
The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia

Appropriations and Administration Committee

House of Representatives
Annual Report 2012–13

June 2013
Canberra

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Membership of the Committee

Chair Ms Anna Burke MP

Members Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP

Mr Ewen Jones MP

Ms Nola Marino MP

Hon Bruce Scott MP

Ms Jill Hall MP

Mr Craig Kelly MP

Ms Janelle Saffin MP

Ms Maria Vamvakinou MP

Secretary Ms Robyn McClelland

Research Ms Kay Saunders

Annual Report 2012–13

The Committee

- 1.1 The Standing Committee on Appropriations and Administration, appointed under standing order 222A, considers estimates of the funding required for the operation of the Department of the House of Representatives for each year and provides to the Speaker for presentation to the House and transmission to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, estimates of amounts for inclusion in the appropriation bills for the Department.
- 1.2 The Committee also considers proposals for changes to the administration of the Department of the House of Representatives or variations to services provided by the Department, other matters of finance or services as may be referred to it by the Speaker or the House, the administration and funding of security measures affecting the House, and proposals for works in the parliamentary precincts that are subject to parliamentary approval. The Committee reports on these matters to the Speaker or the House, as appropriate.
- 1.3 When conferring with the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations and Staffing, the Committee may consider estimates of the funding required for the operation of the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) each year, and provide to the Speaker for presentation to the House and transmission to the Minister for Finance and Deregulation, estimates of amounts for inclusion in appropriation bills for the DPS. To date, the Committee has heard from DPS on its estimates and budgetary position, but has not reported to the House on these matters.
- 1.4 Standing order 222A(a) (ii) provides that the Committee make an annual report to the House on the amounts for inclusion in the appropriation bills for the Department of the House of Representatives.
- 1.5 The House Appropriations and Administration Committee was established at the beginning of the 43rd Parliament on 29 September 2010,

and members of the committee were first appointed on 25 October 2010. There were two changes of membership during the reporting period: Ms Anna Burke MP, as Speaker, became Chair of the Committee from 9 October 2012 replacing the former Speaker, the Hon Peter Slipper MP; and Ms Saffin joined the Committee from 13 February 2012, replacing Mr K J Thomson, MP.

Reports

- 1.6 In 2012–13, the Committee tabled two reports:
- *Report no. 4 – Annual Report 2011-12; and*
 - *Report no. 5 – Budget estimates 2013–2014 for the Department of the House of Representatives.*

Report no. 4

- 1.7 Report no. 4, the second annual report of the Committee, was tabled on 20 September 2012. It reported on the reports and meetings of the Committee during the year.

Report no. 5

- 1.8 Report no. 5 was presented in accordance with standing order 222A(a) (ii) which requires the Committee to provide the Speaker for presentation to the House the amounts for inclusion in the appropriation bills for the Department of the House of Representatives. As in previous years, the report was tabled in the House on the Wednesday following the presentation of the Budget, this year on 15 May 2013. In summary, the total appropriation to be approved by the Parliament for the Department of the House of Representatives in the Appropriation (Parliamentary Departments) Bill (No. 1) 2013–2014 was \$23.218m, compared to \$22.691m in 2012–13.
- 1.9 The Committee endorsed the proposals of the department to seek additional operational funding in the form of New Policy Proposals for the measures set out in the report, which, for the Budget and three out years, totalled \$2.177m. In response, the Government agreed to additional funding of \$1.996m over the Budget and three out-years.
- 1.10 The Committee reported that it was very pleased that the Government had agreed to the additional resources sought by the department. It was also pleased that, at the request of the Committee, the department was excluded from certain targeted departmental savings applying across government.
- 1.11 The Committee also reported that progress had been made on formalising a framework for the parliamentary budget process that went some way in

recognising the constitutional independence of the two Houses of Parliament, their committees and members, and the particular responsibilities of the parliamentary administration that supports them. The indicative budget timeframe and milestones for the Department of the House of Representatives, are set out in the report.

Meetings of the Committee

- 1.12 During the reporting period the Committee met five times, on 19 September 2012, 31 October 2012, 13 February 2013, 15 May 2013 and 26 June 2013. It also met informally on 22 August 2012 with the Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Seychelles, the Hon Dr Patrick Herminie.
- 1.13 The following are among the matters considered at the meetings:
- a request by the Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT), requesting additional funding to establish a new sub-committee for the JSCFADT, to oversee Australia's aid policy
 - a briefing paper by the Department of the House of Representatives on the establishment of a permanent meeting room for the Federation Chamber of the House of Representatives
 - in respect of these two matters, the Committee accepted the department's recommendations not to support requests for these measures in the 2013-14 Budget process. This reflected the tight budgetary framework applying in 2013-14, and the specific requirements for new proposals to be brought forward
 - various briefings to the Committee by the Clerk of the House on the financial performance of the Department of the House of Representatives, its budgetary outlook, proposals for additional operational funding for the department for 2013-2014, and the outcomes of the proposals. The Clerk invited committee members to question the department on any matters relating to departmental expenditure
 - various briefings to the Committee by the Secretary, DPS on the financial performance of, and outlook for, the department

- the report of the *Review of Information and Communication Technology for the Parliament*, and the letter from the Presiding Officers to the heads of the parliamentary departments of 13 September 2012 concerning the review. In relation to the governance structure for the delivery of ICT services, the Presiding Officers proposed amongst other things that the Committee and the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations and Staffing, jointly oversee the delivery of parliament-wide ICT services by DPS. In response, the Committee resolved that when conferring with the Senate Standing Committee on Appropriations and Staffing in considering the estimates for the operation of the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) under so 222A(b)(i), the Committee can have particular regard to the provision of ICT services to the Parliament by DPS
- a paper by its Secretary providing an update on the consolidation of ICT services in Parliament. In response, and in accordance with SO 222A(a)(iii), the Committee noted the proposals for changes to the administration of, and variations to services provided by, the Department of the House of Representatives as a result of the consolidation of ICT services in the Parliament. The Committee also noted that it would be briefed further on the detail of asset and funding transfers and the establishment of service level agreements
- a letter to the Clerk of the House from the Joint Chairs of the Parliamentary Education Office Advisory Committee of 7 February 2013 relating to the schools hospitality program – the Committee is pleased to report that additional funding for the schools hospitality program was provided in the 2013–14 budget process; and
- the response by DPS to the report by the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee into the performance of the DPS. In response to the first recommendation of the report – *that the funding and administration of DPS be overseen by the Senate Appropriations and Staffing Committee and the House Appropriations and Administration Committee, meeting jointly for that purpose, and that standing orders be amended as necessary* – the Chair wrote to the Chair of the Senate FPA Committee indicating that under the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives, the Appropriations and Administration Committee may consider the funding of DPS, when conferring with the Senate Appropriations and Staffing Committee.

- 1.14 In brief, the Committee considers it has played a positive and responsible role in discharging its responsibilities under the standing orders, and in particular, in assessing the funding requirements of the Department of House of Representatives and bringing these requirements to the attention of government. It reports to the House accordingly.

Ms Anna Burke MP
Chairman
June 2013