



Australian Government

Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce

2023 **Annual Report**

Update on the implementation
of recommendations from the
Set the Standard report



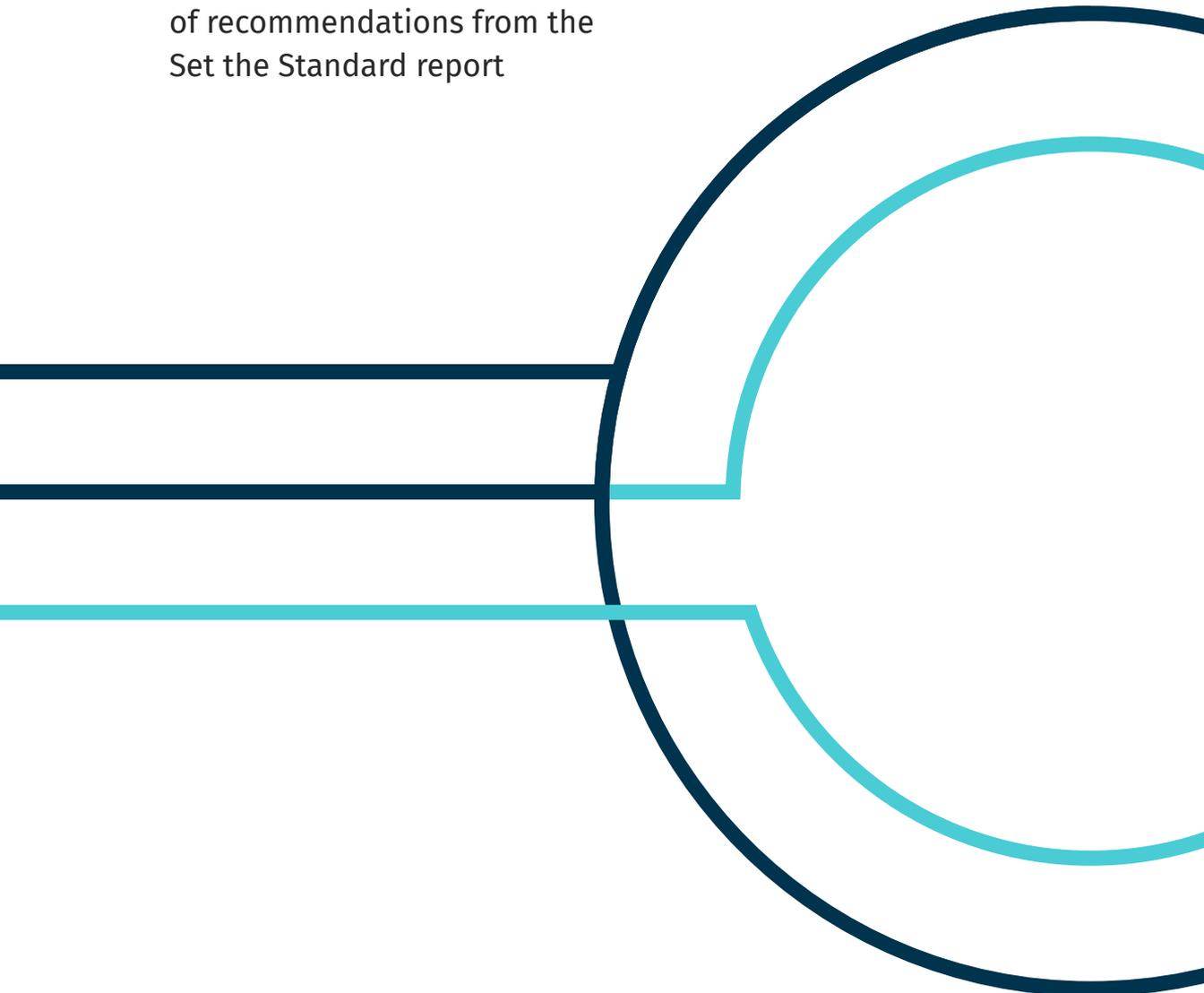


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Use of the Coat of Arms

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Foreword from the Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce

The Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce presents the second annual report on the implementation of recommendations from the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's *Set the Standard: Report on the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces*.

We would like to extend our gratitude to Ms Kerri Hartland, who served as the independent Chair of the Taskforce until January 2023. We thank Kerri for her leadership over the first 12 months of the Taskforce, which culminated in the Taskforce's first Annual Report on progress implementing the 28 recommendations from the *Set the Standard* report.

The Taskforce welcomed Dr Vivienne Thom AM as the new independent Chair in February 2023 and have continued to meet regularly throughout 2023 to oversee the implementation of the *Set the Standard* reforms.

Over the past 12 months, many important foundations have been formed that will continue to underpin ongoing transformation within our workplaces. Among our key priorities has been the establishment of the statutory Parliamentary Workplace Support Service, further enhancing this already valuable service and recognising the need for a robust system that provides comprehensive support to people working in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces.

We thank everyone who has actively participated in the consultation processes, offering invaluable insights and perspectives to shape these reforms. Your engagement has been instrumental in ensuring that the changes implemented are fit for purpose and aligned with the desired outcomes.

The Taskforce remains committed to building a workplace that reflects the nation's values and ensures the safety and wellbeing of everyone who works in and supports the Parliament of Australia. The Taskforce will continue to oversee the establishment of an independent body to enforce standards of behaviour and associated reforms.

We urge everyone to embrace and embed an enduring culture of safety, respect, inclusivity, accountability, and wellbeing within all Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces. Only through sustained commitment and vigilance can we ensure that our workplaces remain spaces where every individual feels valued, protected, and empowered.

January 2024.

(Left to right): Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Ms Zali Steggall OAM MP, Senator Perin Davey, Senator the Hon Jane Hume, Hon Sussan Ley MP, Dr Vivienne Thom AM, Senator Larissa Waters, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Ms Sharon Claydon MP

Progress snapshot

This is the second annual progress update from the Taskforce on the implementation of the 28 recommendations from the *Set the Standard* report. Since the establishment of the Taskforce in early 2022, a total of 13 recommendations have been implemented, with some to continue as ongoing measures (these are marked throughout this report as 'implemented – ongoing'). Six recommendations have been partly implemented and 8 are still in progress. The stakeholders responsible for carrying forward work on implemented recommendations with ongoing responsibilities and recommendations yet to be fully implemented are listed at the end of this report.

This report focusses on the areas of progress made during 2023, with the Taskforce's [2022 Annual Report](#) providing detail of prior achievements.

This report is again structured around the five outcomes 1) Leadership, 2) Diversity, equality and inclusion, 3) Systems to support performance, 4) Standards, reporting and accountability, and 5) Safety and wellbeing.



Leadership

IMPLEMENTED

✓ rec 1, 2,

PARTLY IMPLEMENTED

1 rec 4



Diversity, equality and inclusion

IMPLEMENTED

✓ rec 8, 10

PARTLY IMPLEMENTED

1 rec 9

IN PROGRESS

2 rec 5, 6, 7



Systems to support performance

IMPLEMENTED

✓ rec 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18

IN PROGRESS

2 rec 12, 13, 19

PENDING

1 rec 3



Standards, reporting and accountability

IMPLEMENTED

✓ rec 24

PARTLY IMPLEMENTED

1 rec 20, 21, 23

IN PROGRESS

2 rec 22



Safety and wellbeing

IMPLEMENTED

✓ rec 25, 27

PARTLY IMPLEMENTED

1 rec 28

IN PROGRESS

2 rec 26

Leadership

DESIRED OUTCOME: We want leaders at all levels to prioritise a safe and respectful culture, set clear expectations and model safe and respectful behaviour



RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
1 Statement of Acknowledgement	✔ Implemented
2 Institutional leadership	✔ Implemented
4 Individual leadership	🕒 Partly implemented

Leadership for change

On 8 February 2023, the Presiding Officers, Senator the Hon Sue Lines, President of the Senate, and the Hon Milton Dick MP, Speaker of the House of Representatives, again acknowledged the findings of the *Set the Standard* report (Recommendation 1) and presented the Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce’s 2022 Annual Report (Recommendation 2a-iii). The Presiding Officers recognised ‘*the leadership and commitment of many people for the work completed to date, alongside the Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce, as well as the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and other party leaders.*’ The Presiding Officers also stated that ‘*The nation is looking to this parliament to show leadership in this space, and the expectation is that we will deliver.*’

Implementing the full suite of reforms has attracted cross-party and crossbench support, and commitment to achieve cultural change has been demonstrated through leadership at all levels. Following the presentation of the 2022 Annual Report, party leaders and representatives demonstrated their commitment to the reforms by providing updates to the Parliament in their support for the following motion on parliamentary standards (Recommendations 2b and 4).

8 February 2023 motion on parliamentary standards Hansard chamber excerpts

The House and the Senate agreed that each Chamber:

(1) endorses the draft Behaviour Standards and Codes as presented in the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards’ final report, pending the establishment of the advisory and enforcement regime, and the final adoption of

Behaviour Standards and Codes for parliamentarians, parliamentarians' staff and Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces; and (2) recognises the contribution of the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service to improving the culture at Parliament House and its role in supporting parliamentarians and their staff.

'This is our chance to do more than just catch up to the expectations of the community, employers and staff; this is a chance for parliament to lead, to build a workplace that respects everyone and respects the reason they are here—to serve the nation that we love.'

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

'All who work in this parliament, be they elected representatives, our staff or public servants, do so in the service of our nation and the Australian people. Our service is a privilege, and with that privilege comes only the highest expectations from the people of Australia that we uphold the highest standards. Australians demand nothing less, and we should offer nothing less, because our character and conduct are connected with Australia's confidence in democracy and in the institution of parliament.'

The Hon Peter Dutton MP

'Parliament House is a unique workplace. We want to attract the best and brightest here and we want them to have an enriching and fulfilling experience... We have a shared responsibility to make sure people who work in this building and in other political offices are able to do their job in a safe way and where they are confident that the systems and supports are there when and if they need them.'

Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher

'It should never be lost on anyone who serves in this parliament the crucial role that this place occupies within the fabric of Australia's identity and its conscience. This building is the heart of our nation's democracy. It should always be a place where upholding safety, fostering respect, promoting equality and embracing diversity are the centre of what we do. As MPs, we have the unique privilege of being the elected custodians of these values—values which need to be followed and upheld. It is for this reason that Parliament House should be the safest building to work in in Australia. This place should set the essential and moral standard for our decency and for how we treat, interact and work with one another.'

The Hon David Littleproud MP

'It's our job to provide a safe and respectful workplace. It's our job to ensure that we have a culture of respect and safety which extends outside our own offices to the staff in this place, whether they're the editor of a newspaper, the person who cleans our office or the person who works in the parliamentary library. This place

must have a culture that we can all be proud of. We know that, for that to happen, all leaders in this place must place a high priority on working to implement the Set the Standard report recommendations...'

Mr Adam Bandt MP

'We serve in this place in positions of influence. Every parliamentarian works incredibly hard, but to be chosen by the electorate is indeed a privilege. It's up to all of us to set the standard for our colleagues, our staff, those who enter our workplaces and those who participate in our democracy. Speaking here today, I want to address our staff directly. As I've said before, this is your workplace; you deserve nothing less than a completely safe and respectful workplace.'

Senator the Hon Don Farrell

'The codes of conduct that we've landed on and recommended to the House and the Senate really set out some very clear guidelines as to how we must behave towards each other, with a focus on respectful behaviour, encouraging diverse perspectives and recognising the power and influence that we all have and ensuring that that is not abused. They also set out some clear expectations of upholding laws that support safe and respectful workplaces.'

Ms Sharon Claydon MP

'Everyone deserves to have a safe and respectful workplace, and all parties have a role in improving the parliament's culture... This parliament should serve as a model workplace for our nation, and only by creating the best workplace will this parliament attract the best people that our country has to offer.'

Senator the Hon Jane Hume

'There is still a long way to go, but the momentum is with this change and I am hopeful that parliamentary workplaces can be safe, diverse, inclusive and respectful—the model workplaces that the Australian people expect... Let's continue to clean up what has been a really toxic and damaging workplace and let's aspire to actually set the standard for the rest of the nation.'

Senator Larissa Waters

'It is an unfortunate truth that all too often it takes an unfortunate incident to actually ignite change. But change is what we all committed to, across party lines.'

Senator Perin Davey

'We have a responsibility in this place to ensure a safe and respectful Commonwealth workplace and to set the standard for all workplaces.'

Ms Zali Steggall OAM, MP

Supporting the reforms

The representation of parliamentarians on the Taskforce from across the 47th Parliament was unchanged, however in early 2023 the Taskforce farewelled the independent Chair Ms Kerri Hartland and welcomed Dr Vivienne Thom AM. The Taskforce continued to meet regularly throughout the year and publish the outcomes of each meeting alongside detailed progress updates of each reform on its website.

An Implementation Group (comprising representatives from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Department of Finance, Department of the House of Representatives, Department of the Senate, Department of Parliamentary Services, Parliamentary Budget Office, and the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service) continued to support the work of the Taskforce, meeting regularly to collaborate and progress key reforms (Recommendation 2a). Several working groups established by the Implementation Group also continued to progress work related to the recommendations.

The independent Chair also frequently met with the respective leads of the various *Set the Standard* reforms, including the Presiding Officers, executives of the parliamentary departments, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Department of Finance and the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service.

The Taskforce established a Staff Consultation Group to engage staff from across different workplaces with those responsible for implementing the *Set the Standard* reforms. Nine sessions were held with members of the Staff Consultation Group throughout 2023 with primary focus on the establishment of the statutory Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (Recommendation 11) and reform of the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 (MoP(S) Act) to modernise, improve transparency in, and clarify the employment framework for parliamentarians and their staff.

Ongoing leadership

Leaders in many different roles right across the parliament have a powerful impact on achieving a safe and respectful culture. This involves individuals embracing ownership and accountability, modelling and supporting inclusive and psychologically safe workplace behaviour, and focusing on making a positive impact.

The organisations in parliament continue to play an important role in supporting leaders to develop their capabilities (Recommendation 4). A range of initiatives have been delivered over 2023 by the Department of Finance and the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS) to help strengthen the leadership capabilities

of MoP(S) Act employees across Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces.

These initiatives include:

- refreshed Safe and Respectful Workplaces training for parliamentarians and MoP(S) Act staff,
- a three-part Leadership Speaker Series featuring a collection of guest speakers,
- partnering with the Neuroleadership Institute to tailor and deliver their INCLUDE program to MoP(S) Act employees. INCLUDE aims to elevate inclusivity, creativity and collaboration to create smarter teams,
- psychometric diagnostic tools, aimed at promoting team building through developing insights on working preferences, styles and team members' strengths,
- the Optimising Performance course to assist leaders in fostering high performing teams through role clarity, performance enhancing feedback and growth opportunities,
- the Working Mind for Managers course to address and support mental health in the workplace,
- shared Values and Behaviours sessions to encourage teams to develop customised, positive, and sustainable cultural and leadership practices,
- trialling a Psychological First Aid for Managers model to assist leaders to recognise signs of distress in their employees, confidently discuss their wellbeing, and connect them to appropriate support, and
- specific training on de-escalating difficult constituents, well-being and maintaining performance under pressure and debriefing sessions with electorate office staff.

Heads of the parliamentary departments regularly communicate with staff about maintaining a respectful workplace and promote available supports for staff wellbeing. Departments also provide a range of leadership and other training and development programs for staff aimed at building and sustaining a respectful workplace culture.

The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) continues to refresh and expand its Harassment Contact Officer network annually, providing regular training (including mental health training). The DPS leadership team release clear messaging, using e-mail, face-to-face engagement, and workshops to reinforce DPS' values and zero tolerance for bullying, harassment and discrimination.

As part of ongoing leadership development, DPS offered programs to staff with management responsibility while recognising that leaders are found at all classification levels. Staff from across DPS, including senior executives, have had the opportunity to participate in: Public Sector Management Program, Future Women Leaders Program, Women in Leadership Mentoring Program, Change Makers Program, Australian and New Zealand Government Executive Master of Public Administration

course, APS Academy Leadership Development Programs, individual coaching sessions, and mentoring opportunities. In addition, new leadership courses were incorporated into the corporate learning and development calendar which aim to upskill newly promoted supervisors and managers and strengthen leadership for existing managers and leaders.

The Department of the Senate's training program includes a number of offerings aimed at strengthening the leadership capabilities of supervisors and executive staff and promoting strong, consistent and ethical leadership. The department also supports its leaders and emerging leaders through its approach to succession planning, knowledge sharing and mentoring.

The Department of the House of Representatives continued its commitment to the professional development of leaders with a focus on work health and safety, respectful relationships, wellbeing, bullying and harassment prevention, and leadership and management capability. A new emerging leaders program, refreshed scenario-based training focusing on professionalism in the parliamentary service, and trauma-informed training sessions were provided to strengthen the capabilities of leaders.

The PWSS co-developed a session for managers with the Departments of the House of Representatives and the Senate on trauma-informed responses to disclosures of workplace work health and safety incidents. This session builds leaders' capacity to create psychologically safe workplaces that enable disclosures and connect employees with appropriate assistance. Managers and leaders are also made aware of their work health and safety and reporting obligations. The module has since been adapted for delivery to leaders across Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces.

The Parliamentary Budget Office completed a rotation of managers attending the Australian Public Service Commission's Breakthrough Conversations program. The senior executive and managers continued targeted leadership development through a program of 360-degree feedback and participation in individual coaching. A new learning and development calendar is in development and includes a stream focused on leadership skills at all levels, beginning with upskilling junior managers so they are ready to move to the next level.

Diversity, equality and inclusion



DESIRED OUTCOME: We want a diverse and inclusive workplace: everyone should experience respectful behaviour as the baseline standard

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
5 Diversity among parliamentarians	🔄 In progress – ongoing
6 Diversity among MoP(S) Act employees	🔄 In progress
7 Measurement and public reporting	🔄 In progress
8 Diversity and inclusion in the parliamentary departments	✅ Implemented – ongoing
9 Access and inclusion	🔄 Partly implemented
10 Everyday respect in the parliamentary chambers	✅ Implemented – ongoing

Parliamentarians and their staff

The Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce Chair sought updates from each of the main political parties on the actions being taken to support a diverse and gender-balanced parliamentarian and staff cohort (recommendations 5 and 6).

Australian Labor Party

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) continues our commitment to improving the experiences of women and people of diverse backgrounds in politics.

The ALP has a proud record on women’s representation in public office. Affirmative action has been part of our rules for almost three decades.

The Albanese Labor Government is the most diverse government in Australian history, including a record-high representation of women (52% of the Labor caucus).

In accordance with these rules, from 2025 at least 50% of ALP candidates pre-selected in held and winnable seats at all levels of Government must be women.

As identified in our previous submission, changes to the ALP governance processes have assisted in achieving these outcomes. In 2022 all State and Territory Branches adopted the ALP National Code of Conduct and Associated Policies. In 2023 the ALP rolled out the implementation of these policies at both a National, and State and Territory Branch level.

This nationally consistent framework defines unacceptable behaviour relating to general conduct, sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination, and is complemented by a published Complaints Handling Process.

The Code of Conduct and Associated Policies apply to all people associated with the Party, at Party-sanctioned events.

The priority for 2023 was to launch the Code of Conduct and Associated Policies to all ALP members and ensure its implementation throughout all State and Territory branches of the ALP.

The Code of Conduct and Associated Policies was launched and endorsed at two major conferences in 2023, the National Labor Women's Conference held 10 – 11 June in Perth, and the ALP National Conference held 17 – 19 August in Brisbane.

The implementation process for these policies has included, the establishment of Respect Contact Officers and Complaints Managers, a safe and secure reporting system, legal and trauma informed training, and a communications strategy to inform ALP members of the Code of Conduct.

The ALP hired a dedicated resource to roll out the implementation of the Code of Conduct and Associated Policies, including the development of training which was delivered by subject-matter experts. Two models of training were developed; legal training and trauma informed training, these training modules have been designed to ensure members have a clear understanding of the Code of Conduct and Associated Policies, as well as trauma-informed practice frameworks.

The ALP can confirm that 40 Respect Contact Officers have been appointed and trained across the country to be able to receive complaints.

The ALP has also established a Wellbeing Program to support complainants, respondents, witnesses, Respect Contact Officers, and Complaint Managers.

Liberal Party of Australia

The Liberal Party remains committed to seeing the benefits of greater diversity in Commonwealth Parliament Workplaces in order to reflect the Australian community.

As outlined in the 2022 Report, the Liberal Party has had a strong tradition of representing the diversity of Australia. To continue this, programmes and resources have been dedicated to ensuring the membership and the representative levels of the Party are reflective of the community. This includes dedicated surveys, training, and financial support to assist in increasing diversity.

Since the last report, the Liberal Party has accepted all recommendations from its review of the 2022 federal election, and is working to implement those recommendations in full. This includes:

- a target of 50% female representation within its Parliamentary ranks within ten years or three terms, and to adopt practical measures to increase the female representation in the Parliament as quickly as possible;
- a target of 50% for female membership, and female members in leadership roles within the organisation and branch structures;
- a training curriculum for female members of the Party who may be interested in applying for pre-selection and for all pre-selected female candidates; and
- an outreach programme for Party MPs and Senators to CALD communities.

As part of this, the Party has commenced the establishment of the Margaret Guilfoyle Network. This network will engage current and former female parliamentarians, staff, and members, with the aim of promoting greater female representation in Parliament, and provide opportunities for professional women associated with the Party. Events will be held in early 2024 that will focus on the development of this important professional network for the Party.

In addition to this, the Party has continued to focus on greater gender diversity, and has developed strategies to achieve this.

The Liberal Party's Federal Executive has considered data on the number of female members, including Party office-bearers and representatives, with a view to improving the representation of women in these roles.

The Party and its State and Territory divisions have held a number of well-attended events and training sessions across Australia with a focus on identifying, encouraging and supporting female candidates for pre-selection.

These strategies are providing results at all levels of the Party and for upcoming electoral events. Currently, 60% of new Liberal National Party candidates for the Queensland State Election are women. 60% of LNP's Brisbane City Council councillors are women, with a majority of completed non-incumbent pre-selections resulting in female candidates.

Noting that the representation within the Commonwealth Parliament will not change significantly prior to an election, the Party has begun pre-selections for the next federal election, and has already selected six female candidates. Three of these seats had male candidates at the 2022 federal election. Work will continue as further pre-selections are held closer to the election.

The Nationals

The Nationals support the efforts of the Australian Parliament to create a safer and more respectful place of work for everyone within the parliamentary precinct.

The Nationals will continue our tradition of promoting selection of the best local candidates to represent their communities in both the Organisational and Parliamentary wings.

Likewise, the leadership of the Organisational and Parliamentary wings is chosen on merit.

The leadership team elected by The Nationals party room includes Senator Perin Davey as Deputy Leader and Senator the Hon. Bridget McKenzie as Leader of The Nationals in the Senate.

The Nationals were the first party to elect a woman, Mrs Shirley McKerrow OAM, as the Federal President. Mrs McKerrow recently passed away, and the Party honoured her contribution at her memorial service. We were also the first to appoint a female Federal Director in Cecile Ferguson.

The Nationals have programmes aimed at supporting and increasing women's participation in politics at both state and federal level, such as the Federal Women's Council's Shirley McKerrow Scholarship.

Today, the Federal Management Committee of The Nationals includes seven women of the sixteen voting positions. They include the influential positions including Federal President, Federal Treasurer, and Federal Secretary. Additionally, the Federal Women's Council and Young Nationals Presidents are full and active participants of the Federal Management Committee. The women in these roles are given in writing all protocols in accordance with the Human Rights Commission and Work Health and Safety guidelines, to ensure acceptable behaviour and respect in all interactions with the party as employees, volunteers, supporters and participants.

The Nationals are focused on ensuring we have diversity of socio-economic and geographic background, life experience and professional skills. This focus is nationwide and applies at the local and state level as well as federally.

While some people within the capital cities may think of The Nationals as a purely agriculturally focused party, our members and representatives come from diverse backgrounds and represent their local communities.

Within the federal team we have people from cropping and livestock, manufacturing, journalism, Local and State government, police officers, regional finance, small business operators, education, accountancy, a prosecutor, social work, agricultural science, an economist, the performing arts, and a doctor.

Since the last report, 57% of international professional development opportunities undertaken this year have been completed by women. The Party has offered professional development opportunities for MOPs staff employed by Nationals MPs

and Senators and party members with an interest in party administration roles, including as Directors. The Nationals Federal Secretariat is proud to employ women in two of three significant roles, which are key to the success of the organisation.

As advised last year, Federal Management has resolved to develop a more systematic approach to candidate identification and development and will be working in collaboration with the State Divisions. It is the local members of each State branch who choose their organisational leaders and candidates for election at state and federal elections. One of the key goals and KPIs of the identification and development of candidates, leaders and political professionals is to reflect the diversity of the communities The Nationals represent.

In Queensland the Leader of the Liberal National Party has set a goal of 50% of the target 14 seats to be contested by women. The Party has currently selected 12 women of the first 18 candidates selected by Party members to contest the next state election.

Australian Greens

The Australian Greens welcome the passage of the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service bills in September 2023, and we remain committed to the full adoption of the *Set the Standard* recommendations. Through our participation in the Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce with Greens Senate Leader Larissa Waters, we continue to push for speedy development of a robust Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission (Recommendation 22).

Australian Greens MPs have given their support to the Parliamentary Codes of Conduct, drafted by the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards and endorsed by both Houses of Parliament. The Greens continue to support enforceability of the Codes of Conduct for politicians and senior staff, by an Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission.

We have revised internal staff and MP codes of conduct to specifically require behaviour that recognises and values diversity, abilities and inclusivity. In addition to other minimum standards of training we provide opportunities for professional development through an internal training program.

We understand that representation matters and will be key to the delivery of the cultural change needed in our workplace that is being led by the Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce and the new Parliamentary Workplace Support Service.

Gender equity and equal opportunity are founding principles of the Australian Greens, and those principles continue to inform decisions regarding recruitment, pre-selection of candidates and the composition of our leadership teams.

We are pleased to report that our federal parliamentary team is diverse, with a majority (53%) of our Federal MPs identifying as women, and with representation from First Nations communities, people of colour, people with a disability,

LGBTIQA+ folk, regional areas, and young people. We recognise that this is important for equity and diversity.

Of our six parliamentary leadership roles, three are held by women, two are queer and one is a woman of colour.

Our Party Room is also committed to increasing gender balance and diverse representation among Members of Parliament (Staff) Act employees, with a focus on growing representation in our senior roles.

As a result, across our offices, in 80% of our offices, the most senior staff member is a woman, and in 13% they are women of colour. Our party room strategic plan includes a priority to provide opportunities for First Nations people, people of colour, people with a disability, and LGBTIQA+ people to receive mentoring and upskilling opportunities, opportunities to be involved in strategic processes and to learn about political strategy.

We also actively try to increase the representation of First Nations people, people of colour, people with disability and LGBTIQA+ people amongst our staff in our recruitment practices. We do this by offering flexible working arrangements and by encouraging applications from these cohorts in our job advertisements. We have committed to providing an inclusive workplace and have also increased support to make events inclusive for all participants and using Auslan interpreting services.

The Victorian Greens have established a community training program as a way of engaging with and offering pathways to diverse communities to learn about politics and have opportunities to work closely with Greens representation, with the goal of increasing the number of people who are interested in roles in politics with the Greens. Our intention is to extend this program to other states in the coming years.

Australian Greens Deputy Leader, Senator Mehreen Faruqi, worked with her parliamentary colleagues to develop the parliamentary Behaviour Standards and Codes, as a member of the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards contributing as the sole person of colour on the Committee. Senator Faruqi was instrumental in ensuring the Behaviour Codes include ‘discrimination in any form, including on the grounds of race, age, sex, sexuality, gender identity, disability, or religion will not be tolerated, condoned or ignored’ and the recommendation of the Committee that in addition to providing mandatory training on safe and respectful workplace behaviour and the Behaviour Standards and Codes, parliamentarians should be provided with mandatory training in people management and inclusive leadership, including anti-racism, disability discrimination and First Nations cultural awareness.

The Greens remain committed to actively supporting the cultural reforms needed in parliamentary workplace culture and to the creation of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission that will enforce the Code of Conduct for Parliamentarians for the benefit of staff across the political spectrum. We look forward to supporting and working with the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service as it commences delivery of its new broadened responsibilities.

Other measures to support diverse representation in parliament

The Women's Leadership and Development Program (WLDP) funds a range of national and community level projects that contribute to improving the overall economic security, workforce participation, leadership representation and safety outcomes for women in Australia, including groups such as First Nations women, women with a disability, and migrant women. This includes funding of \$5 million over five years (2022-23 to 2026-27) to Women for Election Australia to improve gender equality and diversity in Australian politics by supporting more women in Australia across the political spectrum; to run for public office at local, state and federal levels.

The Government will soon release its national strategy to achieve gender equality, outlining the vision for gender equality over the next 10 years. The Strategy will include a focus on women's leadership and representation and women's safety, as well as addressing the harmful attitudes and stereotypes that drive and reinforce gender inequality. The Strategy will complement the implementation of *Set the Standard*, as well as other efforts to improve workplace safety and respect, including implementation of *Respect@Work* and the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children (2022-32)*.

The Parliamentary Workplace Support Service will commence reporting on the gender and diversity characteristics of parliamentarians and MoP(S) Act employees in the 2024-25 financial year (Recommendation 7), in accordance with the *Parliamentary Workplace Support Service Act 2023*. The Parliamentary Workplace Support Service has commenced engagement with the Taskforce's Staff Consultation Group and will consult broadly on how and what data will be collected while maintaining individual privacy.

Parliamentary departments

The four parliamentary departments (Department of Parliamentary Services, Department of the House of Representatives, Department of the Senate and the Parliamentary Budget Office) have each undertaken a range of activities to support a diverse and inclusive workforce and working environment (Recommendation 8).

Case Study: Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) Diversity in 2023

In 2023, the PBO established a staff working group to review its workplace diversity program, with a refreshed strategy expected to be in place in early 2024. Other initiatives to support diversity and inclusion over the year have included:

- *Review and update of our recruitment material to ensure we attract a diverse range of candidates, as well as launching a new website in 2023 that meets relevant accessibility standards.*

- *Implementation of flexible working arrangements on an ‘if not why not’ basis, that includes standard work from home options for staff that want to work from home up to two days a week without the need for management approval. We are also implementing a pilot of permanent out of Canberra working arrangements. More generally PBO offers a wide range of flexible work arrangements and leave to support staff with carer or other cultural responsibilities.*
- *Celebration of key diversity events through all staff inclusive morning teas, including supporting National Reconciliation Week, Pride month, RU OK? Day and the International Day of Tolerance.*
- *Participation in various inter-parliamentary department champions groups, working groups and networks that facilitate collective action and support for inclusion and diversity.*
- *Promotion of inclusion and diversity initiatives through our ‘PBO monthly’ newsletter, and consultation with staff on how to communicate effectively through the organisation.*
- *We encourage staff to expand their skills in different contexts through participation in the Jawun Indigenous Community Australian Public Service Secondment program, and the United Nations Development sponsored Pacific Floating Budget Office program.*
- *We require all staff to undertake training in cultural competence on commencement and then refresh this annually.*

The PBO endeavours to respond to key diversity metrics identified through the annual Australian Public Service census, as well as ad-hoc staff surveys. As a small organisation, these metrics can change significantly with normal staff movements, and we review and track changes to inform decision making, identify and address risks to an inclusive workplace through time.

Information from the 2023 Australian Public Service census indicates that over one-third of PBO staff have identified as having carer responsibilities and around a quarter are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Around two-thirds of PBO staff are women.

The parliamentary departments have launched the Parliamentary Service Disability Employee Network, AccessABILITY, for employees with disability, who are neurodiverse, carers and allies. The parliamentary departments are also pursuing options for additional service-wide networks.

All parliamentary departments participated in the Access and Inclusion Champions group to progress a new whole of Parliament Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan (AIAP). DPS has achieved deliverables under its first DPS AIAP 2022-2023 which detailed the department’s approach in achieving better outcomes for people with disability, and building disability confidence within Parliament House, for staff, building occupants and visitors.

The Department of the Senate published a new Policy on Workplace Diversity and Inclusion and action plan on 9 May 2023, to identify shared actions across a range of diversity groups. Specific action plans relating to cultural and linguistic diversity, LGBTQIA+, mature aged persons and gender diversity have been developed, and workshops with interested staff are planned to discuss action plans for other diversity groups.

Together, the parliamentary departments sought to achieve significant outcomes and momentum for reconciliation through its existing *Australian Parliament House Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2019 – 2023*. RAP Champions from each department together comprise the Parliamentary Service RAP Champions Group, which has met quarterly to review and monitor progress. The Group has also formed a working group with First Nations representatives from each department to develop a successor stretch RAP. The Stretch RAP will require each parliamentary department to embed reconciliation initiatives into long-term business strategies. It is anticipated the new Stretch RAP will be completed and launched in early 2024.

Parliamentary Service Indigenous Employee Network

The Parliamentary Service Indigenous Employee Network (PSIEN) provides a supportive environment for First Nations parliamentary service employees to meet, offer support and express their views, and share experiences and concerns pertaining to First Nations peoples matters both professionally and personally.

The PSIEN supported initiatives including:

- National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week 2023 activities
- NAIDOC Week 2023 activities
- a lived-experiences event, and
- Indigenous Artwork tour.

NAIDOC Week 2023 celebrated the history, culture and achievements of First Nations peoples. Key events included an Elders Theme presentation where Uncle Warren Daly spoke about the importance of Elders within the community. Staff could also participate in an Indigenous artwork tour across Parliament House and view a short documentary screening of 'Make it Right', centring around the creation of the Barunga Statement.

National Reconciliation Week 2023 gave staff opportunities to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements, through:

- a lived-experiences event hosted by the PSIEN
- Yeribee Tours across Parliament House, and
- a morning tea featuring local native ingredients.

DPS is investing in a range of diversity and cultural awareness training that can be completed through e-learning or instructor-led courses. This included Cultural Appreciation Training, Disability Confident Workforce, Welcoming Customers with

a Disability, Respectful Workplaces and Workplace Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination. DPS and the Department of the Senate also celebrated diversity by marking days of significance through their respective Diversity and Inclusion calendars.

To provide consistent messaging to all parliamentary staff, the parliamentary department heads agreed a centralised calendar for 2024. The calendar recognises 16 different events throughout the year, promoting awareness around:

- diversity, inclusion, and different cultural backgrounds of staff
- workplaces free from bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination
- the importance of physically safe workplaces, and
- the importance of both physical and mental health and nutrition for overall wellbeing.

The calendar has also been aligned to key strategic documents that are currently being drafted across the parliamentary departments, that include:

- the new Stretch RAP, and
- the new APH Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan.

The Department of the Senate's training program also supports and promotes diversity, equality and inclusion. In 2024, the program will continue to provide training on Indigenous cultural appreciation and its bullying, harassment and discrimination policy, and will include new sessions that promote inclusion such as disability awareness and confidence, inclusive recruitment practices and addressing unconscious bias. Information about diversity in the department's workforce will continue to inform future training for staff and supervisors.

The Department of the House of Representatives partnered with the Australian Network on Disability and Diversity Council Australia to build capability through inclusion. Training programs were delivered across the department to build awareness and understanding of diversity, discrimination, bullying and harassment, cultural awareness, unconscious bias and inclusion.

DPS has published extensive additional workforce data in its 2021-22 and 2022-23 annual reports, including gender-based workforce snapshots by age, working arrangements, contract length, pay, absences, tenure, separation types, and training. The other parliamentary departments are each expanding the scope of diversity information employees can provide in HR information systems. The departments will use the available information to improve their measurement and future reporting of diversity characteristics and to strengthen strategies to support workplace diversity and inclusion. DPS, the Department of the House of Representatives and the Department of the Senate also voluntarily participated in the 2023 pilot public sector reporting program run by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

Workplace accessibility

DPS engaged the Australian Network on Disability (AND) to provide guidance and input in the formulation of the department's first AIAP and provided relevant policies and procedures to AND for review (Recommendation 9). DPS, on behalf of the Presiding Officers, also commissioned AND to undertake a dignified access review of Australian Parliament House to understand barriers to access and to develop recommendations on how to enhance accessibility. DPS is currently working with the consultant to finalise the report. AND commenced work in March 2023 and completed several physical infrastructure reviews and user experience surveys.

DPS commenced a program of accessible bathroom upgrades and automatic doors to external courtyards to facilitate emergency evacuation for people with disability. Personal Emergency and Evacuation Plans were put in place to assist building occupants and a new dedicated nursing room provides working parents and visitors with a private, dedicated space to combine family commitments with work responsibilities. These spaces include:

- baby change facilities
- nursing rooms for feeding or expressing
- family lounges and Senators Spouses' Lounge (with baby change facility) which provide temporary, safe and quiet spaces
- changing facilities in the public area near Queens Terrace Café, and accessible and ambulant toilets.

DPS purchased a small quantity of mini freezers to loan for personal and medicinal use, including the storage of breast milk for nursing mothers. During the year, Parliament House was also re-accredited as a breastfeeding friendly workplace. Other initiatives involved the design and installation of two chair lifts to the Members and Guests Dining Room and alterations to the handrails in the public car park providing greater accessibility.

The Department of Finance completed reviews of physical infrastructure and accessibility in Commonwealth Parliament Offices and Electorate Offices to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice, including the Disability (Access to Premises) Building Standards 2010, internal Minimum Physical Security Control Guidelines, and internal National Fitout Standards. The Department will continue to monitor compliance and consult with relevant stakeholders to adapt to future needs and legislation. The Department has also reviewed Commonwealth Parliament Offices in line with Australian Breastfeeding Association Guidelines and is working towards ensuring multi-purpose and breastfeeding facilities are incorporated into all new designs for refurbishments or office relocations.

Parliamentary procedures

The Procedure Committees of the 47th Parliament concluded their respective reviews into the Standing Orders and unwritten parliamentary conventions, considering how respect in parliamentary proceedings could be improved (Recommendation 10).

The House of Representatives Procedure Committee presented its report on 7 August 2023. The Committee made several recommendations, including that the House amend the Standing Orders to:

- specify that offensive language includes words that are sexist, racist, homophobic and otherwise exclusionary or discriminatory, and
- enable the Speaker to exclude a Member of Parliament for three hours for continued or escalating disorderly conduct (in addition to the existing one-hour penalty).

The House Procedure Committee also recommended that guidance materials and training be reviewed and promoted to ensure that Members are aware of their obligations under the standing orders, and understand how they can draw potentially disorderly conduct to the Speaker's attention. The Committee's recommendations are subject to ongoing consideration by the Government and the House.

The Senate Procedure Committee presented its report on 12 September 2023, and concluded that the Senate's standing orders, and the practice of the Senate in applying the Presidents' rulings, provide a sufficiently flexible framework to ensure respect in the chamber.

Systems to support performance



DESIRED OUTCOME: People should be clear about their roles and responsibilities, and have consistent and standardised systems, processes and advice to support performance

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
11 Office of Parliamentary Staffing and Culture	✔ Implemented
12 Professionalising management practices for MoP(S) Act employees	➔ In progress
13 Professional development for MoP(S) Act employees	➔ In progress
14 Best practice training	✔ Implemented – ongoing
15 Guidance material in relation to termination of employment for MoP(S) Act employees	✔ Implemented – ongoing
16 Fair termination of employment process for MoP(S) Act employees	✔ Implemented – ongoing
17 Legislative amendments to MoP(S) Act	✔ Implemented
18 Comprehensive review of the MoP(S) Act	✔ Implemented
19 Monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement	➔ In progress
3 External review of progress	⏸ Pending – 2025

Independent human resources support

The statutory Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS) commenced on 1 October 2023 following the passage of the *Parliamentary Workplace Support Service Act 2023* on 14 September 2023. This implements Recommendation 11, which recommended the establishment of an Office of Parliamentary Staffing and Culture (now called the PWSS). The PWSS is an independent, statutory agency led by a Chief Executive Officer, and is supported by an Advisory Board and Consultative Committee (consisting of parliamentarians, MoP(S) Act employees and independent members).

The statutory PWSS has broader functions than the former PWSS. It provides human resources support to parliamentarians and their staff, as well as services to support safe and respectful workplaces to everyone who works in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces. This includes assuming the support and review functions of the former PWSS.

The statutory PWSS will publicly report, annually from 2024-25, on progress in preventing misconduct such as bullying and sexual harassment, and on other matters relating to the culture of Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces (Recommendation 19). It is also able to report publicly on parliamentarians' non-compliance with certain obligations.

Ms Michelle Wicks is the acting Chief Executive Officer of the statutory PWSS. The new CEO and the PWSS Advisory Board Members will be appointed in early 2024.

As part of the launch of the statutory PWSS, a survey was sent to all parliamentarians and MoP(S) Act employees inviting feedback on the breadth of HR functions. The survey provided a point in time benchmark which will enable annual comparisons into the future. Some of the qualitative feedback included:

- *“I called at very late/early hour and really appreciated there being 24/7 monitoring of the phone help line. I received really great support”*
- *“I have been impressed with all the PWSS staff I have dealt with”*
- *“The PWSS has made an incredible, qualitative difference-it's genuine structural shift in the support available to MoP(S) Act staff”.*

MoP(S) Act employee development

Prior to the establishment of the statutory PWSS, the Department of Finance offered a range of training programs to MoP(S) Act employees, including training on office management, workplace behaviour, administrative practices, and media and communications.

A cross-department Community of Practice (including representatives from the four parliamentary departments, PWSS, Department of Finance, Australian Public Service Academy and the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority) was established to offer learning and development opportunities to Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces, with the aim of eliminating duplication of professional development offerings, creating efficiencies, better understanding capability and more positive client-centric experience.

The statutory PWSS offers a range of education sessions to develop the foundations of safe, respectful and high-performing workplace cultures. Performance-related modules include equipping teams with de-escalation strategies to manage distressed constituents and other stakeholders while protecting their own wellbeing, managing exposure to trauma-related content in the workplace, encouraging teams to develop shared workplace values and behaviours and effective communications.

Sessions addressing mental health or psychosocial hazards are developed and facilitated by trained PWSS professionals, with backgrounds such as psychology, social work and counselling. All sessions include information on work health and safety obligations and how to access the PWSS's current independent workplace review mechanism.

Targeted, facilitated education sessions continue to be developed to address identified and emerging issues such as office composition and staffing, merit-based recruitment with a focus on diversity, and management of misconduct.

The PWSS Learning Academy, to be launched in the first quarter of 2024, will streamline professional development offerings and improve convenience of access to provide MoP(S) Act employees with a range of formal and informal skills development opportunities (recommendations 12, 13 and 14).

Future PWSS initiatives include:

- A Policy Essentials initiative that is under development with the ANU Crawford School of Public Policy.
- A pool of executive coaches to support parliamentarians and MoP(S) Act employees and parliamentarians who are navigating complex issues to achieve breakthrough insights.
- A professional development strategy that clearly identifies the key capabilities, competencies and frameworks of skills required by MoP(S) Act employees across diverse settings, and connects learning and development to career pathways.

The PWSS Learning Academy will look to form partnerships with universities and research institutions to develop leading practice in parliamentary workplace education content and delivery.

The PWSS is also co-designing with the Department of the Senate an induction and coaching program for parliamentarians undertaking, or interested in, a Chairing role, with a focus on wellbeing and performance under pressure. This program considers the unique complexities of these roles, and how parliamentary convention can be used strategically to guide behaviour in the Chambers and Committees.

Modernising MoP(S) employment framework

The *Members of Parliament (Staff) Amendment Act 2023* made amendments to modernise the MoP(S) Act employment framework and include new powers and duties for parliamentarians. Among other changes to increase the transparency and clarity of MoP(S) Act employment, parliamentarians have new requirements relating to recruitment, authorisation, and termination of the employment of MoP(S) Act employees. They are also able to suspend employees where considered appropriate, and will need to notify the PWSS if they do so.

These amendments are further to the amendments to strengthen MoP(S) Act staff protections made in February 2022. They also substantially implement 11 of 15 recommendations of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's 2022 review of the MoP(S) Act which in turn implemented Recommendation 18 of the *Set the Standard* report. The remaining four recommendations of the MoP(S) Act Review will be implemented by the PWSS.

The amendments to the MoP(S) Act took effect on 17 October 2023.

The PWSS has reminded parliamentarians of their new obligations in relation to terminating staff and prepared guidance material to support their decision making as employers (recommendations 15 and 16). Those aspects are also incorporated into relevant training sessions as is the positive duty employers now have to prevent all aspects of discrimination on the basis of gender in their workplace.

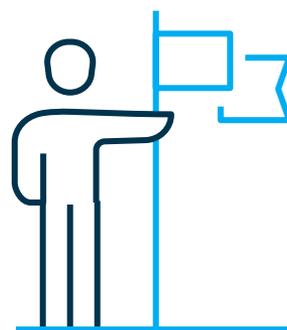
Parliamentary service employee development

The parliamentary departments have assessed their training offerings to parliamentary service staff against the 'best practice' criteria as outlined in the *Set the Standard* report and identified any follow-on actions (Recommendation 14). All departments offer training at induction and as part of the ongoing professional development of parliamentary service officers which supports ethical and respectful standards of behaviour and an appreciation of the value of a diverse and inclusive workplace. DPS has adopted a broad range of mandatory training for its staff, covering cultural awareness, disability confidence and broader work health and safety training. The Department of the House of Representatives has reinvigorated a series of scenario-based workshops for staff at all levels throughout the department, facilitated by senior leaders, with a focus on appropriate behaviour in the workplace.

Progress review

The Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce agreed that the external independent review of progress to examine the impact and effectiveness of the *Set the Standard* reforms should occur in 2025, 18 months after the commencement of the statutory PWSS (Recommendation 3). This will allow the review to assess the impact of key structural reforms, such as the new Behaviour Standards and Codes, the PWSS and the proposed Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission, after they have been operational for a period of time. The Department of Finance will support the Minister responsible for establishing the review, including preparing terms of reference to be consulted with parliamentarians and staff.

Standards, reporting and accountability



DESIRED OUTCOME: We should have clear and consistent standards of behaviour, with processes to ensure it is safe to make a report and that complaints are addressed. We want people to be held to account, including through visible consequences for misconduct

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
20 Expansion of the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	🟡 Partly implemented
21 Code of conduct	🟡 Partly implemented
22 Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission	🟢 In progress
23 Extend public interest disclosure protections to MoP(S) Act employees	🟡 Partly implemented
24 Ensure protections against age and disability discrimination	🟢 Implemented

Behaviour standards and codes

Coinciding with the tabling of the Taskforce’s 2022 Annual Report on 8 February 2023, both chambers of Parliament endorsed the draft Behaviour Standards and Codes as presented in the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards’ final report, pending the establishment of an advisory and enforcement regime (Recommendation 21).

Draft Behaviour Standards for Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces

- Act professionally and with integrity.
- Encourage and value diverse perspectives and recognise the importance of a free exchange of ideas.
- Recognise your power, influence or authority and do not abuse them.

- Uphold laws that support safe and respectful workplaces, including anti-discrimination, employment, work health and safety and criminal laws.
- Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or assault, or discrimination in any form, including on the grounds of race, age, sex, sexuality, gender identity, disability or religion will not be tolerated, condoned or ignored.

Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards: Final Report (2022), Appendix 1

Formalisation of the Behaviour Code for MoP(S) Act staff (Recommendation 21(b)) is in progress, noting the Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards' recommendation that the code be formalised through an employment-related mechanism.

Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission

The proposed Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission (Recommendation 22) will be responsible for enforcing the Behaviour Standards and Codes. It will complement the PWSS which has functions to support safe and respectful Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces, including to provide education and guidance to workplace participants as well as support and complaint resolution services.

The Government is working across the Parliament to establish the proposed Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission by 1 October 2024, subject to legislative passage, one year after commencement of the statutory PWSS.

The Taskforce has considered design principles for the proposed Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission, and the Government will consult with the Taskforce, the Staff Consultation Group and other relevant stakeholders on draft legislation. The Government is considering *Set the Standard* recommendations to expand the PWSS review mechanism to all Commonwealth parliamentary workplace participants (Recommendation 20(a)) and to provide appropriate protections for MoP(S) Act employees who disclose wrongdoing (Recommendation 23) as part of its work to establish the Commission.

Safety and wellbeing



DESIRED OUTCOME: People should be physically and psychologically well and feel safe and supported

RECOMMENDATION	STATUS
25 Work health and safety obligations	✔ Implemented – ongoing
26 Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service	➔ In progress
27 Review of Parliamentary sitting calendar and Order/Routine of Business	✔ Implemented – ongoing
28 Alcohol policies	🕒 Partly implemented

Supporting health and wellbeing

DPS commissioned a feasibility study which was completed on 30 November 2022. DPS evaluated a range of options to enhance health and wellbeing services, including but not limited to, the improved access to health practitioner services, spaces for confidential conversations and personal hygiene products (Recommendation 26).

DPS is consulting with the PWSS to promote publicly available medical and pharmaceutical services through an internal online directory. Enhanced health and wellbeing services will continue to be promoted, including through this directory, QR code cards in bathrooms and at security entrances. The enhanced health and wellbeing services include:

- An additional part-time nurse joined the Nurses’ Centre in Parliament House in September 2023 to support the health and wellbeing of all building occupants. The services include general health advice and observations, first aid, one off provision of analgesics or other minor medications, education, mental health support and linking patients with Allied Health Services.
- A same day delivery service for prescription pharmaceuticals to building occupants.

- The Health and Recreation Centre which includes a gym, fitness classes, spa, pool, sauna, and sports facilities. In September 2023, the Centre launched a 'Jump Start' program to build fitness, learn about healthy eating for a better mood, understand the importance of posture and recovery and to create a plan for the next step in participants fitness journey.
- SportsCare Physiotherapy which offers physiotherapy, exercise physiology and massage services. This service has recently expanded to include an exercise physiologist, psychologist, and access to ergonomic workstation assessments.
- A Mindfulness Initiative Australia program 'Finding Peace in a Frantic World' for parliamentarians and MoP(S) Act employees. The program provides participants with the personal insights and tools to become more focused, productive, happier, healthier, and resilient in work and life. It assists participants to enhance their ability to make meaningful and effective contributions in their work lives and perform at higher levels while working in demanding environments.
- A Hair and Wellness Centre for beauty and massage treatments.
- Three vending machines were installed across Parliament House in May 2023 to provide 24-hours, 7 days a week access to personal care and hygiene products. The machines were initially installed as part of a six-month trial to increase the availability of health and wellbeing services. A range of personal care items are also available from Aussie's Café during trading hours.

DPS has committed to funding the creation of privacy pods throughout Parliament House for employees and building occupants to hold confidential conversations. DPS commissioned a scoping study undertaken by an architect which identified various suitable spaces for conversion, and is working with the PWSS to inform appropriate pod design and implementation.

A Parliamentary Department Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion Calendar for 2024 will be launched in February 2024. The calendar aims to strengthen health and wellbeing services to raise awareness and promote support services to all staff.

Safe and respectful workplaces

Parliamentary departments, the Department of Finance and the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service have supported the development of a draft work health and safety (WHS) framework for managing shared WHS duties in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces (Recommendation 25). The framework provides greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities for WHS, particularly where risks are shared between multiple entities. These clarified WHS duties have informed updates to key documents, such as the induction material for parliamentarians and their staff.

The framework is also intended to support a consistent approach for individual workplaces to manage WHS, and to ensure there is clarity for all workers and duty holders for preventing and addressing WHS incidents. A range of actions are being

taken to implement the framework in consultation with staff, including updating joint governance arrangements and escalation pathways from existing WHS committee structures, reviews of WHS reporting processes with a view to simplify and streamline, and consulting with stakeholders on the development of supporting materials and procedures.

All employers, including those in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces, now have a positive duty to actively prevent workplace sexual harassment and discrimination following the Respect@Work amendments to the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*. DPS has developed the DPS Policy: Preventing and responding to sexual harassment and related *Procedures for reporting and responding to sexual harassment*. The policy provides greater clarity on the responsibilities and consequences for employees who engage in such behaviour, and the reporting and handling of complaints. The policy complements the *DPS Policy: Preventing and responding to workplace bullying, harassment, and discrimination*.

The parliamentary departments continued to offer learning and development opportunities to ensure parliamentary service officers understand workplace bullying, harassment and discrimination policies and are equipped to support staff who raise a sensitive issue or complaint. The departments also provided trauma informed training which more generally seeks to support the psychosocial health of officers.

Training sessions were delivered to parliamentarians, including Ministerial offices with a focus on employment and legal obligations. These refresher sessions assisted parliamentarians with their understanding of the employment and WHS framework and to highlight recent legislative changes. This includes the amendments to the *Fair Work Act 2009*, WHS and anti-discrimination legislation and how this impacts parliamentarian obligations. The sessions resulted in increased requests for tailored and office-based training (e.g. leadership programs, constituent management/ dealing with difficult behaviours) and trauma specific training and supports provided through the PWSS.

In-person and online education initiatives are offered to parliamentarians and their staff to further support safe and respectful workplaces, as outlined below. The Safe and Respectful Workplaces training was refreshed and is currently delivered by a panel of external experts to new parliamentarians and MoP(S) Act employees. Into the future, this training will be facilitated by appropriately trained PWSS professionals.

Table 1: In person and online education initiatives for parliamentarians and their staff, 2023

Mode of delivery	Education initiative	Number of completions
In-person	Safe and Respectful Workplaces	51
	Safe to Speak	<10
	Mental Health First Aid	<10
	Introduction of Cultural Appreciation	17
eLearning	Safe and Respectful Workplaces	<10
	Preventing Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace	136
	Australian Human Rights Commission Anti-racism	-
	Domestic and Family Violence Awareness	<10
	Suicide Awareness	-
	Compassionate Foundations Suicide Prevention Capability Suite (APS Academy)	<10
	Discovering Resilience Program	<10
	Emergency Officer	100
	WHS Site Officers	133
	Guide to Preventing Trips, Slips and Falls	<10
	Workstation Setup and Ergonomic Assessment Module	126
	Correct Manual Handling and Ergonomics in the Workplace	30
	Workplace Safety: Working Alone and Out of Office	32
Work-Related Travel	26	
Webinar	Understanding Bullying in the Workplace	<10

The following case studies scenarios are provided to give insight into how learning and development opportunities may arise, in connection with other functions of the PWSS and the approaches for follow-up.

Fictional Case Study – Addressing Psychosocial Hazards and Risks

Alex works in an Electorate Office. Her team regularly handles high volumes of aggressive and distressed calls from constituents, particularly during key political events. Alex speaks with a PWSS Case Coordinator and is offered individual follow-up to help maintain her wellbeing and development. The Case Coordinator also suggests to Alex that her team might benefit from an education session on Wellbeing and De-escalation Strategies, which assists staff to build skills in effective communication with escalated constituents whilst maintaining psychological safety and self-care. With Alex's permission, a Learning and Development Coordinator contacts her to discuss the office's particular needs and arranges to facilitate a session in the electorate office within the fortnight.

During the session, the team mention that they are often exposed to constituents' trauma histories, whether over the phone, in writing or through constituents sharing graphic pictures. The team recognise that the high-pressure nature of their work has contributed to tensions between staff members, and at times people are not communicating as effectively or respectfully as they could be. The office has also had a number of recent staff movements and the team is still settling its culture. The Learning and Development Coordinator discusses scheduling a Shared Values and Behaviours workshop with the team, which helps to build and recalibrate positive workplace culture and enhance ways of working together. The Learning and Development Coordinator also suggests including a module in this workshop on Recognising and Managing Vicarious Trauma to address and mitigate exposure to constituents' trauma-related material.

Following the session, Alex's Case Coordinator assists her to develop a support plan for the team that includes proactive individual wellbeing checks and access to team debrief sessions facilitated by the PWSS. Alex is also linked with PWSS staff for advice on strengthening the office's WHS policy and processes. After three months, Alex reports that her team are working together more respectfully and efficiently and she is happy with the office culture. Alex says that her team are proactively applying the wellbeing strategies discussed in the education sessions and the office has implemented workload monitoring and management processes, which the team reports has helped them manage the demand of their roles.

Fictional Case Study – Performance Management and Professional Development

Aziz is a Chief of Staff and contacts the PWSS to request resilience training for his team. Aziz reports that a number of his younger staff in particular seem to be struggling with the high volume of work, and a couple of team members become defensive or upset when he tries to give them feedback to improve their performance. A Learning and Development Coordinator arranges to facilitate an in-person session on Maintaining Wellbeing and Performance Under Pressure, accompanied by a Case Coordinator. As the session progresses, it becomes clear that most staff don't have position descriptions and are uncertain about the scope of their work. The younger team members express they need more training in administrative processes and efficient workload management. Because of Aziz's own schedule, he has found it difficult to maintain regular one-on-one performance conversations and tends to provide feedback when staff have made an error, rather than linking continuous feedback to position outcomes and career goals. It also emerges that urgent and non-urgent communication are typically not separated within the office and staff are finding it difficult to track important tasks across mediums such as Microsoft Teams and email.

The Learning and Development Coordinator guides the team through strategies for maintaining wellbeing in high-pressure working environments, along with techniques for optimising and sustaining performance. The Case Coordinator connects Aziz with HR support to create position descriptions, structure performance conversations, create individual professional development plans for staff, and actively monitoring workloads. The team is encouraged to streamline communication and regularly discuss which mediums should be used for which tasks. The Learning and Development Coordinator discusses current on-demand, in-person and virtual education offerings that can assist staff to develop efficient workload and office management practices. The team are also taken through their options for accessing ad-hoc training and study assistance to support their career pathways and equip them with the knowledge to excel in their role.

As part of a broader review into ensuring respect in the chamber, the House of Representatives Procedure Committee also considered the parliamentary sitting calendar and the order of business with a view to enhance wellbeing, balance and flexibility for parliamentarians and workers in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces (Recommendation 27). The Committee presented its report on 7 August 2023 and noted the changes introduced at the start of the 47th Parliament in 2022. The Committee noted that the changes are relatively recent and that it would continue to monitor the effects of the changes.

Lighting of external pathways around the parliamentary precinct has been increased to improve journeys to and from Parliament House, with positive feedback received. The Presiding Officers requested DPS explore potential measures aimed at further enhancing the safety and security at Parliament House and options are being considered by the respective Appropriation Committees.

Ensuring everyone is fit for duty

One of the key areas of focus for the Taskforce has been to encourage a culture of appropriate and responsible use of alcohol in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces (Recommendation 28). The Taskforce agreed on alcohol policy principles which are designed to underpin each Commonwealth parliamentary workplace policy that relates to alcohol use.

Principles for a common approach to alcohol policies in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces

Any policy should:

- *ensure people are fit for duty and free of any adverse effects of alcohol (or other drugs),*
- *outline legal and personal responsibilities,*
- *detail available support for those with alcohol dependency,*
- *include sanctions for non-compliance, and*
- *provide for alcohol education and training,*

while acknowledging different cultural views on alcohol consumption.

The principles support a safe, healthy and productive workplace by seeking to eliminate risks associated with the adverse effects of alcohol and other drugs in the workplace.

An alcohol policy for parliamentarians and their staff will be developed by the PWSS and consulted on broadly. Other Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces, including the parliamentary departments and many of the Parliamentary Press Gallery member organisations, already have alcohol policies in place and assessed their respective policies against the principles.

DPS reviewed its Alcohol and Drug policy and confirmed the policy already contained the common principles. The policy was enhanced to further bolster the departmental approach to the management of alcohol and other drugs at work. The department undertook to ensure workers were aware of the policy and their responsibilities at work.

Status of each recommendation

The below table is a snapshot of the status of the implementation of each recommendation from the *Set the Standard* report. More detailed progress updates have been [reported online](#) following each meeting of the Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce.

Table 2: Implementation status of each recommendation from the *Set the Standard* report

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
1 Statement of Acknowledgement	Presiding Officers	✔ Implemented
2 Institutional leadership	Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce	✔ Implemented
3 External review of progress	Government	⏸ Pending – 2025
4 Individual leadership	All leaders in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces	🟡 Partly implemented
5 Diversity among parliamentarians	Political parties	🔄 In progress – ongoing
6 Diversity among MoP(S) Act employees	Political parties	🔄 In progress – ongoing
7 Measurement and public reporting	Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	🔄 In progress – ongoing
8 Diversity and inclusion in the parliamentary departments	Parliamentary departments	✔ Implemented – ongoing
9 Access and inclusion	Presiding Officers / Parliamentary departments / Government	🟡 Partly implemented
10 Everyday respect in the parliamentary chambers	Parliament	✔ Implemented – ongoing
11 Office of Parliamentarian Staffing and Culture	Government	✔ Implemented
12 Professionalising management practices for MoP(S) Act employees	Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	🔄 In progress
13 Professional development for MoP(S) Act employees	Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	🔄 In progress

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBILITY	STATUS
14 Best practice training	Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	✔ Implemented – ongoing
15 Guidance material in relation to termination of employment for MoP(S) Act employees	Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	✔ Implemented – ongoing
16 Fair termination of employment process for MoP(S) Act employees	Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	✔ Implemented – ongoing
17 Legislative amendments to MoP(S) Act	Government	✔ Implemented
18 Comprehensive review of the MoP(S) Act	Government	✔ Implemented
19 Monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement	Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	➡ In progress
20 Expansion of the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	Government	① Partly implemented
21 Code of conduct	Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards / Parliament / Government	① Partly implemented
22 Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission	Government	➡ In progress
23 Extend public interest disclosure protections to MoP(S) Act employees	Government	① Partly implemented
24 Ensure protections against age and disability discrimination	Government	✔ Implemented
25 Work health and safety obligations	Parliamentary departments, Government and political parties, Parliamentary Workplace Support Service	✔ Implemented – ongoing
26 Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service	Presiding Officers / Department of Parliamentary Services	➡ In progress
27 Review of Parliamentary sitting calendar and Order/Routine of Business	Presiding Officers	✔ Implemented – ongoing
28 Alcohol policies	Parliamentary departments, Parliamentary Workplace Support Service and political parties	① Partly implemented

