



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

DPS ref: 13/6278/108

Ms Rebecca Gordon
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Gordon

Thank you for your letter of 2 July 2015 about the Committee's current inquiry into the delivery of Electoral Education and for inviting the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) to attend a public hearing roundtable discussion.

I note that the focus of the Committee's inquiry includes electoral education services provided to schools, students and teachers; the teaching methodology and results of the national Civics and Citizenship Curriculum; and evolving technology and new platforms for delivering electoral education. Your letter invites DPS to make a short presentation outlining its current civic and/or electoral education programs.

As part of its role of supporting the functions of the Australian Parliament and the work of parliamentarians, DPS provides a range of interpretation and information services for visitors to Australian Parliament House. School students are one of the largest audience groups who visit Parliament House. During 2014-15, more than 132,000 students participated in school tours led by DPS Visitor Services Officers (VSOs). These tours provide an introduction to the building and how parliament works, including a visit to both chambers. These tours complement the role play programs delivered by the Parliamentary Education Office. Many of these students come to Canberra through the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) program. This program requires students to visit three institutions: Parliament House, the Museum of Australian Democracy and/or the National Electoral Commission and the Australian War Memorial. DPS has responsibility for ensuring the PACER documentation for each school group is properly stamped to show the school has completed the Parliament House part of the program.

DPS VSOs are not education officers; however, they are trained to manage and engage the broad range of visitors, including students, who come to Parliament House.

Given this level of involvement, DPS feels it would not contribute significantly to the roundtable. However, we would be pleased to provide further information if that would be of assistance to the committee.

Yours sincerely

Karen Greening
Assistant Secretary
Parliamentary Experience Branch

10 July 2015