

Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984
Annual Report 2007–08



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Introduction from the Special Minister of State



This is the first annual report relating to all staff employed under the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984.

Over the years, the workload of parliamentarians, particularly that of ministers, has significantly increased. This reflects changed expectations of the Commonwealth Government, a more complex policy environment, changes in governance and rapid technological innovation.

As a result, staff have come to play an increasingly important role assisting parliamentarians. Their work contributes to the democratic and political process and in the case of ministers' personal staff to the processes of government. More often than not, their roles involve heavy workloads and require long hours, especially during parliamentary sittings.

Shortly after taking office, the Government implemented its election commitment to reduce personal staff available to it by 30 per cent from 477 to 334. Together with commensurate reductions for the Opposition and minor parties, there was an overall reduction in all MOP(S) Act staff from 1,531 at 1 November 2007 to 1,374 at 1 June 2008.

This is still a significant number of staff employed to fill a broad range of roles and categories. These include electorate staff for all parliamentarians, as well as personal staff for government, opposition, and minor party office-holders. Also included are staff for independent members and senators, the presiding officers, whips and former prime ministers.

MOP(S) Act staff are not public servants. Their role is inherently political, as is recognised by the MOP(S) Act itself, which gives parliamentarians freedom and individual choice in the employment of their staff. They are accountable to their employing member or senator, rather than through such means as parliamentary committees that apply to ministers or public servants, who alone have responsibility for executive decisions.

Given the unique position of MOP(S) Act staff, their role, and their responsibilities, the Government has introduced the first comprehensive code governing the conduct of ministerial staff at the federal level, which took effect from 1 July 2008.

The Government has chosen to produce and table this annual report as a part of its continuing commitment to enhance accountability and transparency in government, by making detailed information available to the public about the employment of MOP(S) Act staff.

It is my hope that this annual report will become increasingly useful over time, providing an ongoing record of staffing data and changes in the patterns of staffing.

Finally, I want to record my personal thanks, and that of my colleagues, to all our staff. They play an important role in our democratic and political processes and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'John Faulkner'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Senator the Hon John Faulkner
Cabinet Secretary
Special Minister of State

17 November 2008