (July 2022) and less than 5 years	47	23
Staff role	n=	%	Other	37	18	Between 5 and 10 years	35	17
Chief of staff	16	8	Location sitting weeks	n=	%	Between 10 and 20 years	13	6
Senior adviser	14	7	Parliament House	82	42	More than 20 years	5	2
Policy adviser	34	17	Electorate office	111	57	Age	n=	%
Media adviser/assistant	15	8	Other	3	2	24 or younger	32	16
Research officer	7	4	Location non-sitting weeks	n=	%	25–34	54	27
Office manager	22	11	Parliament House	20	10	35–44	26	13
Electorate officer	80	41	Electorate office	169	86	45–54	39	19
Other	9	5	Other	8	4	55–64	41	20
Constituency	n=	%	Parliament House	20	10	65 or over	9	4
Mainly urban	102	51	Electorate office	169	86	Rather not say	0	0
Mainly rural	30	15	Other	8	4			
Equally urban and rural	69	34						

Committee staff (n=16)

Age	n=	%	Position	n=	%	Length of service	n=	%
24 or younger	0	0	House of Representatives committee staff	5	31	Less than 6 months	0	0
25–34	2	13	Senate committee staff	7	44	Between 6 and 12 months	0	0
35–44	2	13	PBO staff	4	25	Between 1 and 2 years	3	19
45–54	9	56			Between 2 and 5 years	4	25	
55–64	3	19			Between 5 and 10 years	2	13	
65 or over	0	0			Between 10 and 20 years	7	44	
Rather not say	0	0			More than 20 years	0	0	

3. Parliamentarians and staff — Overall satisfaction and performance

Key points

- Satisfaction among parliamentarians and their staff remains high (96%) and is consistent with previous years. Responsiveness, professionalism and high-quality research were all cited as reasons for satisfaction. There were no *dissatisfied* responses.
- There was a significant increase in those indicating that Library performance had improved (28%, +18%) driven to a large extent by the availability of online services, improved quality of research and communication and outreach efforts.
- The Library continued to score well against all performance measures for responding to requests. There were however small, but not significant, drops in the *all the time* scores for **Balanced, Accuracy and Timely**.
- Ratings of Library staff remained stable across all measures for parliamentarians and their staff. The highest score was for **Provide services professionally** (97%) and the lowest for **Go the extra mile** (84%).

Satisfaction

Satisfaction among parliamentarians and their staff remains high (96%) and is consistent with previous years. There was a slight decrease in those who were *very satisfied* and an increase in those who were *quite satisfied*. There were no significant differences from 2021. Importantly, only 4% indicated they were *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* and there were no *dissatisfied* responses. These results are shown in [Figure 1](#) below.

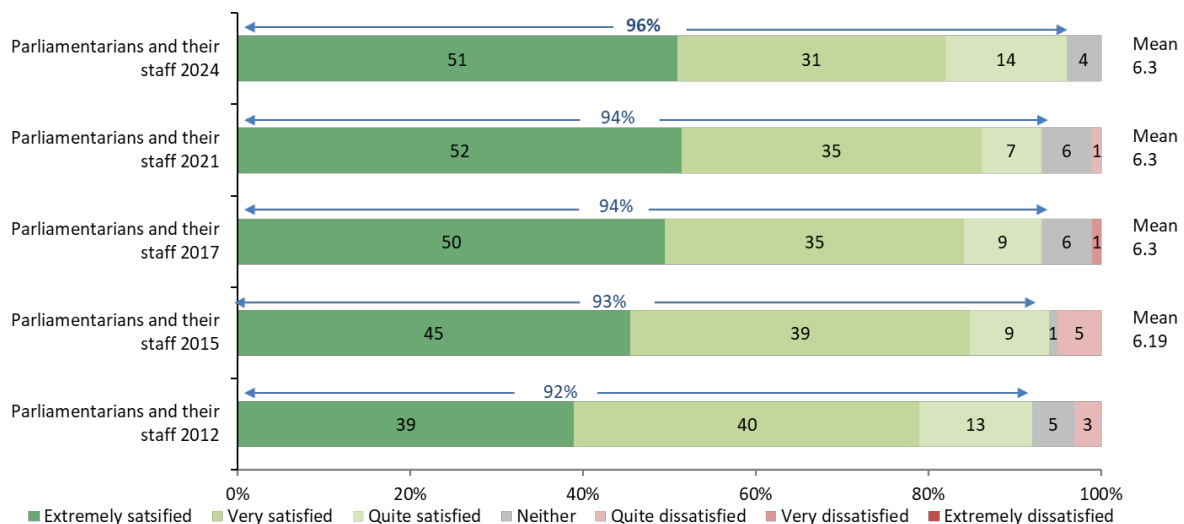


Figure 1: Satisfaction with Library services

Q14. Based on your current experiences (within the last 2 years), which of the following best describes your overall level of satisfaction with the Parliamentary Library services?

Parliamentarians and their staff 2024 n=195; 2021 n=126; 2017 n=160; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=132

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. This doesn't mean there is underlying dissatisfaction, but it does mean that the satisfaction rating can be based on years of experience for longer term clients rather than the immediate past. This is possibly still the case although in both the 2021 and 2024 surveys, the 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 from 2012 has 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.

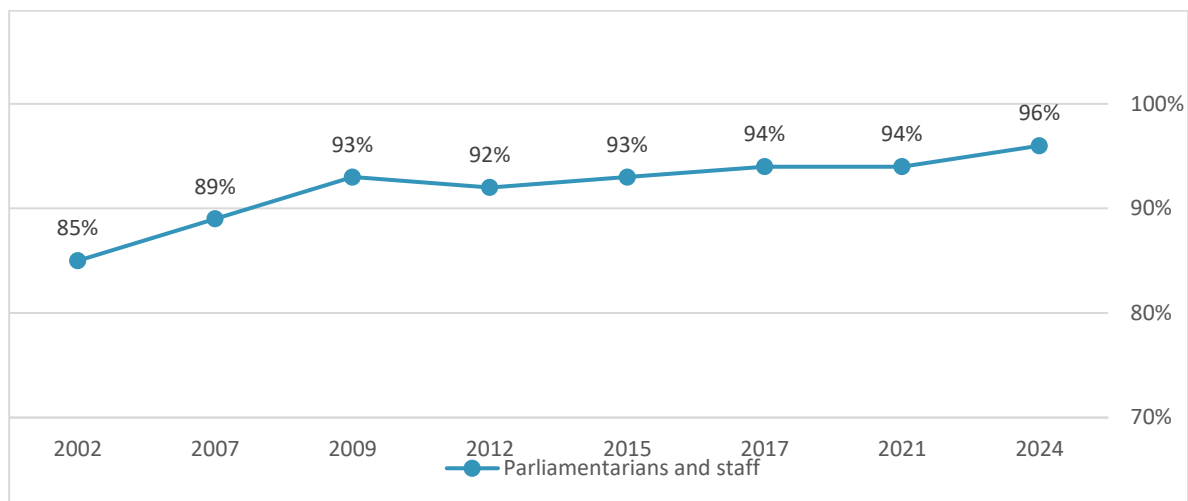


Figure 2: Satisfaction trend since 2002

Q14. 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?

Parliamentarians and their staff 2024 n=196; 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 Library staff as being polite, friendly, professional, knowledgeable, thoughtful, willing to assist, and positive. A willingness to negotiate when a request is beyond the scope of library resources was also noted.

The reasons given for being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied were from a small sample base (n=8) and focused mostly on difficulties with digital and online services, and not always being kept informed of delays in research requests. Many respondents also spoke of their inability to answer the question as they hadn't experienced enough services or products and gave a *satisfied* rating rather than a *very satisfied* rating.

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

In 2024 (as in 2021) only clients who had worked in Parliament House since before the current Parliament were asked whether they believed there had been a change in the Library's performance. There was a significant increase in those who said it had improved – 28%, an increase of 18% from 2021. No respondents indicated a decline. These results were similar to those from previous waves of research as shown in Figure 3 below.

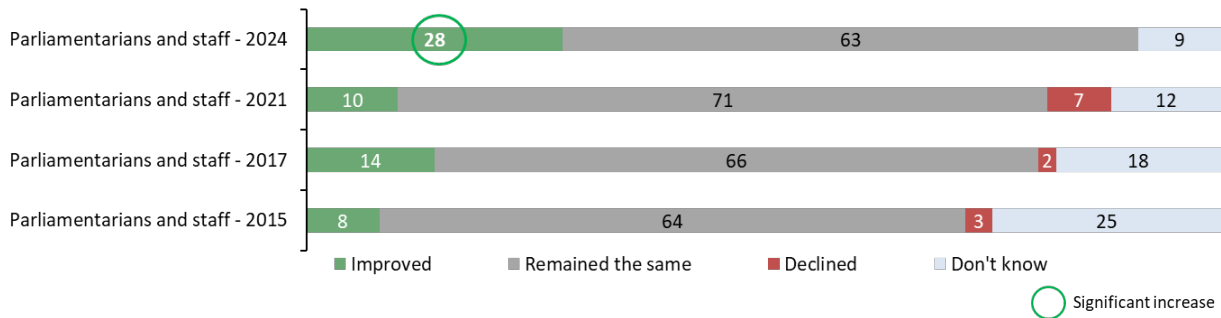


Figure 3: Has Library performance changed?

Q18. For the period you have had dealings with the Parliamentary Library, do you think its overall performance has declined, remained the same, or improved?

Parliamentarians and their staff 2024 n=97, 2021 n=81, 2017 n=160; 2015 n=148

Reasons for saying Library services had improved included:

- more online tools
- more analysis and less ‘cut and paste’ in research responses
- regular communication and outreach.

Possible improvements and key things to change in next 12 months

In planning for the future, parliamentarians and their staff were asked if there were any areas the Library should be looking to develop, do things differently or improve. They were also asked if the Library were 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 the need for more communication and training dominating the responses.

- **Continued outreach combined with introduction and refresher training (including online modules, the power user sheet, hints and tips and simple guides)** — Possibly the strongest theme heard throughout the 2024 research was the need for more communication and training. This was not a criticism of the current outreach activities, which were received very positively; rather it was a call for more and repeated communication and training in an environment of constantly changing staff and busy work schedules. Many people either acknowledged current outreach activities but noted they had no time to take advantage of these, or they were completely unaware of the Library services and communication methods — “What’s New – is that what it’s about?”.

Some specific suggestions included: an online induction/orientation package suitable for all new staff (and those needing a reminder) including an easy, concise, dot point reference of the services and a link to those; information tailored to specific roles and needs; how to frame research questions to get the best response; how to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) responsibly and ethically; how duty senators can use the Library to understand different electorates; and more one-on-one engagement.

“... a webinar ‘virtual tour’ of the Library giving a ‘meet and greet’ with the different teams and staff and hear about ‘when you have a question about X, you could try searching Isentia, here’s how you do that, and when you have a question about Y, you could use these mapping tools, or when you are doing Z in your community, you might benefit from this type of Library research to really

maximise your engagement’ etc. So a virtual tour training might explain what the Library can do to help you in your work and give some practical examples (anonymised) of the typical type of work Library staff do for various offices across the country because I am sure some parliamentarians lean more heavily on the Library than others and so it would be good to learn some examples about how various parliamentarians’ offices maximise their value from the Library resources.”

- **Improving and staying current with the online services** — There were many mentions around the need to improve digital services and their platforms. Respondents spoke of wanting to use digital services to save time for both them and the Library but feeling frustrated by those services not being intuitive and based on ‘old-fashioned’ design (particularly the Library website), poor search functions, and they themselves not having the knowledge to use the services effectively. They spoke of their need for redesign, training, and ‘tipsheets’.
- **The need for more staff resources to meet the need for greater capacity and quick turnaround, particularly in the areas of research, Bills Digests and mapping** — 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. There were also calls for advising offices when a Bills Digest or preliminary Bills Digest was issued. Requests for more resources for the mapping team were mentioned by a few in response to delays in meeting desired timeframes.
- **A continued requirement and appreciation for discussing and clarifying requirements regarding a request with Library staff and keeping informed of progress** – While respondents repeatedly spoke of the value of discussing their requests in helping them and Library staff understand the request, many only made requests online by email and some said they were advised to do this. There was also a call for stronger relationships with Library staff, possibly because of the reliance on email and the number of respondents who did not work in Parliament House (and had never been to Parliament House). Being kept informed of progress was also important.
- **Media subscriptions and monitoring improvements** — Issues around media monitoring were less than in previous rounds of research however technology was still seen as a problem affecting mostly those accessing media in the **early mornings** and often from non-DPS devices. The improvements to EMMS were noted by most, however there were a few complaints about not being able to move through clips in 15-second jumps to access specific grabs, and an inadequate search function.

Some other mentions included:

- separate regular emails that look at one service in-depth (what it is, how to use, where to access, who to contact for more info etc)
- training on how to use ABS data more fully
- keeping to timeframes and a request tracking system
- more FlagPosts, podcasts of webinars
- account/relationship managers
- compilations of novel research on highly salient issues from overseas thinktanks and academics
- Library should maintain a list of businesses with contact details which can be tailored to electorates
- a fact checking service that can be published or made available to all parliamentarians.

Library performance against its service delivery measures

Among parliamentarians and their staff, **keeping you informed** is rated significantly lower than the other measures and along with **timeliness** and **right level of detail**, has a low *all the time* rating. Interview responses suggested timeliness issues were not constant and were often understood, and **keeping you informed** was lower because it was often not required. *Rarely* scores were seen for **timeliness**, **keeping you informed**, and **format best meets your needs**. This can be seen in Figure 4 below.

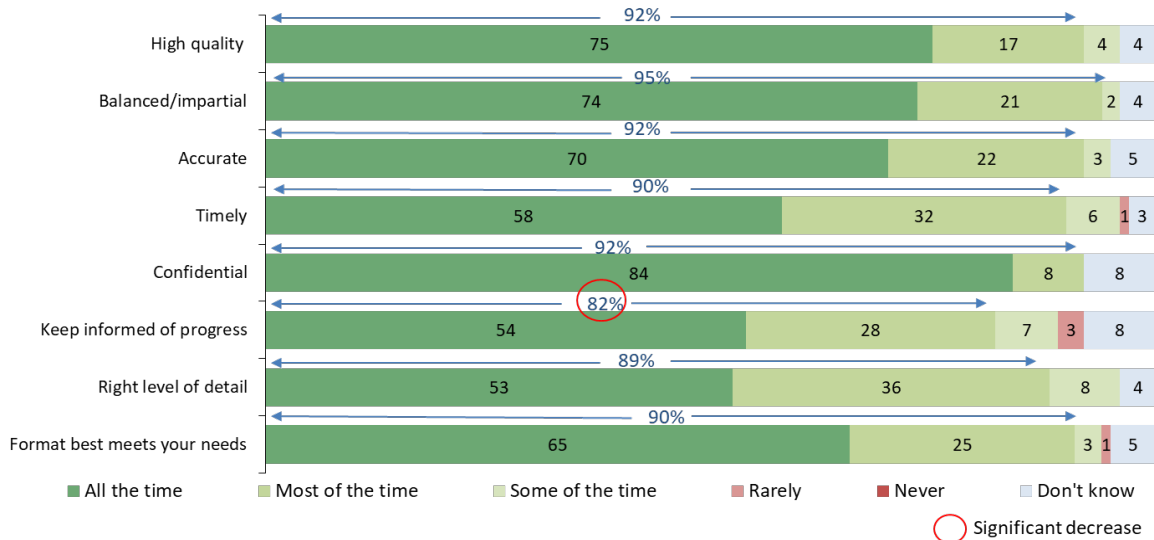


Figure 4: Perceived performance of Parliamentary Library by parliamentarians and their staff

Q21. How do you think the Parliamentary Library performs against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Parliamentarians and staff n=185

As can be seen from the comparison figures in Figure 5 below, the scores for *all the time* were generally lower in 2024 and in the case of **Balanced**, significantly lower (-9%) than 2021. However, when *most of the time* is added to *all the time*, there are no significant differences from 2021.

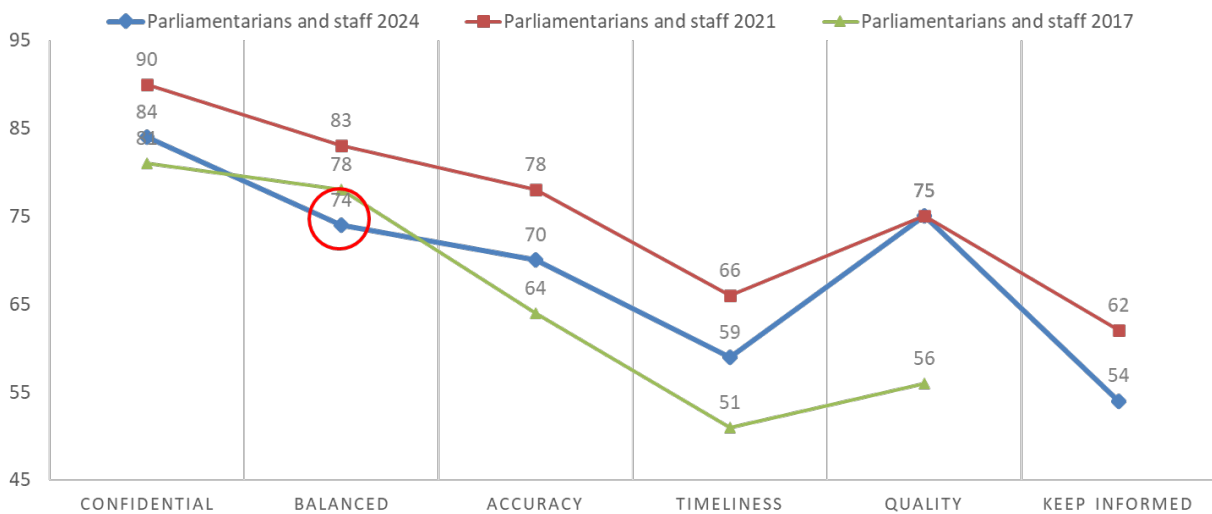


Figure 5: Scores of all the time against the Library's performance measures

Q21. How do you think the Parliamentary Library performs against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=185, 2021 n=126, 2017 n=156

The reasons given for the positive ratings related to providing a quality service in a timely manner, being impartial, responses containing analysis and the right level of detail, and asking questions to clarify what information is required. As an example of the feedback, *“I am pleased with the impartiality of the research team. I am provided only the data without any external imposition of beliefs or ideology”*.

The reasons given for less positive ratings related to responses sometimes containing too much detail and not enough ‘plain English grabs’, not enough analysis, not receiving progress reports and occasional perceived bias. Some people had expectations of the information being in a form ready for the purpose it is to be used.

While the Library continued to be widely and very highly regarded as balanced and impartial, the qualitative research suggested it could only take one occasion out of many (with an individual Library staff member) where a possible bias was perceived, for a respondent to lower their rating from a rating of *all the time*.

Library staff

Library staff were highly regarded by most respondents. There were no significant differences from 2021. Figure 6 charts the 2024 ratings from parliamentarians and their staff.

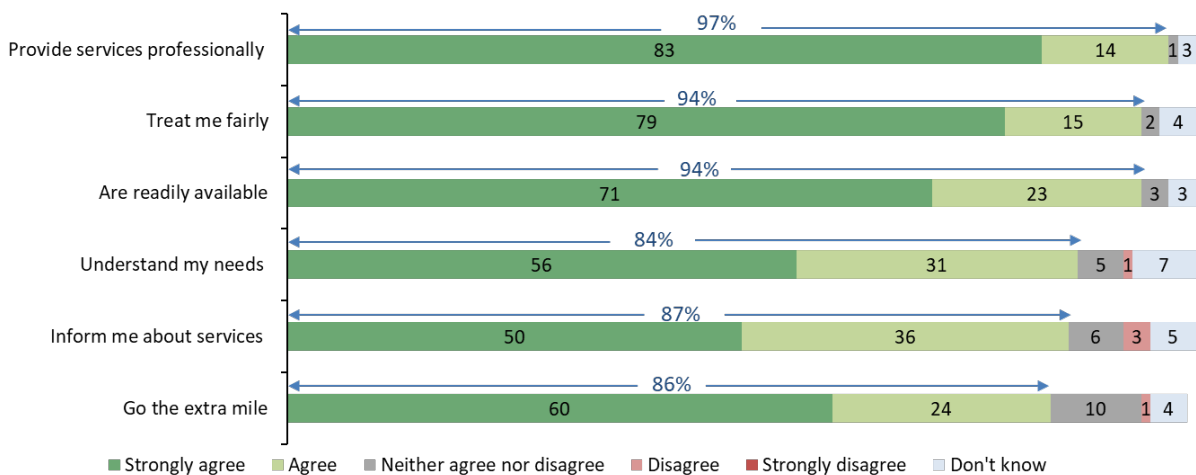


Figure 6: Evaluation of Library staff by parliamentarians and their staff

Q23. In your experience (in the last 2 years), do Library staff ...

Parliamentarians and their staff 2024 n=185

Figure 7 charts the yearly comparisons for those who responded *strongly agree*. While **Are readily available** (71%, -5%) and **Understand my needs** (56%, -6%) has fallen slightly, these shifts are not statistically significant.

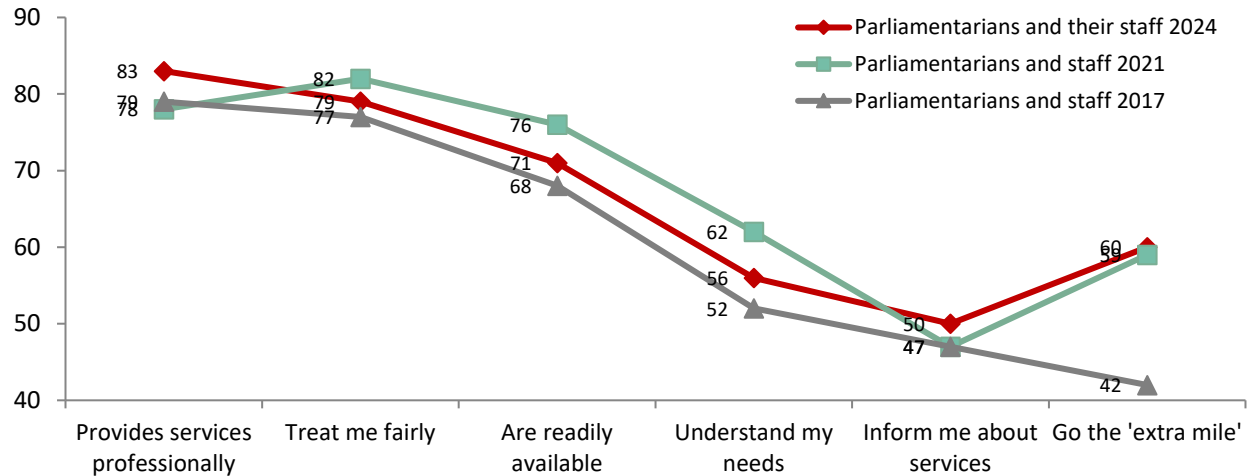


Figure 7: Yearly comparisons of strongly agree

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

Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=185; 2021 n=125; 2017 n=156; 2015 n=148; 2012 n=117

Reasons given for the ratings of the Library staff by parliamentarians and their staff are consistent with those received throughout the research where the majority, although not all, are positive. They related to Library staff expertise, passion, quality of responses with the right details, showing initiative, providing guidance and tips and the quality training and outreach services. For example:

“Staff are always passionate and keen to share knowledge.”

“I’m consistently impressed by the work of Library staff....”

“I don’t necessarily know enough about the Library even though I’ve had an outreach – I’m still not sure how to ask a question.”

“Training has been good, but you don’t know what you don’t know.”

Less positive feedback tended to relate to specific one-off or rare experiences where responses didn’t hit the mark or required a lot of work to be useful (e.g. receiving graphs and tables when asking for speaking notes or in receiving too much detail to a quick question). These experiences live long in people’s memories. The less favourable feedback also related to a lack of accessibility outside working hours and unfamiliarity of how to use the Library.

4. Parliamentarians and their staff — Use of Library services

Key points

- Library use by parliamentarians and staff has increased and they continue to use the Library more often in sitting weeks than non-sitting weeks. Almost half (46%) use the Library more than once a week during sitting weeks (+12%) and 38% more than once a week during non-sitting weeks (+12%).
- While Library services continued to be well used by parliamentarians and their staff, there were some significant decreases in 2024 which could be attributed, in part, to the change in sample composition (with more electorate-based staff)
- When asked about intended Library use in the next 12 months, 35% of parliamentarians and staff indicated research services as their first priority.

Use of the Library

The data suggest that the Library is being used more by parliamentarians and their staff overall, and more in sitting weeks than non-sitting weeks. Almost half (46%) of parliamentarians and their staff use the Library more than once a week during sitting weeks (+12% from 2021) and 38% during non-sitting weeks (+12% from 2021). This is a significant increase in use in both sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks.

Figure 8 below compares usage patterns of parliamentarians and their staff between sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks from 2015 through to 2024.

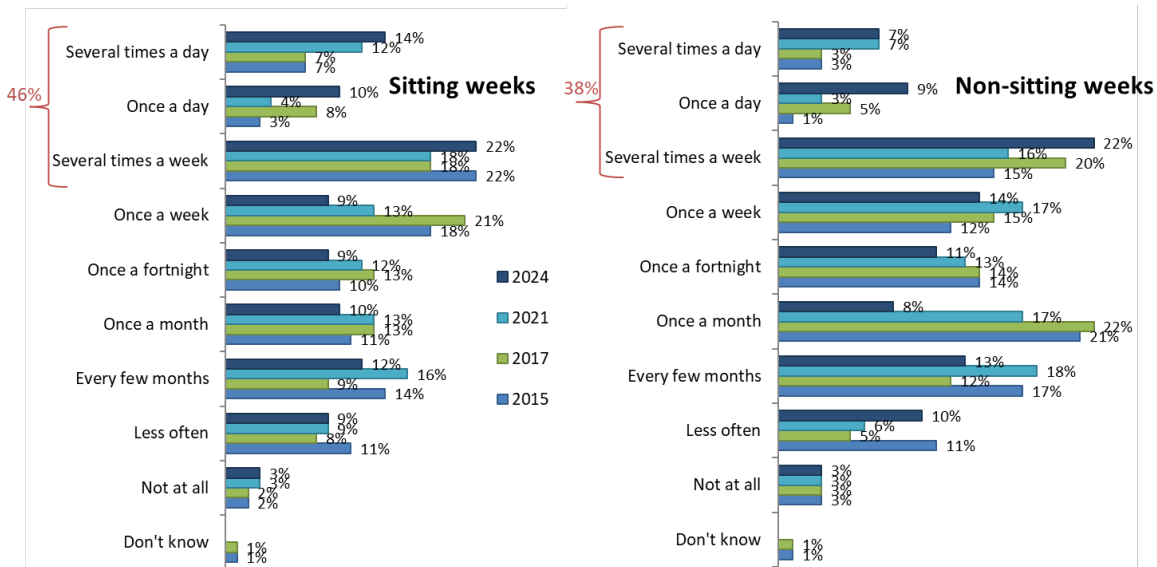


Figure 8: Reported usage by parliamentarians and their staff during sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks by year

Q8. Excluding Isentia Mediaportal provided by the Library, which of the following best describes how often you use the Parliamentary Library during (a) sitting weeks and (b) non-sitting weeks?

Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201; 2021 n=126; 2017 n=154; 2015 n=148

Use of different Library services

Research services remain the most often used services with 92% of parliamentarians and their staff using these services to some degree. The most heavily used services however are **online newspapers** which 49% of respondents indicated they used *heavily*, followed by **Isentia Mediportal** which is used *heavily* by 36% of respondents. **Mapping services** were the least used (noting use of this service is subject to the parliamentary cycle). Figure 9 below shows the different levels of use of the different Library services.

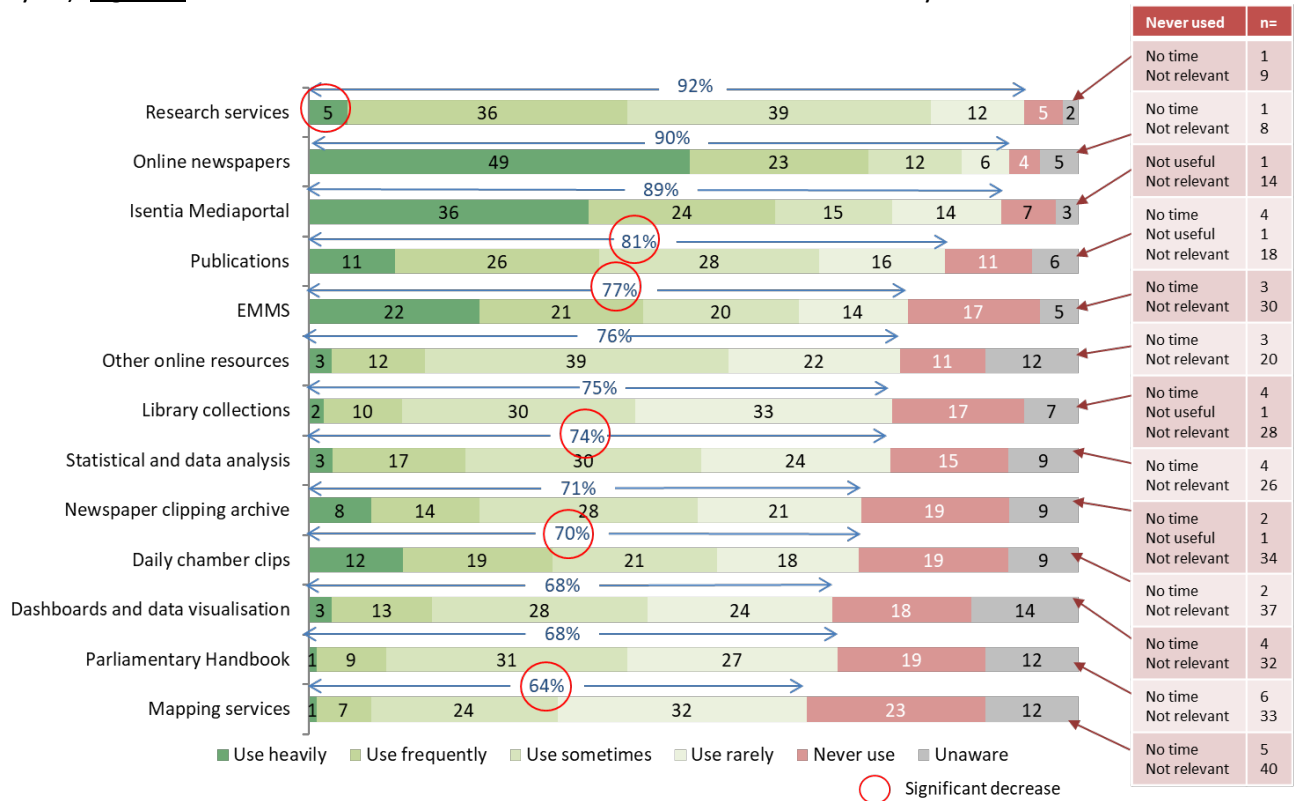


Figure 9: Reported frequency of use of specific Library services by parliamentarians and their staff

Q9. How often do you or your office use the following Library services?
Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201

Figures 10–22 to follow show comparisons with previous years where applicable. While Library services continued to be well used by parliamentarians and their staff, there were some significant decreases in 2024 which could be attributed, in part, to the change in sample composition (with more electorate-based staff):

- 10% decrease in those who considered themselves to be heavy users of research (5%)
- 11% decrease in users of Library publications (81%)
- 9% decrease in users of EMMS (77%)
- 15% decrease in users of statistical and data analysis (74%)
- 10% decrease in users of daily chamber clips (70%)
- 16% decrease in users of mapping services (64%) (noting use of this service is subject to the parliamentary cycle).

Research services

Most respondents have used the research services to some level. *Heavy* use has dropped a significant -10%, possibly a reflection on the higher number of electorate officers and office managers in the 2024 sample.

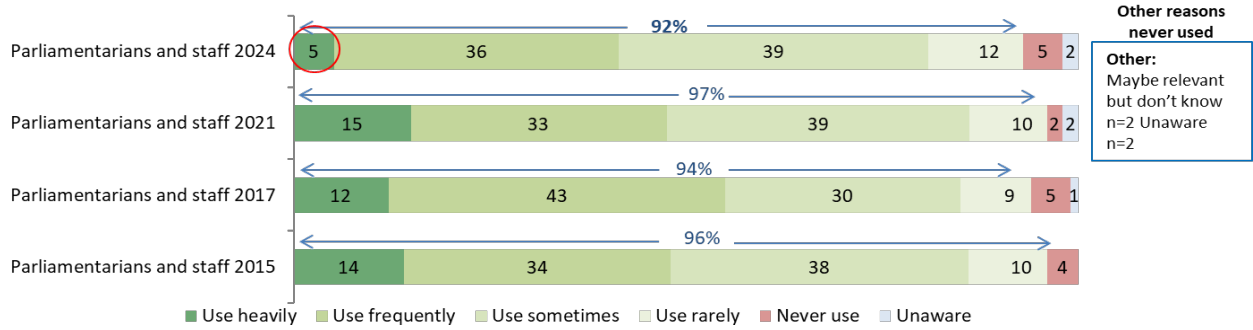


Figure 10: Use of research services

Q9. How often do you or your office use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201; 2021 n=124; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148

Online newspapers

Use of the online newspapers provided by the Library was asked for the first time in 2021 and 88% of respondents indicated they used them at some time, increasing to 90% in 2024.

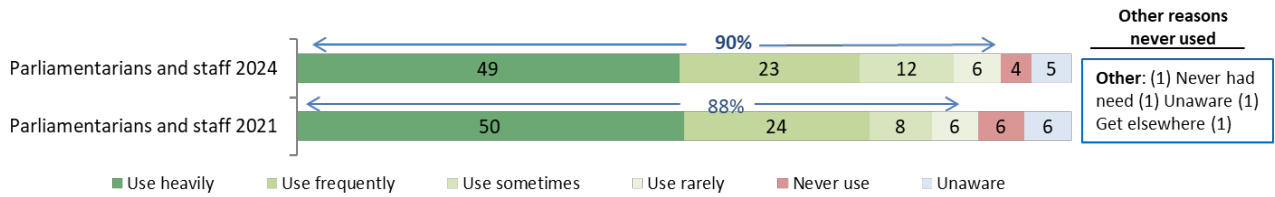


Figure 11: Use of online newspapers

Q9. How often do you or your office use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201; 2021 n=126

Isentia Mediportal

89% of parliamentarians and their staff used the Isentia Mediportal at some point. The increase seen in previous years has declined.

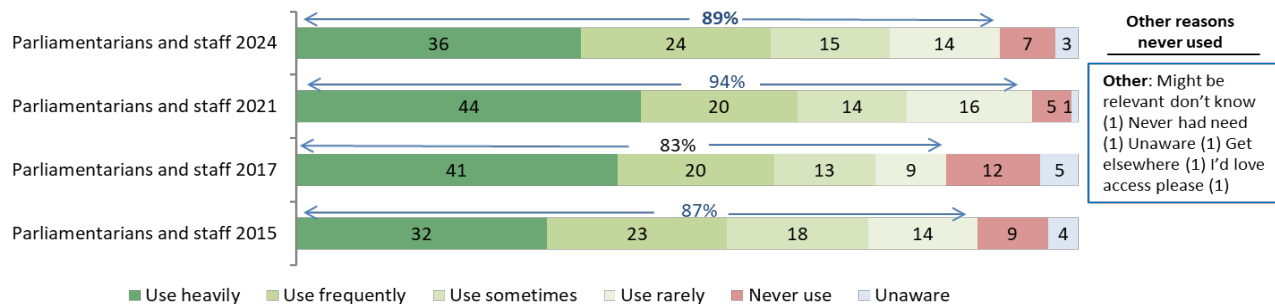


Figure 12: Use of Isentia Mediportal

Q9. How often do you or your office use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201; 2021 n=124; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148

Library publications (including Bills Digests)

Use of Library publications (including Bills Digests) by parliamentarians and their staff has decreased significantly since 2021 (-11%), possibly a result of the 2024 sample composition. Qualitative research suggests that while timeliness of Bills Digests is a major requirement, there is recognition it will always be impacted by the time available, the amount of work involved and the need for careful research and checking.

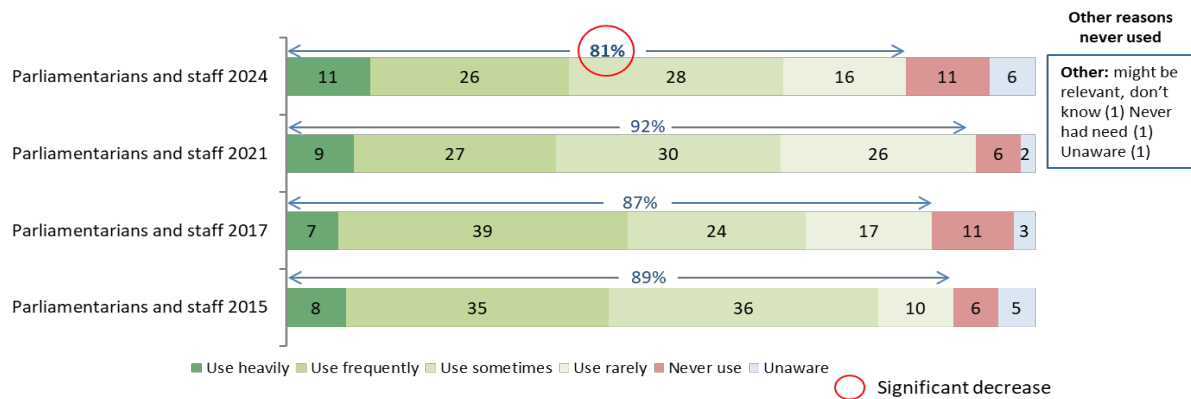


Figure 13: Use of Library publications (including Bills Digests) services

Q9. How often do you use the following Library services?
Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201; 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148

EMMS

There was a significant decrease in the use of EMMS (-9%) with the decrease coming mainly from the *use rarely* rating. Use of EMMS remains stable for those who used it *heavily* or *frequently* (43%, -1%). Some respondents were unaware of recent improvements, while those who were, were generally very positive. Those who criticised media services spoke of technical issues, particularly when trying to access early morning grabs and there being no Library assistance available.

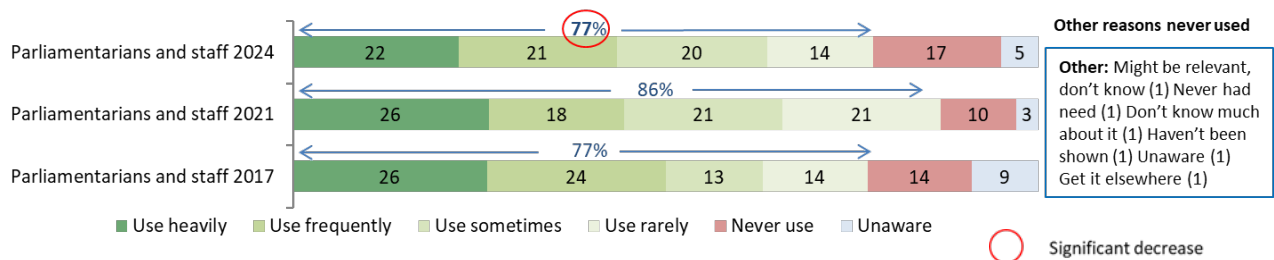


Figure 14: Use of EMMS

Q9. How often do you or your office use the following Library services?
Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201; n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148

Other online resources

After a significant increase in 2021, use of other online services by parliamentarians and their staff remained stable. As noted earlier in the report there continued to be comments in this evaluation about the need for improved functionality (download times, search functions) and training.

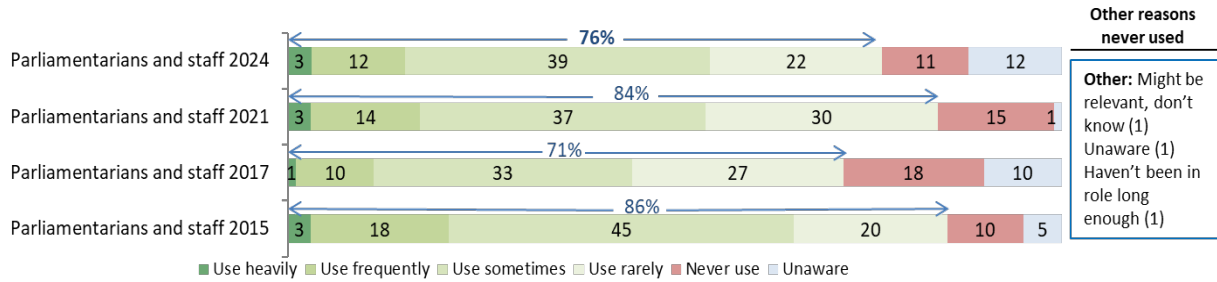


Figure 15: Use of online resources

Q9. How often do you use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201; 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148

Library collection

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

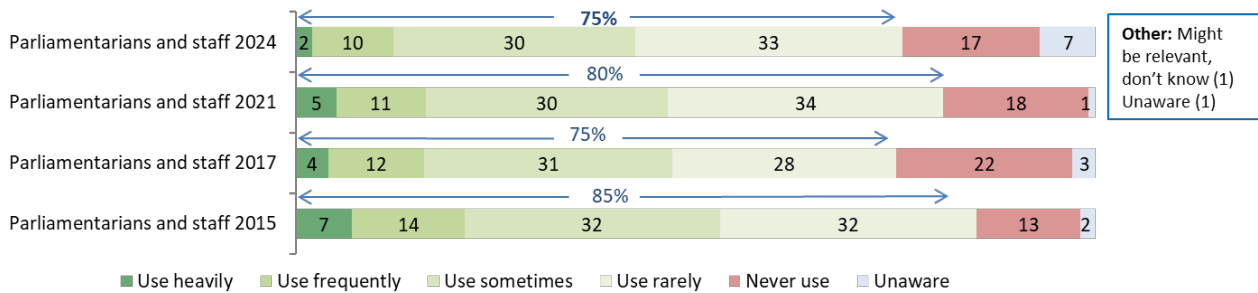


Figure 16: Use of Library collection

Q9. How often do you or your office use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201; 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148

Data and statistical analysis

Use of data and statistical analysis services was asked for the first time in 2021 and has seen a significant decrease (74%, -15%) in 2024. However *heavy* and *frequent* use has remained stable.

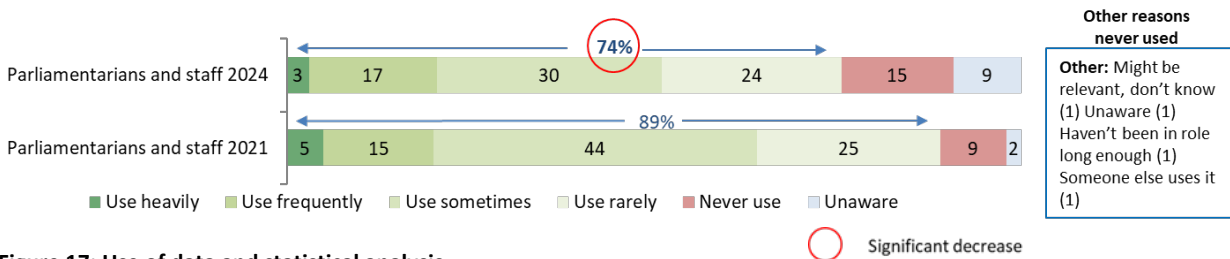


Figure 17: Use of data and statistical analysis

Q9. How often do you or your office use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201; 2021 n=121

Newspaper clipping archive

Use of the newspaper clipping archive has dropped (71%, -9%).

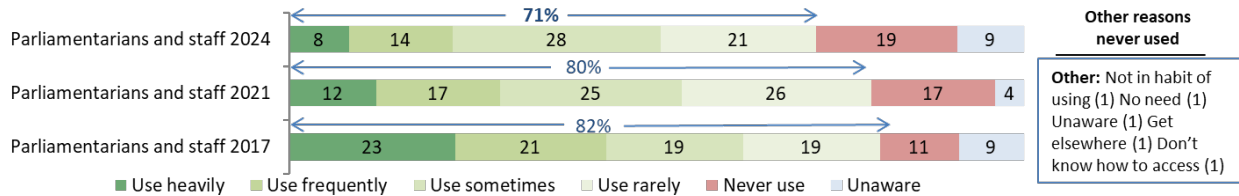


Figure 18: Use of Newspaper clipping archive

Q9. How often do you or your office use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201; 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155

Daily chamber clips

Use of the daily chamber clips decreased by 10% and the decrease is seen in the heavy, frequently and rarely scores. The qualitative research however suggests some confusion with what the daily chamber clips entail.

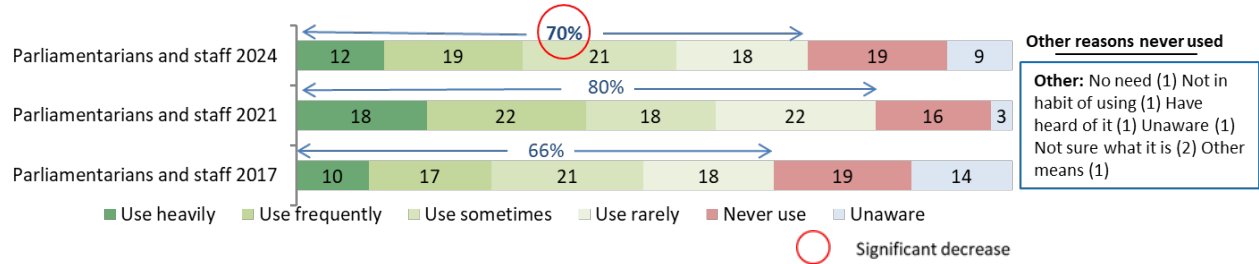


Figure 19: Use of Daily chamber clips

Q9. How often do you use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155

Dashboards and data visualisations

Around three quarters use dashboards and data visualisations, although 14% have never heard of them.

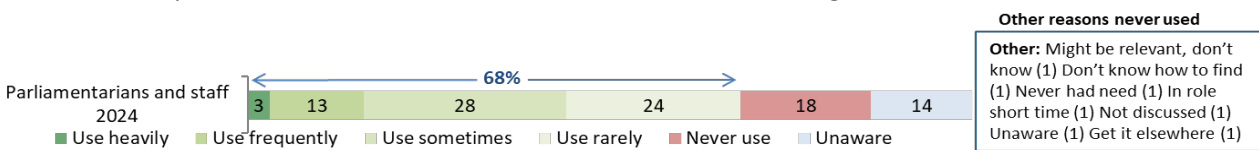


Figure 20: Use of Dashboards and data visualisations

Q9. How often do you use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201

Parliamentary handbook

Around three quarters use the Parliamentary Handbook, but 12% have never heard of it.

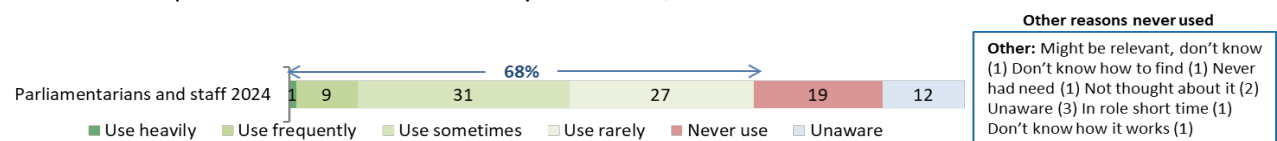


Figure 21: Use of Parliamentary Handbook

Q9. How often do you use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=201

Mapping services

The number of parliamentarians and their staff in 2024 who reported using the mapping service at some time significantly decreased (-16%) from 2021, and there was a significant increase (+13%) in those who said they *never used* mapping services.²

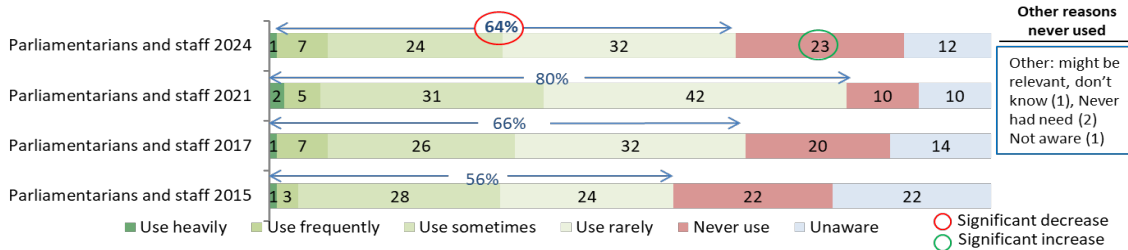


Figure 22: Use of mapping services
 Q9. How often do you use the following Library services?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2021 n=126; 2017 n=155; 2015 n=148

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, not relevant to their work (although it was noted that maybe it was, but they didn't know) and that they didn't know how it worked. 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, particularly given the high turnover of staff in most offices, and particularly focusing on how a product or service could be used in their jobs.

Library service priorities for next 12 months

When parliamentarians and their staff were asked to rank up to 3 services in terms of priority for the next 12 months, the clusters of priority were in research services and media services (e.g. Isentia Mediaportal, online newspapers and EMMS) and Bills Digests, followed by a next tier being statistical and data related services (e.g. statistical and data analysis, dashboards and data visualisation and mapping service).

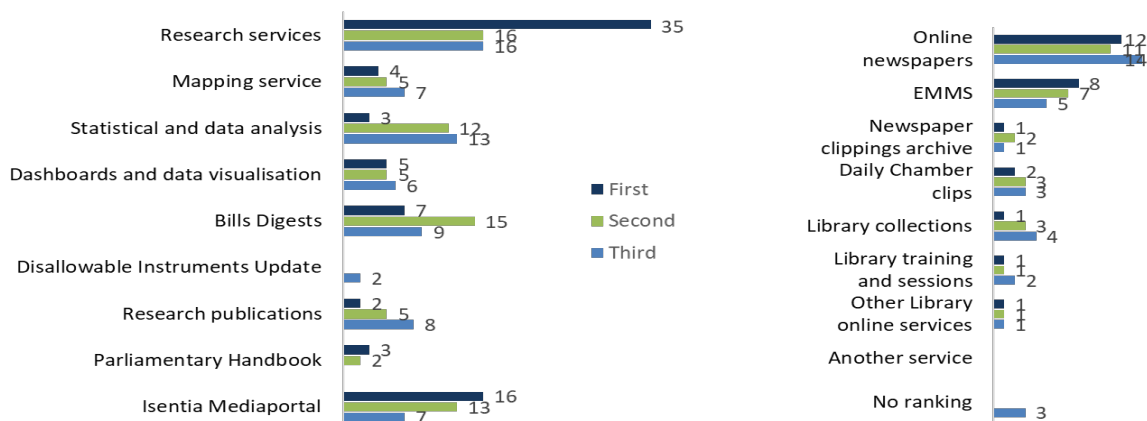


Figure 23: Library service priorities for next 12 months
 Q11. Thinking about how you will use the Library in the next 12 months, please rank up to 3 services in terms of priority.
 Parliamentarians and staff 2021 n=190

² Note the Library's internal figures indicate overall mapping requests in the current parliament continues at similar levels to those in the 46th parliament.

5. Parliamentarians and staff — Qualities of Library services and preferences

Key points

- The qualities of Library services were again scored highly by parliamentarians and staff. Importantly, **trust** in the Library as a source of information was very high at 98%.
- The relevance and usefulness of **papers and publications** also scored positively overall with parliamentarians and staff (90%). There was a notable drop for providing **online and digital services** that are useful and easy to use with 78% of parliamentarians and staff rating this quality as *strongly agree* or *agree*. Dissatisfaction with digital and online services was also raised in the qualitative research with complaints made mostly about ‘clunkiness’ and not being intuitive.
- When asked what parliamentarians and their staff thought should be the Library’s priorities, the highest proportion (51%) cited **Confidential analysis and research**.
- **Bills Digests** remain an important tool for many with 62% indicating they used them *heavily* or *frequently* and 57% finding them *very* or *extremely* useful.
- Parliamentarians and staff used a wide range of resources as part of researching with Google (78%) and the Library research service (72%) being the most and often first used. The Library’s research service stood out for having ‘legitimacy’ and ‘gravitas’ compared with other sources.
- While artificial intelligence rated low (included by 15% of parliamentarians and staff), qualitative research suggested it was growing in use although not particularly for research.

Qualities of Library services

Qualities of Library services scored highly and there were no significant differences from 2021. **Trust** in the Library as a source of information was the highest quality at 98%.

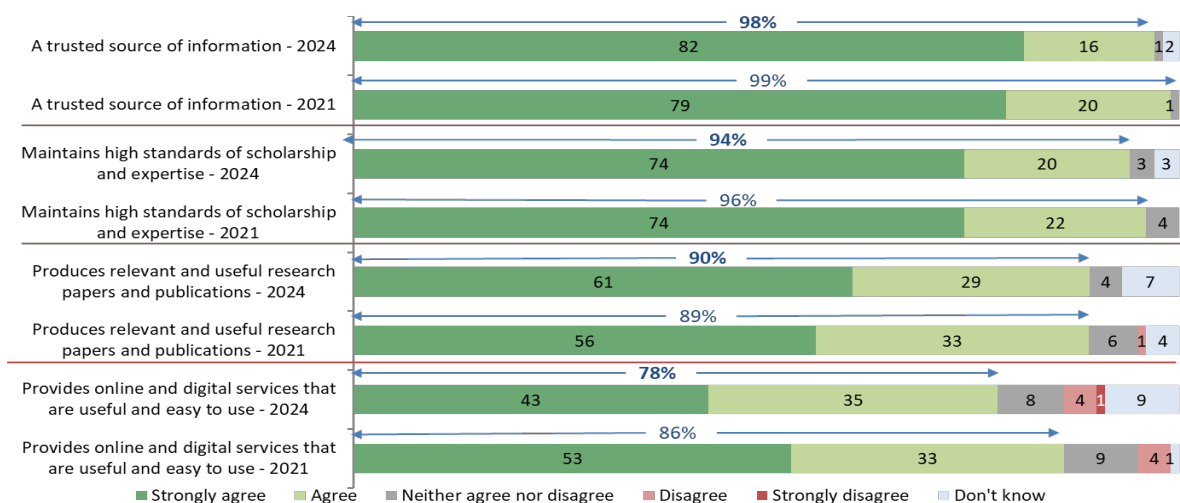


Figure 24: Qualities of Library services by year

Q25. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Library?
Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=184; 2021 n=126

The only quality to receive *disagree* scores was where 4% *disagreed* and 1% *strongly disagreed* that the Library **Provides useful and easy to use online and digital services**. Dissatisfaction with digital and online services was also raised in the qualitative research with complaints made mostly about their ‘clunkiness’ and old-fashioned design/layout affecting navigation and overall usability, as well as difficulty in accessing away from Parliament House and on private devices (e.g. home computers and phones).

Reasons given for positive ratings related to the quality and breadth of the research including research papers, advice, publications, and EMMS. For example:

“Research papers are great – don’t know I need them until I read them.”

“The new EMMS service is great!”

Reasons for lower ratings related primarily to digital services. For example:

“Website can be confusing”

“Online services are clunky”

“Don’t like the changes to EMMS – it’s not as intuitive and the search function is not as good as in the past” “...and online systems are clunky and old-fashioned. VIC system is 10/10”

“A problem having to be logged into a PH device.”

Resources used to research

The **Library research** service is the second most popular resource for research (72%), beaten only by **Google** (78%). Close behind are **Government websites** (71%) and **media sources** (71%). Google was also the first place most people went (29%), although 12% started with party resources and 11% with the Library’s research service. Figure 25 below these results.

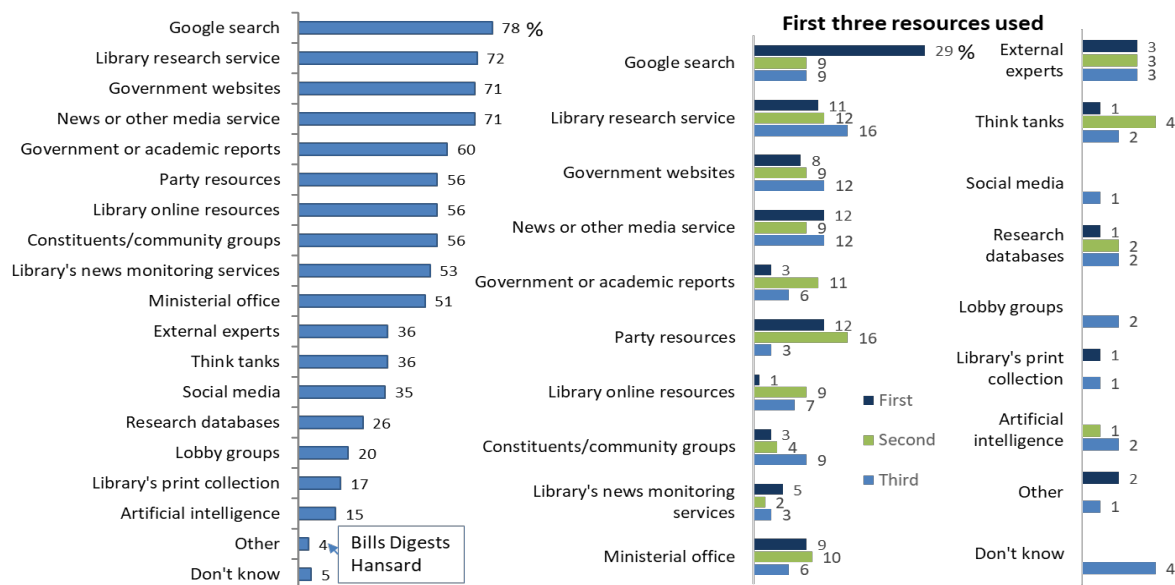


Figure 25: Resources chosen by parliamentarians and staff for researching - first, second and third selections

Q27. Which resources have you or your office used for researching information for preparing papers or speeches or for any other purpose?

Q28. Please rank up to 3 resources you would usually begin with.

Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=184

Emergence of artificial intelligence

While scoring low in the selection of research resources (15%), artificial intelligence (AI) is being used by parliamentarians and their staff. Many people spoke of trying out AI, using it for a ‘few things,’ or using it in their private lives and now considering how it might be used in the office. Most have found it ‘useful.’

In the qualitative research, respondents spoke of using it to:

- help get started with speeches, responses and providing a framework to adapt and personalise
- draft social media content
- ask for a list of sources of information or resources to look at
- its search function and spell-check.

All those who used it said they were aware of its limitations and the need to check all facts and figures. No-one mentioned using the Library to check AI accuracy. Some who weren’t using it now, considered that they might in the future as it developed further including any capacity to be more industry specific (e.g. upload templates, policies etc for it to draw from). There was one suggestion that the Library should provide a subscription to AI and a number of suggestions that the Library should provide training in ‘how to use AI responsibly.’

Research & legislative services priorities

Parliamentarians and their staff strongly believe **Confidential analysis and research** should be the Library’s first priority (51%), followed by **Bills Digests** (17%), but as can be seen in Figure 26 below all services received a first, second or third priority rating.

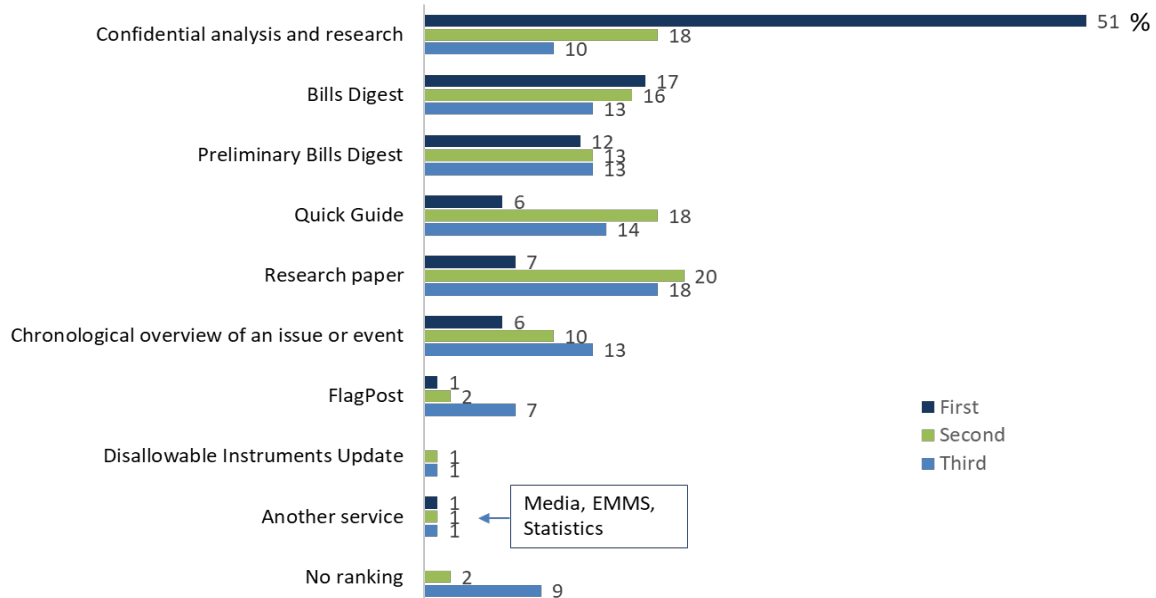


Figure 26: Research & legislative services priorities – first, second and third priorities

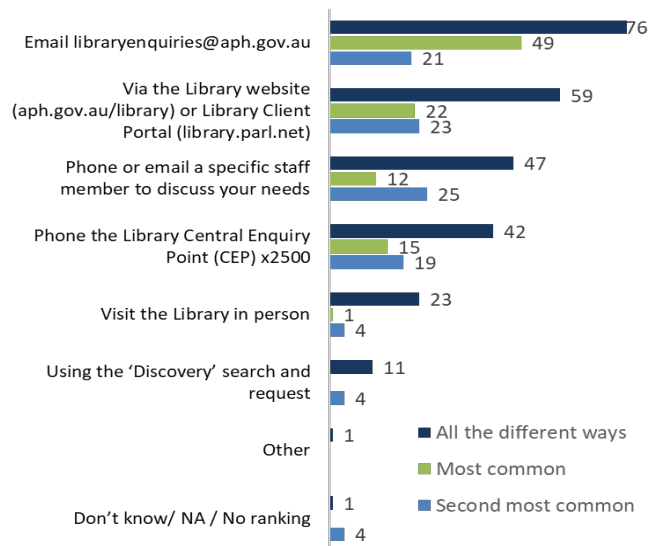
Q29. Please rank up to 3 of the following Library services based on what you believe should be of highest priority.
Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=184

Accessing services and documents

As can be seen in [Figure 27](#) below, the main ways parliamentarian offices access Library services is via the library enquiries email and the Library website. This is followed by phoning the central enquiry point and contacting a specific staff member. Feedback in the qualitative research indicated some were instructed to email by the Library and there was some desire to have more personal direct contact and relationships.

PC/laptop was clearly the preferred way of accessing documents for parliamentarians and staff (89%). This possibly reflects the larger number of electorate office-based staff in the 2024 sample. In 2021 respondents were asked how they access Library documents, which had a wider spread of methods selected, although the majority still preferred PC/laptop. Qualitative information suggests that some staff will still print documents for their parliamentarian, especially if they anticipate documents being read on a plane or in a car. They will also print for themselves if a document is long or if they plan on writing notes on it.

Different and most common ways Library services are accessed



Preferred way to access documents

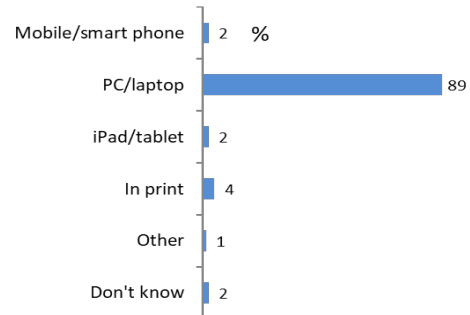


Figure 27: Ways of accessing services and documents

Q12. Please select all the different ways that you access the Library services. Q13|9 Please rank the 2 most common ways that you access the Library services. *Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=195*
Q32. Which of the following best describes your most preferred way of accessing the Library's publications (research papers, quick guides, Bills Digests and Flagpost blogs). *Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=181*

Bills Digests, Preliminary Bills Digests and Disallowable Instruments Updates

In 2024, 75% of parliamentarians and their staff indicated **Bills Digest** were *quite, very or extremely useful*, 5% indicated *slightly useful* and the remaining 20% indicated they didn't use them (either because their office had little involvement in legislation or because looking at these was the job of others in the office) or were unsure. Of those who used them at all, 62% use them heavily or frequently, 27% use them sometimes and 9% use them rarely. In 2021, 86% reported using Bills Digests but only 65% found them useful. The 2021 question on use was framed differently and cannot be used for direct comparison. Qualitative research and comments made in the survey strongly suggest that Bills Digests would be considered more useful if they were timelier.

Preliminary Bills Digests were seen to be *quite, very* and *extremely* useful by 60%, *slightly* useful by another 8%, while 12% don't use them. 86% of those who have used them do so heavily, frequently or sometimes. **Disallowable Instruments Updates** were identified as *quite, very* or *extremely useful* by 38%, slightly useful by 9% and *not at all useful* by 1%. 54% either don't use them or indicated *don't know*. Of those who had used them at all, 26% use them heavily or frequently, 49% use them sometimes and 23% use them rarely.

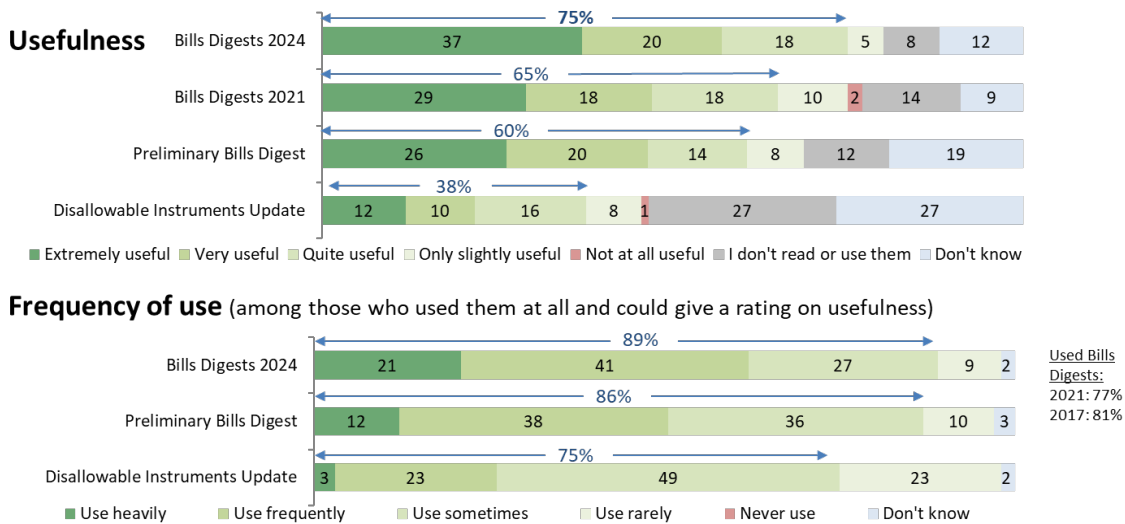


Figure 28: Use and usefulness of Bills Digests, Preliminary Bills Digests and Disallowable Instruments Updates

Q31. How useful do you or your office find ...?
 Q32. How often do you or your office specifically use ...?
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=153; 2021 n=126

In 2024 respondents were asked whether Bills Digests contained the right amount of information and whether they were available when needed. Around three quarters of parliamentarians and their staff *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they contained the right amount of information (79%) and were available when needed (72%). 3% disagreed they contained the right information and 6% felt they weren't available when needed. This is shown in Figure 29 below.

The qualitative research suggested that responses were very dependent on the respondents' interest in the Bill and its relevance to their work. Comments included many references to them being late (especially for Opposition staff needing to brief Shadow Cabinet), and to wanting email advice when they were issued.

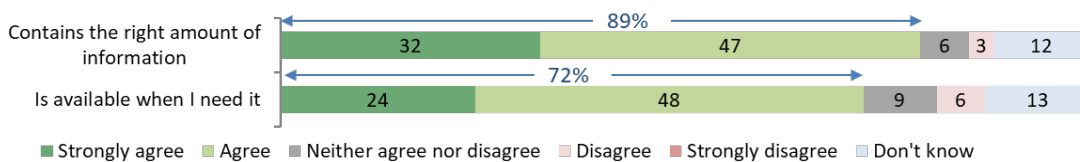


Figure 29 Content and availability of Bills Digests

Q35. The Library has been making changes to Bills Digests. Please rate your experience in the past year of the Library's Bills Digests against the following statements.
 Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=119

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 what topics would be most important to include in any 'fast-turnaround' summary.

Parliamentarians and their staff considered **High level overview of key issues** (36%) as their highest priority followed by **Background information** (24%). **Key facts and figures** was rated second by 27% and third by 23%, along with **Positions held by stakeholders** (at 17% and 23%). Qualitative feedback suggested that priority in depth analysis of key issues and provisions came down more to the specific Bill and to the individual offices interest and/or role regarding the Bill. This is shown in [Figure 30](#) below.

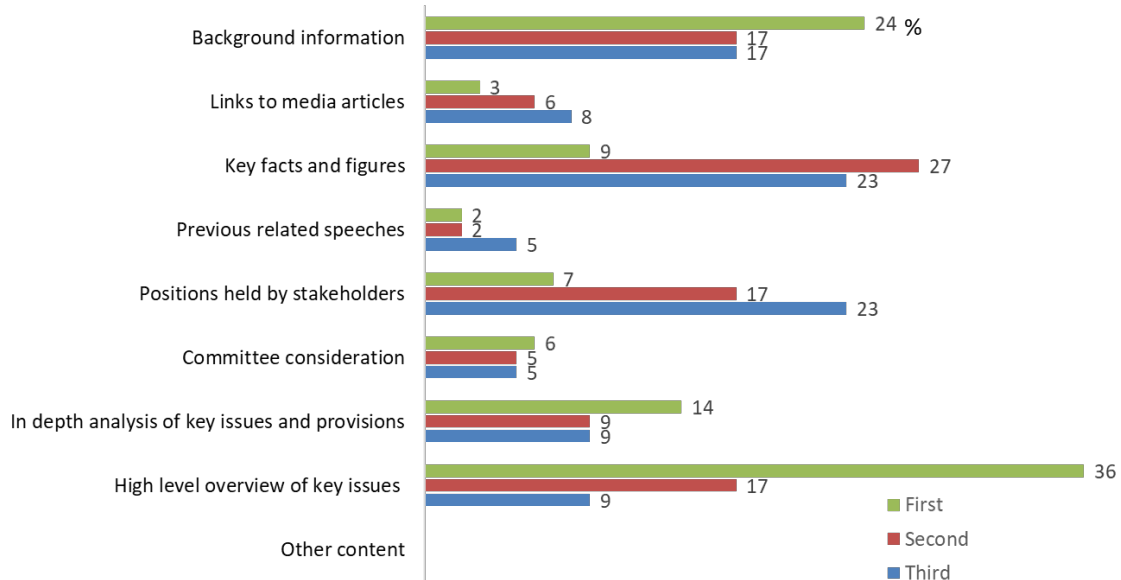


Figure 30: Summary topics for Bills Digests – first, second and third priorities

Q34. Bills Digests can be time intensive to produce. If we produced a summary sooner instead of a complete analysis, which 3 categories are of the highest priority to you?

Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=115

Bills Digests are considered useful for many reasons ranging from briefing Shadow Cabinet through to using content in speeches. The qualitative research and comments from the survey showed some confusion about whether every Preliminary Bills Digest was followed up with a full Bills Digest and whether there was a way to know when a Bills Digest was released rather than having to constantly check. There were some calls for the content to be more direct and ‘scathing.’ Whether the content was considered ‘right’ or not depended on their interest — one person said they’d never made it all the way through one and that they tended to be complex and verbose, but others felt they would be less useful if they contained less information. There were also calls for summaries or abstracts of the digests.

6. Parliamentarians and staff — Outreach and communication

Key points

- Emails from the Library (including *What's New*) remain the main channel for finding out about Library services for 70% of parliamentarians and their staff. Around half of respondents indicated the Library website and around a quarter included Library staff, the Library client portal and colleagues as key sources.
- Similar to 2021, just over half of parliamentarians and their staff have experienced a visit or contact by the Library, and just over one third recalled contact with the electorate office (+8%). There was a significant fall in the number of parliamentarians and staff who had experienced lectures, seminars or webinars (-13%), however the qualitative research suggested these were valued but many felt they had no time to attend or watch. 38% of parliamentarians and staff recalled support in their induction/transition to this parliament, but 40% said they didn't know.
- There was a small insignificant drop among parliamentarians and staff indicating they were *quite, very or extremely satisfied* with outreach activities (86%, -7%).
- As in 2021, the qualitative research suggests a significant acknowledgement of the work the Library puts into communication. However, the lack of knowledge of Library services was still considerable. Ideas to improve communication included establishing and maintaining regular contact, and more and continued offers of training both online and in real time.
- Suggestions for training were wide and varied, ranging from more of what is currently provided, to training in various aspects of their jobs (understanding parliamentary procedure, how policy is developed, setting up office systems etc).

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 (70%) to find out about the Library's publications and services. This has remained stable.

The next most common way was the Library website (45%), with an increase of +31% compared to 2021. However, it's important to remember that the website received criticism for being 'clunky' and 'old-fashioned' in comments made about online and digital services.

More strategic use of *What's New* and work on the structure of the website have the capacity to improve knowledge and understanding of Library services and contribute to greater satisfaction.

These results are shown in [Figure 31](#) on the next page.

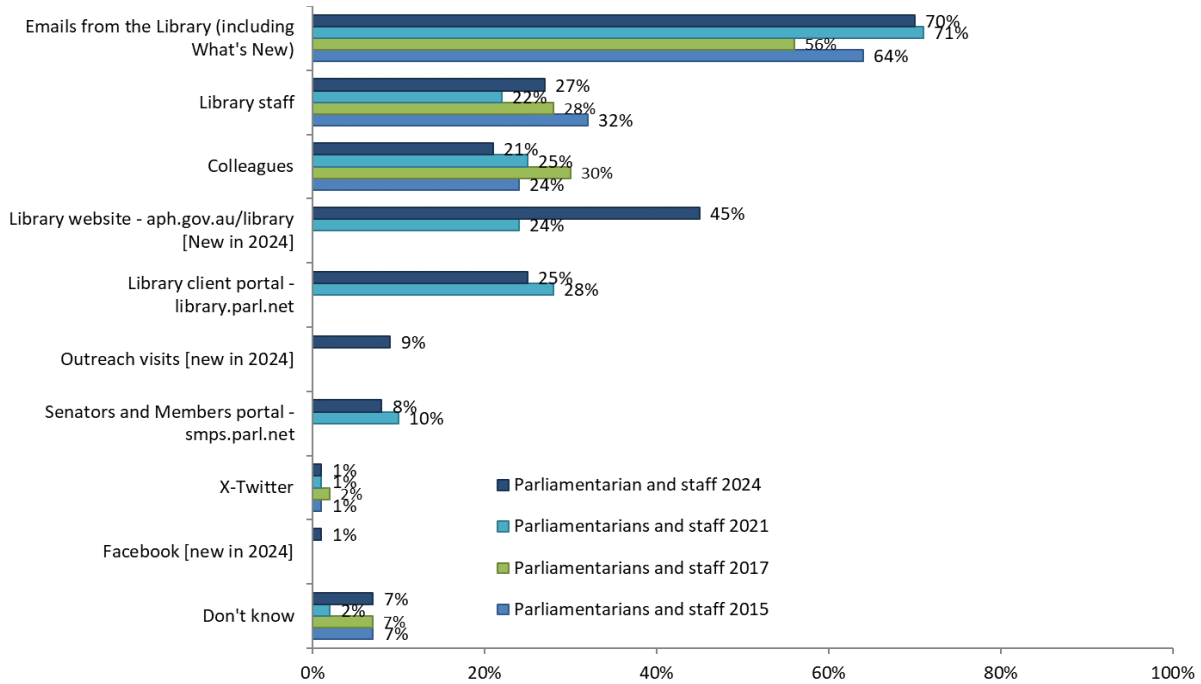


Figure 31: How do people find out about Library services?

Q37. How do you mainly find out about the Parliamentary Library's publications and services? (Multiple responses)
Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=183

Outreach and training

The only significant change from 2021 was a fall among parliamentarians and staff (-13%) in those who had attended a seminar, roundtable or webinar. The qualitative research suggests these are very valuable, but many consider they don't have the time.

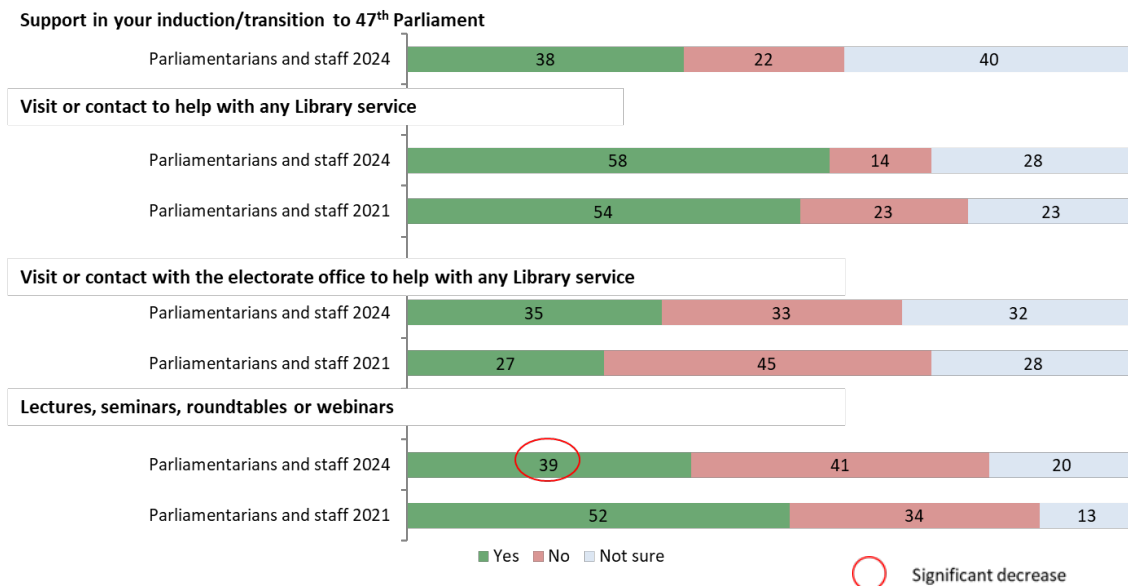


Figure 32: Outreach services

Q28. Please indicate if you or your office have experienced the following Library activities.
Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=183, 2021 n=126

When the topic of training activities was raised in the qualitative research, interviewees were often surprised that the Library provided training in electorate officer resources, media adviser resources, and Isentia, and were keen to be involved. The suggestion of training being potentially available on identifying grants and locating organisations in the electorate was very well received. Other topics suggested for training included:

- Policy research and development, how policy is developed
- Understanding the Library – what’s available and how to use it
- How parliament works
- Understanding how to track Bills and amendments
- Office management systems for independents
- How to use AI responsibly and ethically
- How to undertake research (and use the Library’s research service most effectively)
- Plotting grants onto electorates
- How to read legislation (rules and interpretations)
- Using research databases, accessing and using ABS data.

Satisfaction with outreach services

Parliamentarians and their staff continued to provide high satisfaction ratings with the Library’s outreach activities ([Figure 33](#)). The small decrease (-7%) is not significant.

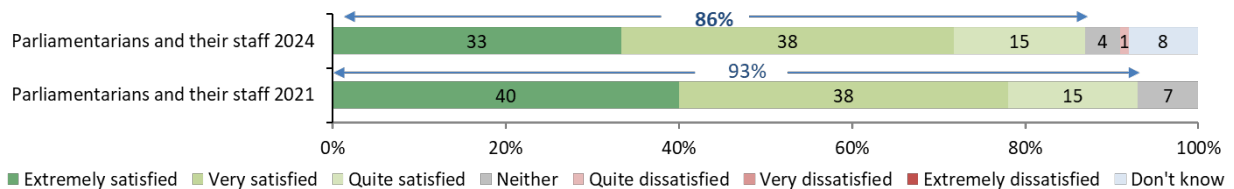


Figure 33: Satisfaction with outreach services

Q29. Please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with all Library activities above that you or your office have experienced.

Parliamentarians and staff 2024 n=180, 2021 n=126

Satisfaction with outreach services was driven by the appreciation and value of relationships formed, and the value of the information and training delivered. It is hampered by the large number of electorate-based staff who know little about how the Library works and how its products and services can help them in their work. It is also hampered by the high turnover of staff and how time poor people are.

7. Committee staff

Note

With a sample size of n=16, it is not possible to reliably compare the 2024 committee staff results with those from 2021 nor can they be compared with the results from parliamentarians and staff. This chapter charts the results for visual acuity and discusses them at times along with those of parliamentarians and staff where they offer different insights, however they should be considered qualitatively and not quantitatively.

In 2012 and 2015 similar research to that undertaken with parliamentarians and staff was undertaken with parliamentary department staff, and in 2017, 2021 and 2024 only those people working in committee offices (both Senate and House of Representatives) were surveyed. In this report, the 2024 results are compared with 2021 and 2017, and the parliamentary committee staff component from the 2015 research. This group was unable to be extracted from the 2012 data.

Satisfaction

There continues to be a trend of lower overall satisfaction scores or ‘don’t know’ responses in general among this group compared with parliamentarians and their staff. This is shown in [Figure 34](#) below maintain this. There was a small decrease in satisfaction levels among those rating themselves *very* or *quite satisfied*. There were no scores of *dissatisfied*.

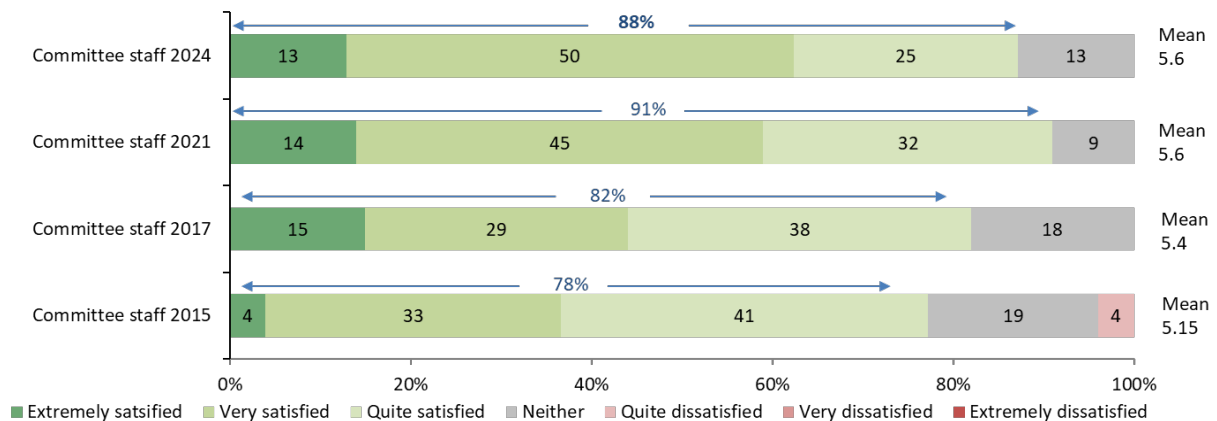


Figure 34: Satisfaction with Library services

Q10. Which of the following best describes your overall level of satisfaction with Parliamentary Library services?

Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=34; 2015 n=27

What drives satisfaction ratings?

Responsiveness, timeliness, and expertise were all cited as reasons for satisfaction and comments showed a strong acknowledgement of the work done by the Library to improve communication with committee staff. For example:

“Great advice, great people, service orientated, and developing new services.”

“Timely response, knowledgeable, easy to deal with.”

“Products and interactions with the Library are consistently excellent.”

While committee staff readily acknowledged the efforts the Library has made to improve responsiveness to them, the issue remains — “we’re here to help, isn’t always backed up by their being there to help.”

There was also an issue raised where a research response was provided that didn’t meet expectations — “A piece of research I requested recently had 4 pages of concise high-quality research from a senior staff member and 36 pages of copying and pasting from a junior researcher that could have just told me to read the report it came from.”

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

In 2024 (as in 2021) only committee staff who had worked in Parliament House since before the current Parliament were asked whether they believed there had been a change in the Library’s performance. As with parliamentarians and staff, there was an increase (31%, +15%) in those who believed it has improved. These results are shown in [Figure 34](#) below. 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 and better analysis in research responses.

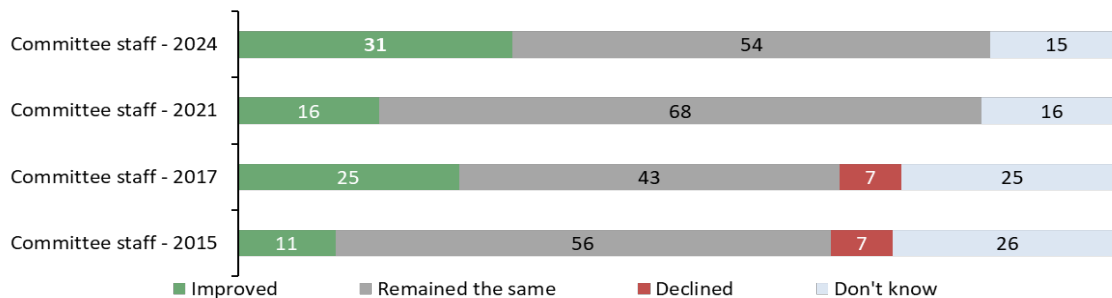


Figure 35: Has Library performance changed?

Q14. For the period you have had dealings with the Parliamentary Library, do you think its overall performance has declined, remained the same or improved?

Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=19; 2017 n=28; 2015 n=27

Possible improvements

Committee staff were asked to suggest improvements in how the Library could operate, and provided comments such as:

“Staff are extremely helpful and always respond helpfully and promptly.”

“I can often find what I need and am able to self-serve.”

“Research responses haven't always hit the mark...”

“Great advice, great people, service oriented, and developing new services.”

“Found useful resources, but not aware of what is available.”

Library performance against its service delivery measures

Looking at ratings for *all the time* and *most of the time*, the Library’s performance was stable on all measures of service delivery — balanced/impartial (88%, +11%), accuracy (88%, +1%) and confidentiality (69%) were all high, followed by quality (81%, +4%), keeping clients informed (75%, +2%), and timeliness (82%, +14%).

These scores can be seen in [Figure 36](#) below.

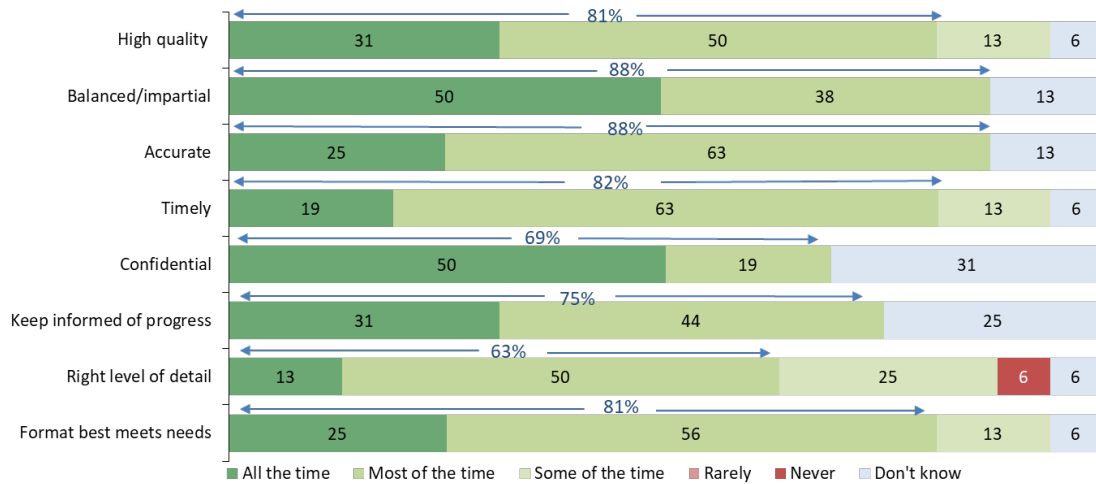


Figure 36: Perceived performance of Library by committee staff

Q17. How does the Parliamentary Library perform against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Committee staff 2024 n=16

However, as can be seen from Figure 37 below which compares 2015, 2017, 2021 and 2024 scores for *all the time*, there were notable drops on all measures. This move from *all the time* to *most of the time* is an example of the less effusive feedback seen in 2024.

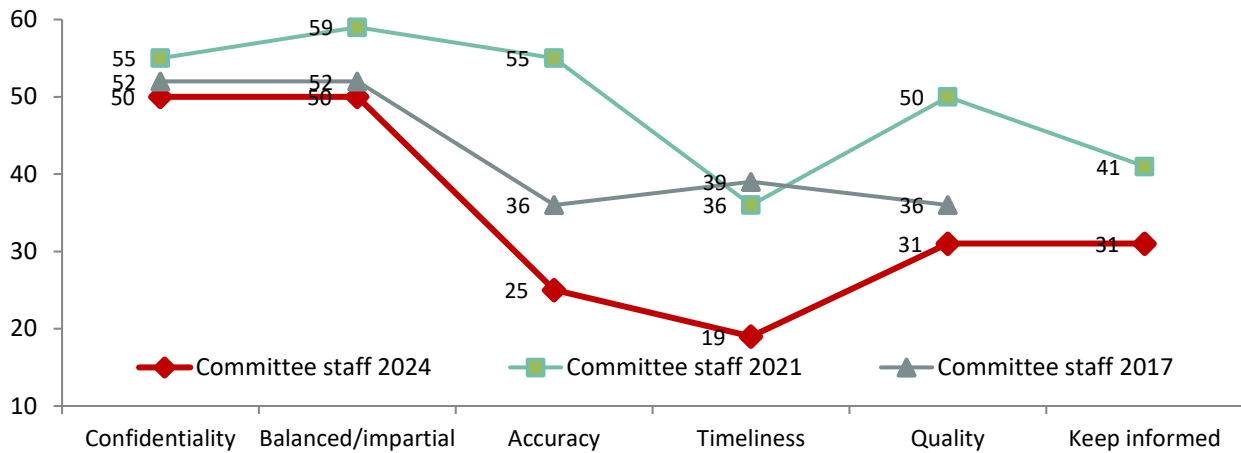


Figure 37: Scores of 'all the time' against the Library's performance measures

Q17. How does the Parliamentary Library perform against each of the following measures when responding to requests?
Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=33

Reasons given for the perceived improvements (whether *all the time* or *most of the time*) in most of the performance measures were with regard to service, expectations management and written products. For example:

"Partly because they are more responsive to research requests."

"Material provided to us has been of a VERY high quality this Parliament."

"New services."

"More responsive and clear, and better research results (more analysis, rather than 'cut and paste' of other work)."

Library staff

Committee staff’s ratings of Library staff tell a similar story to that from parliamentarians and their staff, but with slightly lower figures. The larger number of *don’t know* ratings is different from the ratings of parliamentarians and their staff and suggests a lack or low level of experience with the Library, a lack of clarity regarding the level of service they can expect from the Library or simply a lack of experience with the Library’s products and services.

The ratings of committee staff respondents are shown in Figure 37 on the next page. There were only small changes from 2021. Figure 38 on the next page shows the yearly comparisons for those who responded *strongly agree*.

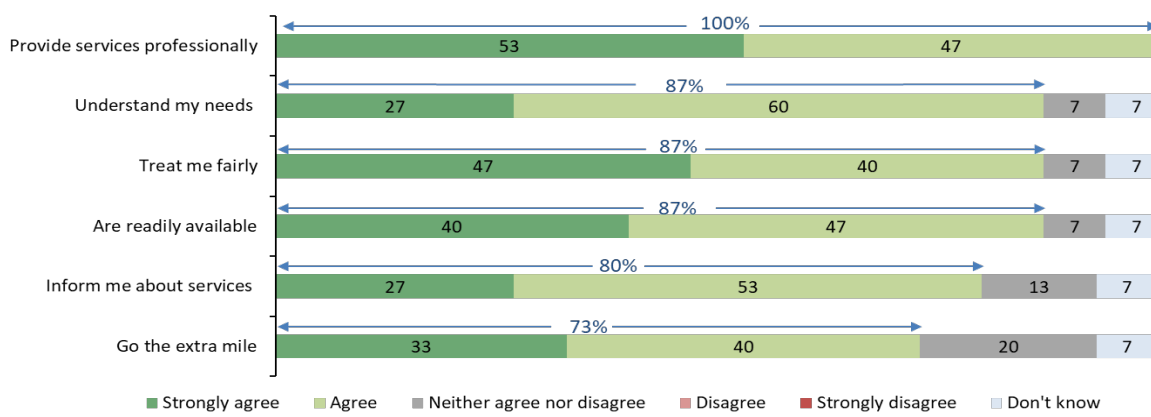


Figure 38: Evaluation of Library staff by committee staff

Q19. In your experience, do Library staff ...
Committee staff 2024 n=16

Like for parliamentarians and staff, there are notable changes in the strongly agree scores as shown in Figure 38. While the pattern is similar, a number of scores have fallen from 2021 particularly **Understand my needs** (27%, -5%) and **Treat me fairly** (47%, -8%).



Figure 39: Evaluation of Library staff by committee staff - Yearly comparison of 'strongly agree' rating

Q19. In your experience, do Library staff...
Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=34

Use of Library services

The data suggest that the Library was being used less by committee staff than it has in the past. In 2024 only 13% of committee staff used the Library more than once a week during sitting weeks and the same number during non-sitting weeks: in 2021, 32% of committee staff used the Library more than once a week during sitting weeks and the same number during non-sitting weeks. It is important to bear in mind the small sample size where 1 respondent is equal to 6%.

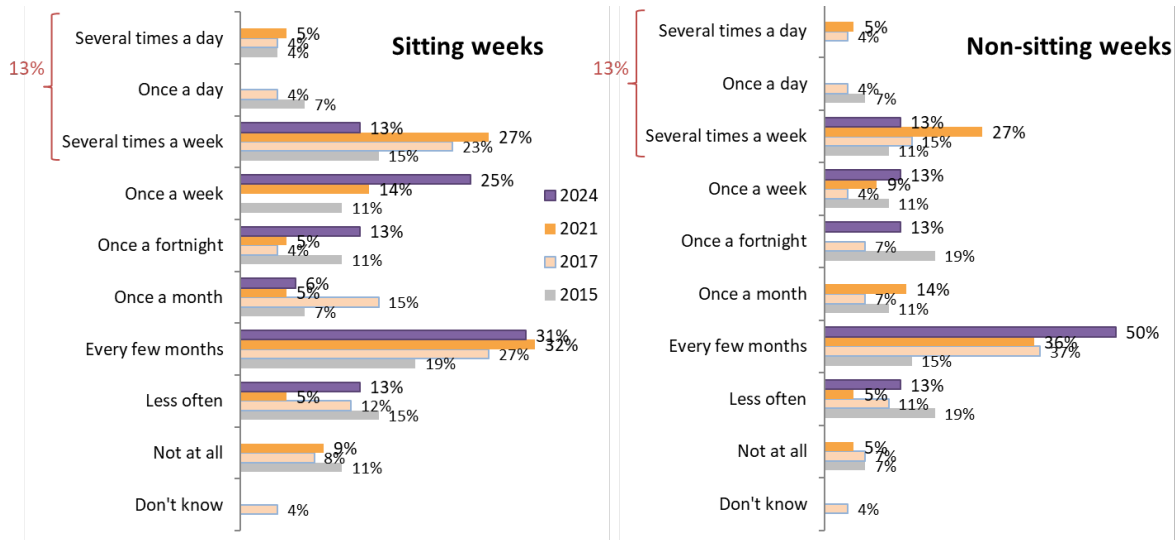


Figure 40: Reported usage by parliamentary committee respondents in sitting and non-sitting weeks
 Q4. Which of the following best describes how often you use the Parliamentary Library during sitting weeks and non-sitting weeks?
 Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=27; 2015 n=27

Use of different Library services

Figure 41 below shows the levels of use indicated by Committee staff.

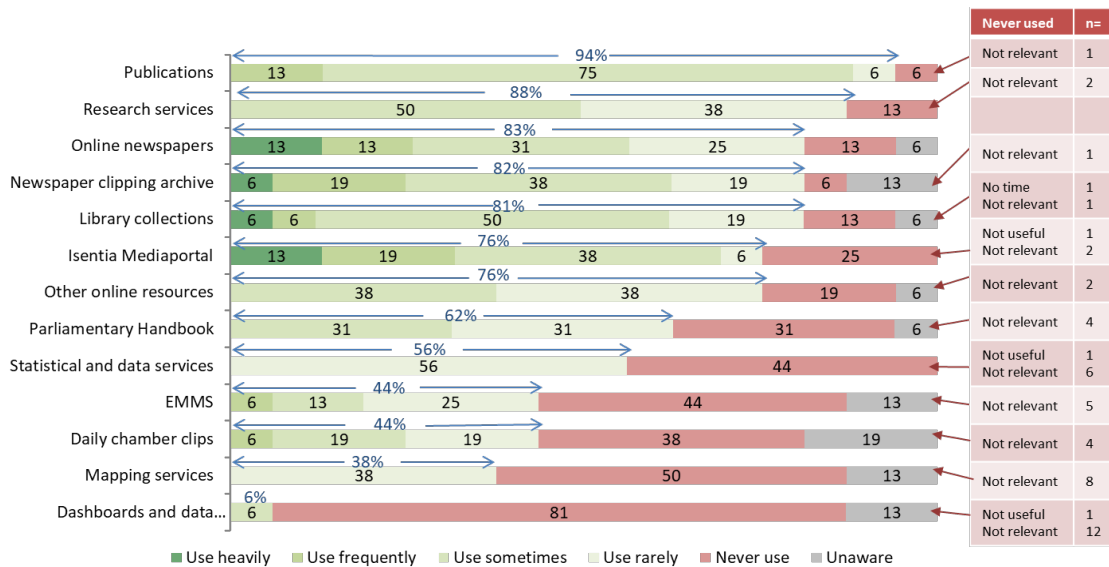


Figure 41: Reported frequency of use of specific Library services by parliamentary committee respondents
 Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
 Committee staff respondents 2024 n=16

Library publications (94%) and research services (88%) were the most used of the Library’s services although online newspapers, the newspaper clipping archive, the Library collection and Isentia Mediaportal were the only services receiving a *use heavily* rating (13%, 6%, 6% and 13%, respectively). All services received a *never use* rating, highest for dashboards and data (81%) and mapping services (50%). Figures 41– 53 show comparisons with previous years where applicable.

Library publications (including Bills Digests)

Use of the Library publications (including Bills Digests) is at 94%, a small increase from 2021. This increase is seen in the *sometimes* category (+30%). The *heavily* and *frequently* categories have both fallen by 5%.

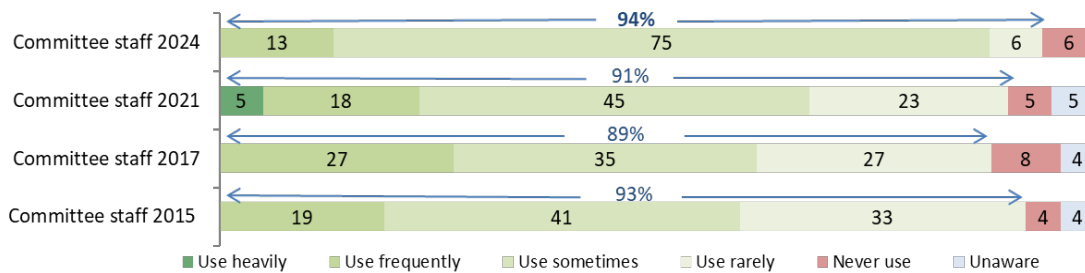


Figure 42: Use of Library publications (including Bills Digests) services

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff respondents 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

Research services

Committee staff reported using research services to a similar level as they did in 2021 although the 88% score was entirely made up from *sometimes* and *rarely* users. There was a notable 13% who *never used* this service.

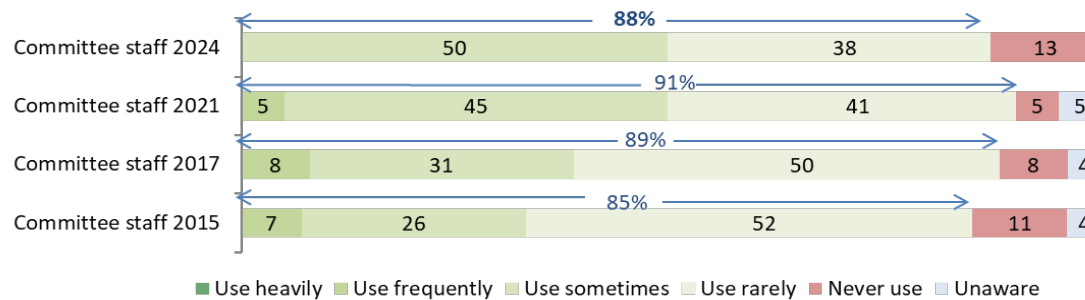


Figure 43: Use of research services

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

Online newspapers

Committee staff were given access to online papers for the first time. It is the third most used Library service.

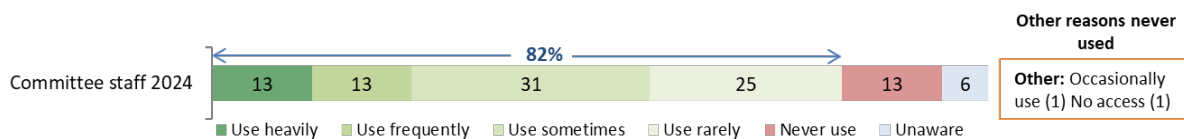


Figure 44: Use of online newspapers

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16

Newspaper clippings archive

Most committee staff (82%) used the newspaper clipping archive and 63% reported their use as *heavy*, *frequent* or *sometimes*. The overall decrease from 2021 (-13%) is seen in *heavy* (-3%), *frequent* (-22%) and *rarely* (-8%) scores.

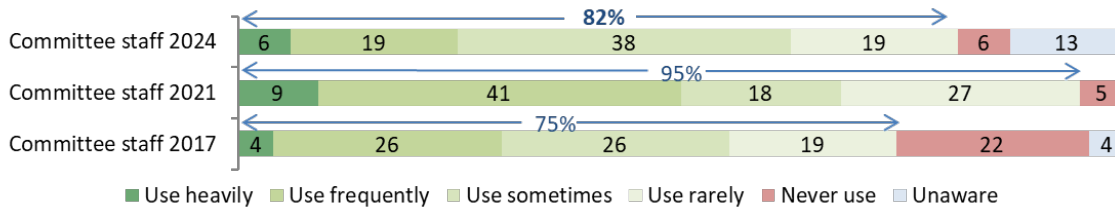


Figure 45: Use of newspaper clipping archive

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26

Library collection

The Library collection was used by 81% of committee staff yet in 2021 it was used by 91% and was one of their most often used services, as it was in 2017 and 2015. The number who said they *never* used the collection increased to 13% (+8%) dropped to 5% and a further 6% were *unaware*. With such a small sample the information should be treated with caution.

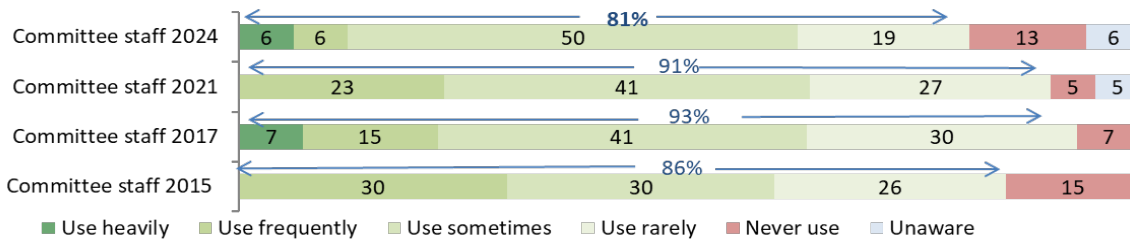


Figure 46: Use of Library print collection

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

Isentia Mediportal

Committee staff were given access to the Isentia Mediportal for the first time during this research wave.

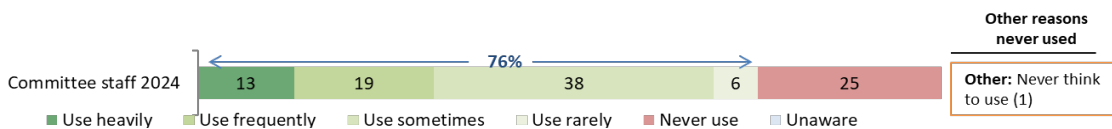


Figure 47: Use of Isentia Mediportal

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16

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%).

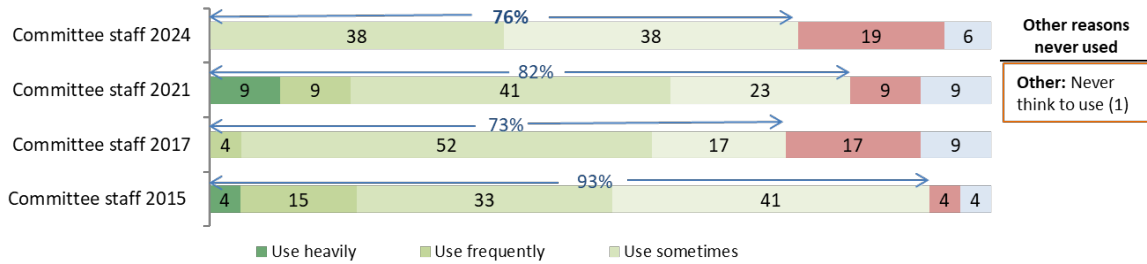


Figure 48: Use of other online resources

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

Parliamentary Handbook

2024 was the first year this was asked and 62% claimed to use it either *sometimes* or *rarely*.

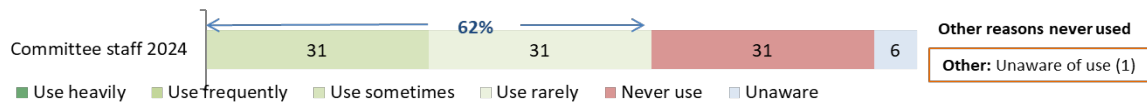


Figure 49: Use of the Parliamentary Handbook

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16

Statistical and data services

While just over half (56%) of committee staff respondents reported using statistical and data services, all use was reported as *rarely*, and 44% *never use* the data and statistical services.

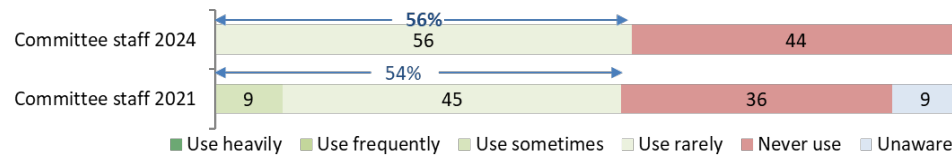


Figure 50: Use of statistical and data services

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22

EMMS

Usage of EMMS was asked of committee staff for the first time in 2024 where 44% said they used it *frequently*, *sometimes* or *rarely*. As many (44%) indicated they *never used* it. (A business case is required for access to EMMS to comply with the Library’s exemption under the *Copyright Act*).



Figure 51: Use of EMMS

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16

Daily chamber clips

Use of the daily chamber clips has decreased to 44% (-5%) and the number of those saying they are unaware of the service increased 5%.

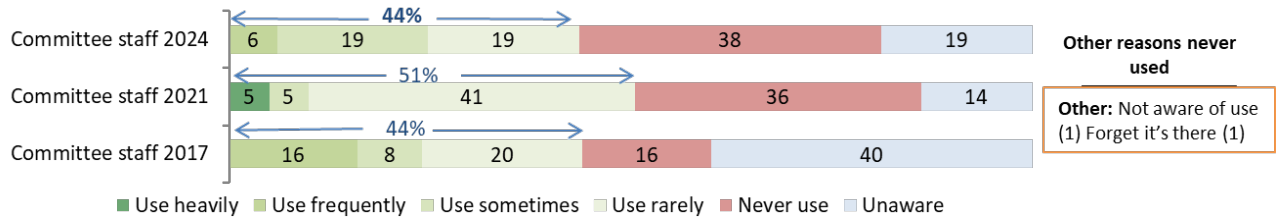


Figure 52: Use of Daily chamber clips

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26

Mapping services

There was very little change in the usage pattern for mapping services since 2021.

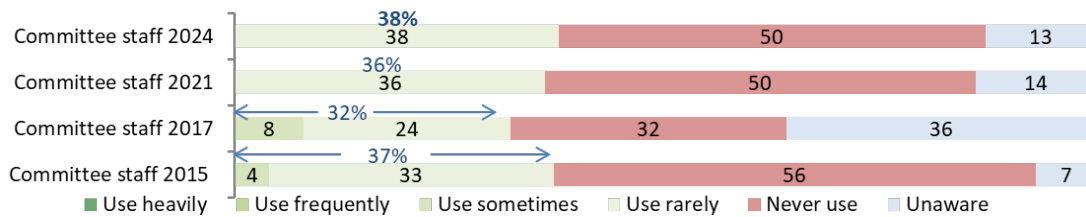


Figure 53: Use of mapping services

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22; 2017 n=22; 2017 n=26; 2015 n=27

Dashboards and data visualisations

This question was first asked in 2024 and only 6% of committee staff indicated they used them, and this was only *sometimes*.



Figure 54: Use of dashboards and data visualisations

Q5. How often do you use the following Library services?
Committee staff 2024 n=16

Reasons were offered for why particular services were not used, most citing having no need for the service, forgetting the service existed, or being unaware of the service. This indicates that there is an ongoing need to try to address knowledge gaps.

Library service priorities for next 12 months

When Committee staff were asked to rank up to 3 services in terms of priority for the next 12 months, the clusters of priority were with research services and media services (such as the Isentia Mediaportal, online newspapers and newspaper clippings archive) and Bills Digests like parliamentarians' offices. However, there was also a priority cluster around research publications and to a lesser extent library collections.

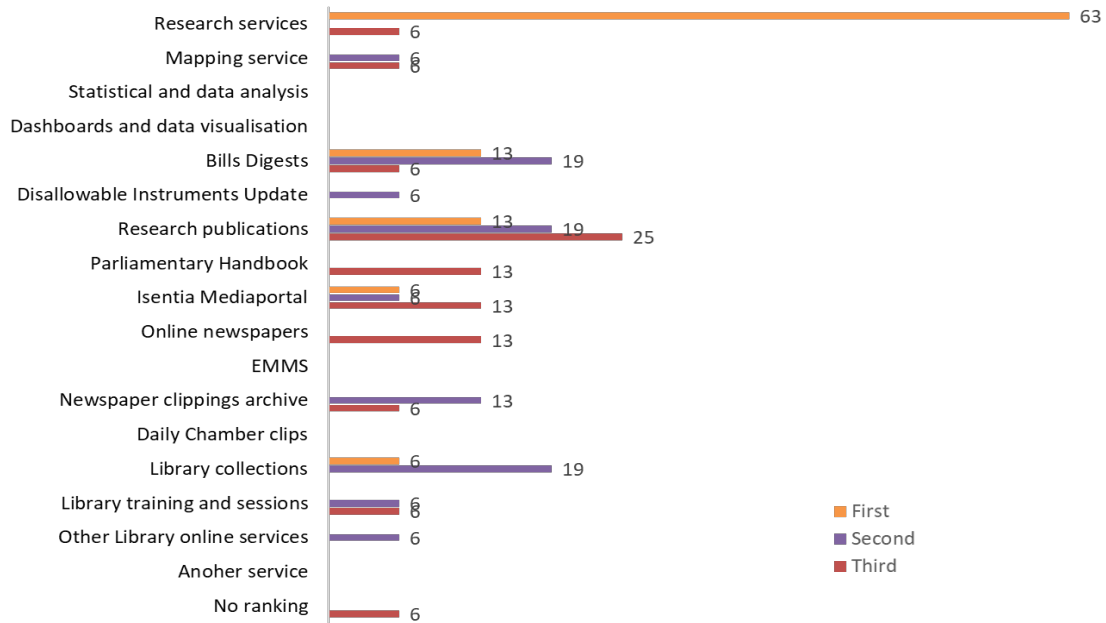


Figure 55: Library service priorities for next 12 months

Q7. Thinking about how you will use the Library in the next 12 months, please rank up to 3 services in terms of priority.
Committee staff 2024 n=16

Qualities of Library services and preferences

Qualities of Library services scored highly from committee staff and there were no significant differences from 2021. Trust in the Library as a source of information was the highest quality for committee staff at 100%. These are shown in [Figures 56](#) below.

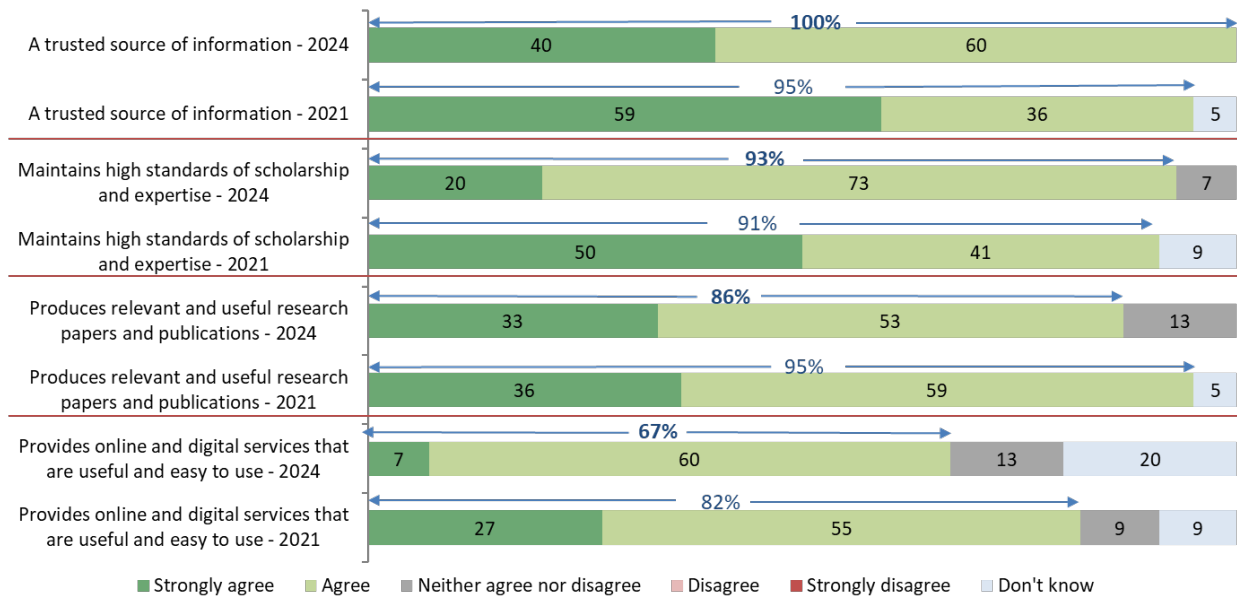


Figure 56: Qualities of Library services by year

Q21. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Library?
Committee staff 2024 n=16; 2021 n=22

Reasons given for positive ratings related to the quality and breadth of the research. For example:

“Maintain your excellent long form research.”

“Most of the Library products are not relevant for my daily work in providing a service to our mutual clients. However, I keep up to date with what is being produced so I can direct clients to them when appropriate.”

Less positive comments related to digital services. For example:

“Sometimes navigation makes things a bit hard to find/use. I know it's excluded but the poor usability of ParInfo is a big one.” [noting the library is not responsible for the ParInfo platform]

“I think that the online services could be updated a little, including a clearer webpage.”

Resources used to research

Committee staff were most likely to use **Google** and **Government websites** (both 87%), followed by **Government or academic reports** and the **Library research service** (both 80%). Google and Government websites were also the first places most people went (both 31%), although 15% started with Library online resources and another 15% with external experts. [Figure 57](#) below these results.

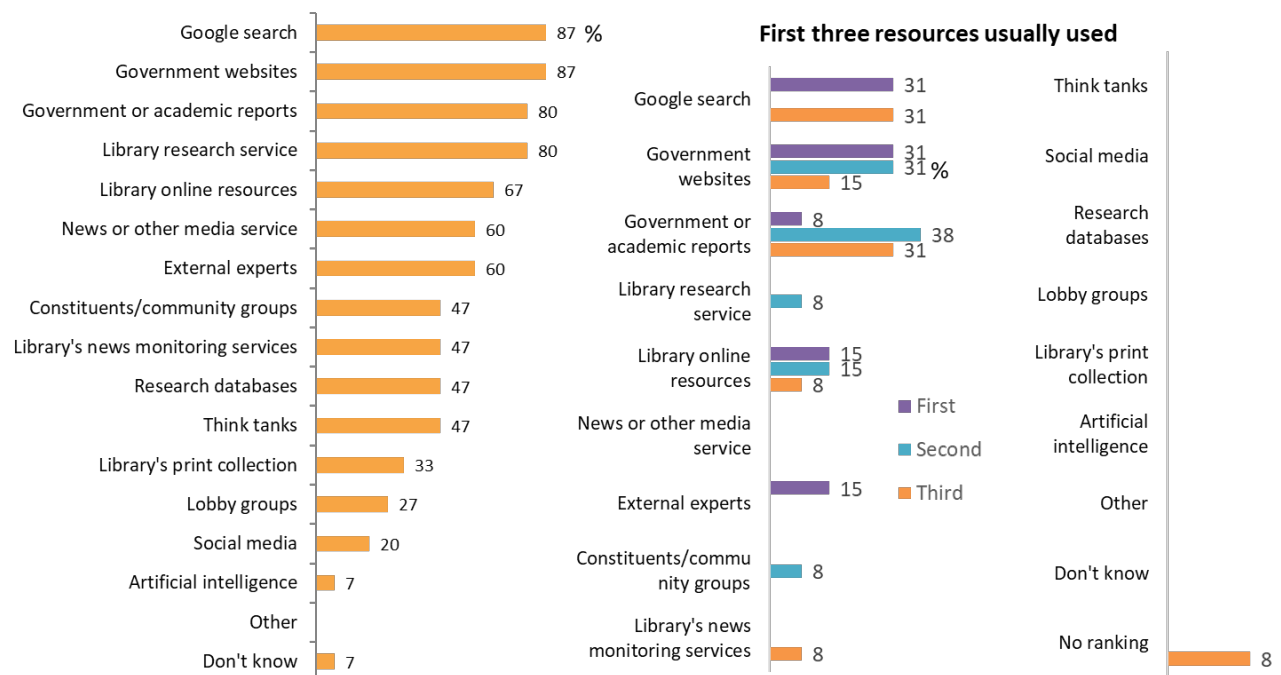


Figure 57: Resources chosen by committee staff for researching – first, second and third selections

Q23. Which resources have you or your office used for researching information for preparing papers or speeches or for any other purpose?
Q24. Please rank up to 3 resources you would usually begin with.
Committee staff 2024 n=15

Research & legislative services priorities

While parliamentarians and their staff believe Confidential analysis and research should be the Library’s first priority (51%), followed by Bills Digests (17%), for committee staff, top priority was shared by **Confidential analysis and research, Preliminary Bills Digests, and research papers** (all 25%). This is shown in [Figure 58](#) below.

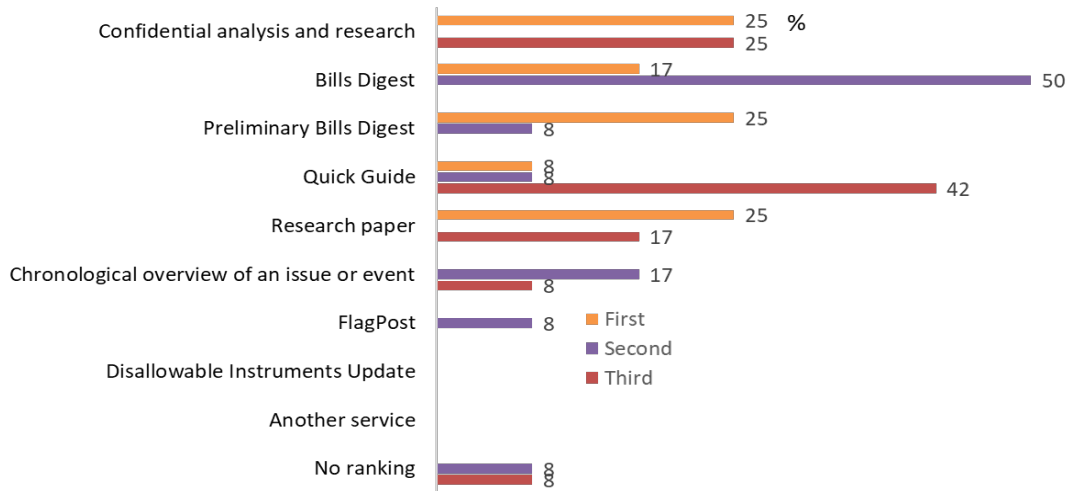


Figure 58 Library priorities for next 12 months – first, second and third priorities

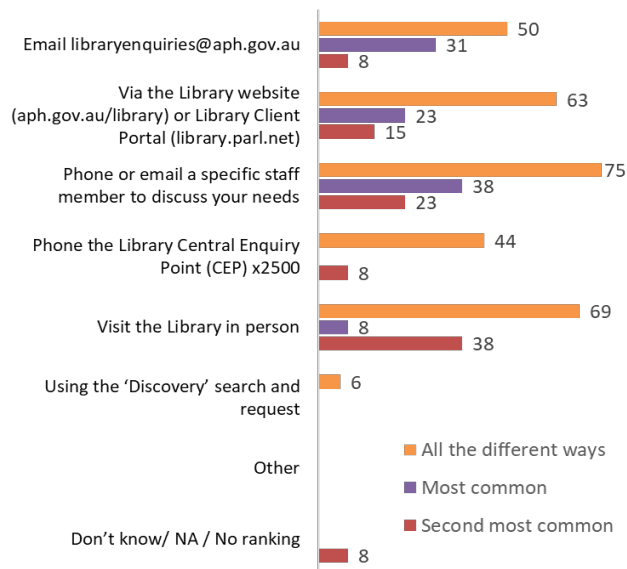
Q25. Please rank up to 3 of the following services on what you believe should be of the highest priority. Committee staff 2024 n=12

Accessing services and documents

Figure 59 shows the main ways Committee staff access Library services with contacting a specific Library staff member the primary way, and higher compared to parliamentarians’ offices.

PC/laptop was clearly the preferred way of access (100% of committee staff). It is important to note that the 2021 question asked how respondents accessed documents and not how they would prefer to access them.

Different and most common ways Library services are accessed



Preferred way to access documents

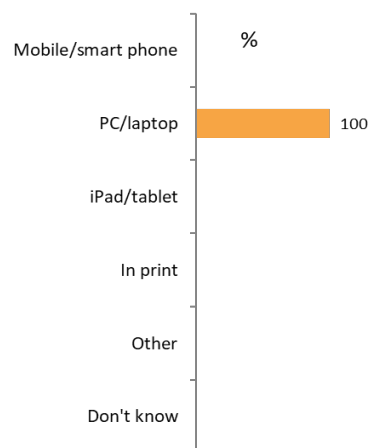


Figure 59: Preferred way of accessing documents

Q8. Please select all the different ways that you access the Library services. Q9. Please rank the 2 most common ways that you access the Library services. Committee staff 2024 n=16

Q26. Which of the following best describes your most preferred way of accessing the Library’s publications (research papers, quick guides, Bills Digests and Flagpost blogs) Committee staff 2024 n=15

Bills Digests, Preliminary Bills Digests and Disallowable Instruments Updates

Ratings of usefulness and use of Bills Digests, Preliminary Bills Digests and Disallowable Instruments Updates by committee staff tended to be based on their relevance to their role and committee considerations, making them similar but slightly lower than the ratings given by parliamentarians and their staff. 64% of committee staff indicated **Bills Digests** were *quite, very or extremely useful*, 7% indicated *slightly useful* and the remaining 28% indicated they didn't use them or couldn't give a rating. Of those who used them at all, 40% use them heavily or frequently, 50% use them sometimes and 10% use them rarely. **Preliminary Bills Digests** were seen to be *quite, very and extremely useful* by 50%, *slightly useful* by 7%; 29% said they didn't use them and 14% couldn't give a rating. Of those who have used them, 88% did so heavily, frequently or sometimes and 13% did so rarely. **Disallowable Instruments Updates** were identified as *quite or very useful* by 35%, while 50% didn't use them and 14% were unsure. Of those who had used them at all, 80% use them sometimes and 20% use them rarely. These are shown in [Figure 60](#) below.

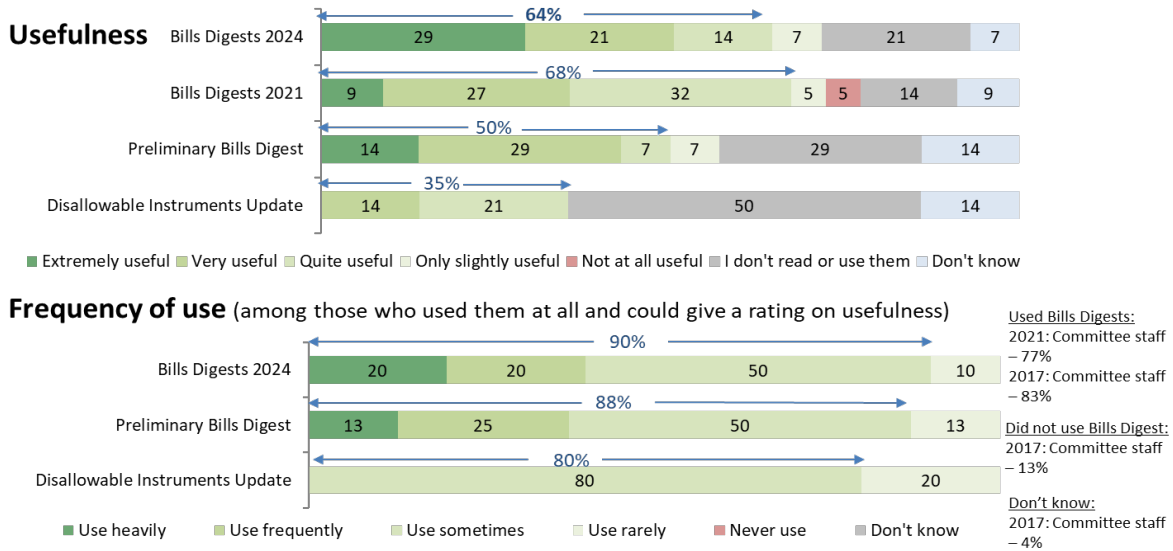


Figure 60: Use and usefulness of Bills Digests, Preliminary Bills Digests and Disallowable Instruments Updates

Q27. How useful do you or your office find ...?
 Q28. How often do you or your office specifically use ...?
 Committee staff 2024 n=14; 2021 n=22

In 2024 respondents were asked whether Bills Digests contained the right amount of information and whether they were available when needed. 90% of committee staff *agreed* that Bills Digests contained the right amount of information (no-one *strongly agreed*) but only 50% said they were available when needed with 30% saying they *neither agreed nor disagreed*. 10% *disagreed*. These are shown in [Figure 61](#) below.

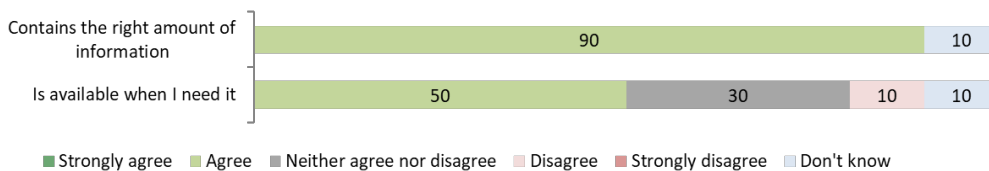


Figure 61: Content and availability of Bills Digests

Q31. The Library has been making changes to Bills Digests. Please rate your experience in the past year of the Library's Bills Digests against the following statements.
 Committee staff 2024 n=10

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 what topics would be most important to include in any ‘fast-turnaround’ summary.

Consistent with parliamentarians and their staff, committee staff considered **High level overview of key issues** (50%) as their highest priority followed by **Background information** (30%). Both groups selected Key facts and figures as their second choice (40% of committee staff). This is shown in [Figure 62](#) below.

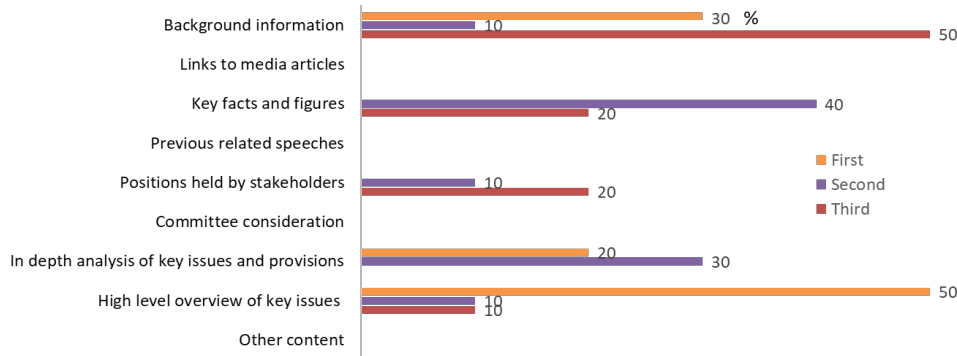


Figure 62: Summary topics for Bills Digests – first, second and third priorities

Q30. Bills Digests can be time intensive to produce. If we produced a summary sooner instead of a complete analysis, which 3 categories are of the highest priority to you?

Committee staff 2024 n=10

Outreach and communication

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 (70%) and committee staff (80%) to find out about the Library’s publications and services. This is a small increase (+7%) for committee staff.

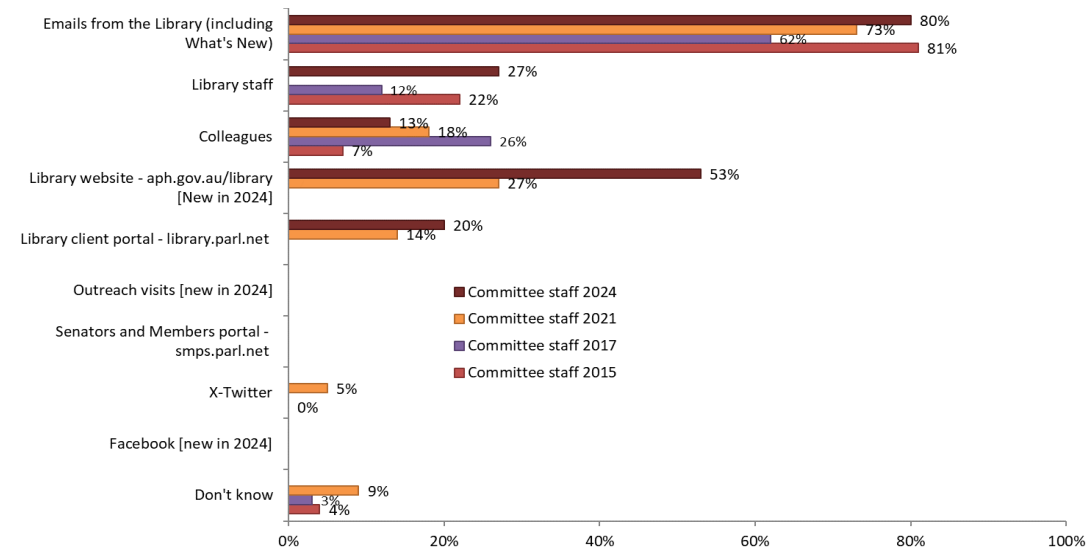


Figure 63: How do people find out about Library services?

Q32. How do you mainly find out about the Parliamentary Library’s publications and services? (Multiple responses)

Committee staff 2024 n=15

Outreach and training

Like parliamentarians and their staff, committee staff were keen on training opportunities, including in Isentia media and EMMS. Approximately two thirds have experienced the Library’s outreach activities and most (87%) have experienced Library organised lectures, seminars roundtables or webinars.

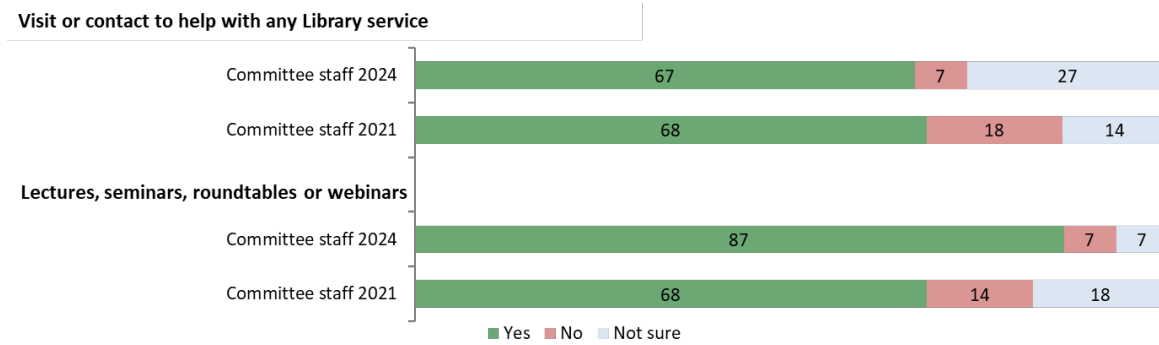


Figure 64: Experience with outreach services

Q33. Please indicate if you or your office have experienced the following Library activities.
Committee staff 2024 n=10, 2021 n=22

Satisfaction with outreach services

Committee staff again gave very high satisfaction ratings with the Library’s outreach activities (Figure 63).

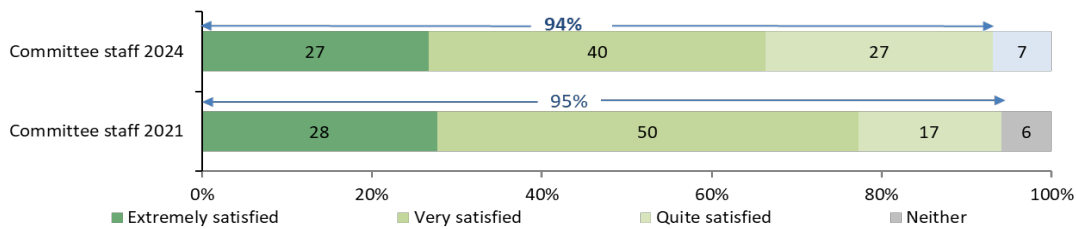


Figure 65: Satisfaction with outreach services

Q34. Please indicate your overall level of satisfaction with all Library activities above that you or your office have experienced.
Committee staff 2024 n=15, 2021 n=22

Satisfaction with outreach services was driven by the appreciation and value of relationships formed, and the value of the information and training delivered.

8. Final comments

Planning for the future and changes the Library could make in the next 12 months

In 2024 respondents were asked whether there were any areas they thought the Library should be looking to develop, do things differently, improve its services or any areas of knowledge they thought the Library didn't cover or cover well. Respondents were also asked if there was one change the Library could make over the next 12 months that would have a positive impact on their work. The comments often crossed both questions so have been grouped and provided below.

- **An introduction or induction kit or online module for new staff.** For example:
 - "It's like a high level 'welcome kit' including training opportunities, contacts etc."*
 - "An outreach session that automatically occurred for new EO staff would be really helpful. It could be something like a 10-minute call to the new staff member that guides them through what the library does/offers/can provide and then tells them how to sign up to automatic notifications etc."*
 - "An online library tour for staff who don't get to come to Canberra. Does that already exist?"*
 - "A webinar 'virtual tour' that would help train me in how to get the most out of what the Library has to offer."*
- **Ongoing communication and outreach.** For example:
 - "Instead of calling it What's New it should be called Did you Know - everything is new to me."*
 - "More communication - tell people exactly what they Library can and can't do."*
 - "They need more attention-grabbing marketing. They need to make the Library sound more interesting."*
 - "Library should reach out to Members and Senators - they are a taxpayer funded service that should be used by more."*
 - "An account manager, please."*
 - "Sending an email isn't communicating - there has to be regular one-on-one personal communication or at least the offer of it. Would like a personal relationship with the team that handles our portfolio's interests."*
 - "Until the electorate office visit, I knew nothing about the Library and until I did this survey, I had no idea how much they did to try to engage with me ... but it's all overwhelming in an otherwise busy day."*
 - "Regular emails about individual services - i.e., separate regular emails that look at one service in-depth (what it is, how to use, where to access, who to contact for more info etc)."*
- **Build relationships.** For example:
 - "Would like stronger relationships with people in the Library - very important."*
 - "Would like to have an account manager - someone I could ring to ask if they Library could help me and who would also check in on me every 6 months or so to see if I was having problems. A bit of personalisation/relationships."*
 - "Personal contact is so important. Joe's training is really comprehensive - very good. I've used the Library so much more since the training."*

- **Improving research services.** For example:

“Keep to timeframes.”

“More researchers - especially given the impact of more Greens and Independents.”

“Would like to be able to log a request and track its progress.”

“I think the research responses would be much better if I had the chance to talk them through with someone.”

“I've lost some confidence in the library - it can take weeks to get a response and then I have to work on it. I would love to change my mind.”

“Better discussion and work with offices on research tasks. I am always hesitant to seek assistance out of concerns my ask is too large or too much of a burden - there is a feeling that the library needs to say yes even if it a significant imposition.”

“Concise research responses with more political nous (i.e. media grabs in plain English)” “More analysis and summaries of research.”

“Quality control on research requests.”

- **Faster Bills Digests.** For example:

“More, and (whenever possible) faster production of, bill digests would always be welcome!”

“Quicker Bills Digests”

“More timely Bills Digests distilling the core issues. Instead of having to decipher a bill and explanatory memorandum the day the bill is tabled, a few short paragraphs on what exactly the bill does (along with key views, if known) would be incredibly helpful.”

“More regular reminders of current bills and the progress of bills, for those who take an interest but for whom it is not a daily habit.”

- **Improve digital services.** For example:

“More training on the digital platform, including on EMMS so we can go direct and get what we need, rather than them having to get it for us.”

“Broaden the scope of digital subscriptions to improve access to media. I receive alerts for articles that I can't access.”

“Improving the online and data services, including the catalogue system accessibility and our understanding and effective use of the systems with better training and online or direct support.”

“Fix it so you can access online services from non-PH devices”

“Upgrading EMMS would prove most helpful for my work. I often find the service does not have the feed available I am after in a timely manner, and the clip I cut has alternate time codes after being clipped than the in and out points I have set before downloading.”

“Simplify access to media - one system for all”

“Sort out newspaper subscriptions / clips – have to pay my own subs so I can have easy access. Bills Digests need to be quicker.”

“Would like a list of who to contact [in the Library].”

Other comments included:

- *“Fact checking service that can be published or made available to ALL parliamentarians.”*
- *“Would like to see more FlagPosts.”*
- *“Perhaps they could make podcasts based on their webinars - I'd listen while I'm in the car.”*
- *“Expand mapping team.”*
- *“Understanding budget papers by portfolio area.”*
- *“Hire some low to mid-level staff who can just turn out basic information in plain English - no analysis in verbose academic articulation needed.”*
- *“I'd like something to come out on Fridays before sitting weeks saying 'here's what's on in the House next week and here are some resources that might be useful.’”*
- *“Grant Connect is not up to date so any help on which departments provide different grants and when the next round is opening.”*
- *“More visuals in information and data Tracking grant funding.”*
- *“Lists of key stakeholders in different subjects (like Committee lists and in Bills Digests, including First Nations academics).”*
- *“Purchasing and maintaining an electronic directory of all constituents and businesses email and mobile contact details in our electorate.”*
- *“I think if there were ways to make clearer who we should contact on a particular issue that might assist. There are more opportunities to build direct relationships with staff supporting committees.”*
- *“Prioritise committee work.”*
- *“Continue to work with the PBO to add value to the work of parliamentarians and leverage each of our respective strengths.”*
- *“Run some short e.g. 45 min masterclasses for us on specific topics – you have amazing researchers so getting them to share their expertise would be great - here's some topics we'd find helpful: History of school funding in Australia; what would increase housing affordability; what would an effective federal environmental law look like; How Australia's approach to higher ed policy compares with other OECD nations.”*

9. 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, the research suggests that along with a demand for faster timeframes, there are also a lot of respondents who don't understand what the Library offers or how it could be used in their jobs. This finding is possibly strengthened by the number of respondents based in electorate offices rather than in Parliament House (including many who would have been based in Parliament House in the past), and who have little familiarity with its role in supporting the Parliament.

The Library is highly valued by parliamentarians and their staff who use it, receiving high ratings against satisfaction and outreach activities. There are, however, some clear areas of dissatisfaction that have the capacity to affect resilient trust. The most noted of these is digital and online services not being as technically efficient or intuitive as needed. This was also an issue in 2021. Many people noted the improvements to EMMS, but a couple were not positive.

Library resources and services are used regularly by most people, although not all. Those who don't use them generally believe they have no reason to use them or are not aware or familiar enough with them. 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, but a considerable number still felt the Library could and should do more.

Research is seen as the core Library service and its value-add would be difficult if not impossible to get elsewhere. While other resources are used for research, the Library's service is considered the most legitimate and trustworthy.

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

The issue of timeliness of research services remains, however there was acceptance that some timeframes were unrealistic and any drop in quality is usually because of the timeframe or the way in which the question was framed. There were some complaints of responses being late without any updates on progress. There is still scope to help improve the quality of the questions asked and associated expectations and minimise some variation in the quality of service and response.

The timeliness of Bills Digests is also still an issue, although not to the extent of previous research — 72% of parliamentarians and staff agreed or strongly agreed that they were there when they were needed. In any 'fast-turnaround' summary a high-level overview of key issues followed by background information were identified as priority content. However, the qualitative research suggests the selection of the top 3 priorities in content for a Bills Digest summary could be challenging for people, and a few interviewees refused to make selections for the top three priorities, because it was too dependent on the nature of the Bill and their understanding of it and the issues.

Outreach and training activities were much appreciated although many respondents were unaware of what was already offered, particularly with regard to training. A change of government has meant many new staff (50% of respondents were new this parliament) and the qualitative research indicated many were surprised by the resources and services the Library offered. As in previous research, 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 training in everything from the courses already provided right through to training on areas outside the Library's traditional role such as understanding parliamentary procedure, how policy is developed, and choosing and setting up office systems. There were also requests for written 'tipsheets'.

There were many more comments this year about technical and online services being 'clunky', particularly because of inadequate search functions, unacceptable download times and being difficult to navigate.

There were many comments expressing concern as to whether the Library would be able to cope with the expected increase in work leading up to an election. Many called for the Library to have more staff.

Recommendations

Improve online systems

12. Improve the useability of the website and online services (particularly search functionality) as a priority. Good training will not fully overcome online services' shortcomings and 'clunkiness'. Failing to address this effectively will impact satisfaction and trust in the longer term.
13. Consider how staff working outside of the Parliament House network can access online services reliably and an on-call service for media staff having difficulties accessing articles and clips before 8:30 am (AEST/AEDT) (resources permitting).
14. The Library should leverage any initiatives by the Department's Information Services Division to improve access to information for off-network clients such as ministerial staff (noting relevant cyber security constraints).
15. Consistent with client requests, the Library should implement an alerting service for new publications (including Bills Digests).

Improve communications and outreach

16. Continue outreach services, particularly visits to electorate offices and committee secretariats. Many respondents asked for better and more regular general and specific training and information in different aspects of Library services for new staff and for constant refresher follow-up.
17. Use *What's New* (Library weekly email), the Library website and the 'Power User' fact sheet strategically. Consider including 'tips' for using the Library and its services more effectively, having links to feature training articles/blogs such as 'How to frame your research question,' and promote these. Also consider specific topic and service communication.
18. Consider offering all offices a contact person/account manager 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. Many appeared to desire a stronger relationship with the Library.

Request service management and quality assurance

19. Renew the Library's focus on mechanisms, protocols and training to ensure consistency in the quality of the service and responses to client requests. Ensure receipt of client requests are acknowledged; library staff should check and discuss clients' requirements and turnaround timeframe/trade-offs, and keep the them informed of the progress of the request.

Legislative support

20. The Library should continue to focus on ways of ensuring timeliness of Bills Digests. It should also note feedback about the importance of providing a high-level overview of key issues and ensure that this is given priority in drafting Bills Digests.
21. The Library should investigate the most effective way to support clients' consideration of disallowable instruments.

Address perception of committee staff

22. There appears to be a gap in the Library's and Committees' shared understanding of research services which should be addressed. Committees' observations that their requests are not given equal prioritisation with direct client requests was raised in 2021 and activity to date has been appreciated. However, further work is still required. The Library should work with committees to better understand their needs. This likely involves:
 - a. developing a shared understanding or framework about the types of research and specialist services the Library is best placed to assist with, and those that are within the remit of the committee (noting that this boundary will not always be clearcut)
 - b. investigating whether some committee needs cannot be met under the current service model, and whether any new initiatives are required (noting this may have resource implications) and
 - c. ensuring mechanisms and protocols are adhered to to ensure consistency in the quality of the service and responses to requests (recommendation 8).