



Coimisiún Thithe an Oireachtais Houses of the Oireachtas Commission



ANNUAL REPORT 2014

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*Mr Seán Barrett TD,
Ceann Comhairle*

We are pleased to present the 2014 Annual Report of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.

This, the Commission's 11th Annual Report to the Houses, prepared pursuant to section 6 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts, is a key element of its accountability framework. This report provides information on the activities of the Commission over the past year in overseeing the delivery of services by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service to support the business of the Houses and their members.

The overarching objective of the Commission is the provision of responsive and effective services to support the Houses and their members in performing their parliamentary functions. The focus of these services continues to evolve and adapt to respond to changes in objectives and priorities. As recorded in this Annual Report, the past year was a busy one for the Houses and the parliamentary committees.

The year also saw a number of important new initiatives being implemented to support Parliament into the future. For example, the introduction, through primary legislation, of enhanced powers of inquiry for the Houses with the establishment of the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis. With the support of the Commission, the Service effectively leveraged its knowledge and expertise to provide high quality services to support the Committee in its ongoing inquiry work.

Enhancing communication between the people and their parliament is a key objective of the Commission. The launch of the Oireachtas TV Channel in September last year was a significant milestone in this regard. The Channel provides live coverage of the daily proceedings of both Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees. It allows members of the public to have a better understanding of the work of their parliament and to be better informed through parliamentary debates on matters that touch their daily lives. It also serves to strengthen the relationship between elected representatives and the people they represent.

In addition to the Oireachtas Channel, the use of a variety of social media tools, including webcasts, Twitter and the Oireachtas App, are also being used to reach out to and keep the public up to date with information about the work of the Houses.

These are just some of the initiatives that are described in this report.

The Commission has an important governance role in relation to the use of public resources for the delivery of services to support the parliamentary business. While the Commission is independent in determining policy and



*Seantor Paddy Burke,
Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann*

setting objectives, the Houses are funded from taxpayers' money. The Commission places the highest priority on ensuring that transparency, accountability and delivering value for money are at the forefront of its decision-making.

The cost of running the Houses in 2014 was €102.6m, resulting in an underspend of €6m against budget, or a 6% financial saving this year. This reflects a continuing focus on efficiency and savings and a commitment to ensuring that public resources are used in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible. In meeting our financial accountability obligations, the Commission's annual accounts, which have been submitted for audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General, are presented at Appendix 4.

We would like to acknowledge the efforts and significant achievements of the Service over the past year. The commitment of the staff to serving the Houses and their members is highly valued by the Commission. We would like to record our gratitude for their work and professionalism.

We would also like to thank the committees of the Commission for their work towards achieving our objectives.

Finally, we would like to sincerely thank our Commission colleagues for their support and commitment throughout the past number of years. Together we worked hard to ensure that members, the Houses and their Committees had the resources to effectively serve the democratic interests of the Irish people.



*Seán Barrett, T.D.,
Ceann Comhairle,
Chairperson*



*Senator Paddy Burke,
Cathaoirleach,
Deputy Chairperson*

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

June 2015.

THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION

The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (the Commission) is the governing body which oversees the provision of services to the Houses and their members by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (the parliamentary administration) in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2013. It consists of 11 members and is chaired by the Ceann Comhairle. First established in 2004, it is a statutory corporate body and is independent in the performance of its functions. The Commission is also accountable to the Houses of the Oireachtas in the performance of its functions and has responsibility for ensuring value for money.

Since its establishment in 2004, the Commission has overseen the delivery of services to both Houses and has introduced a number of significant improvements in the services provided to members and to the public. Amending legislation is enacted every three years, the primary purpose of which is to make funding available for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas and the parliamentary administration for the following three-year period. The requirement to provide by statute for a new Commission budget every three years is useful not just in facilitating financial planning but also in affording an opportunity to assess the adequacy of the legislation thereby allowing it to be updated

as required. Additionally, in 2013 the legislation was amended to give the Commission responsibility for the translation into Irish of Statutory Instruments and the publication and periodic review of An Caighdeán Oifigiúil.

Commission members serve in a corporate capacity and do not represent their parties, or groups, or their own interests at this forum. Commission members do however carry out a valuable role in communicating information about Commission policies and decisions through the parliamentary party system.

THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS SERVICE

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service (the Service) is the public service body which provides administrative services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members. The Service is headed by the Secretary General/Clerk of the Dáil.

The role of the Service is to provide professional advice, services and facilities to the Commission, to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees and to members of the Houses. The Service is staffed by approximately 401 civil servants of the State and 45 State industrial staff who are employed by the Commission. There are also approximately 381 political staff working in either Leinster House or in members' constituency offices

who are employed directly by the members or the relevant political party and who are paid by the Commission.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL

The Secretary General of the Service is the Chief Executive of the Commission and Clerk of Dáil Éireann. The Secretary General has responsibility for managing the Service on a day-to-day basis and for implementing Commission policies. The Secretary General is a member of the Commission, while also being accountable to it and subject to its direction. S/he is also the Accounting Officer in respect of Commission expenditure.

THE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Secretary General is assisted by the Service's Management Advisory Committee (MAC).

The top level management structure in the Service consists of two Assistant Secretaries reporting to the Secretary General as agreed by the Commission in 2006.

The MAC decides on issues of strategic, operational and financial importance which may then be referred to the Commission for decision as appropriate. Its agenda is driven to a large extent by the policies adopted by the Commission,

as well as by the strategies and programmes set out in the Strategic and Corporate Business Plans. MAC members and other senior managers of the Service also attend Commission meetings as required.

PRINCIPAL OFFICER NETWORK

The MAC is supported by the Service's Principal Officer Network. The Network provides a forum for Principal Officers to collaborate and cooperate to achieve outcomes that are in the best interest of the Service.



Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission, (l to r): Bernard Durkan TD, Jack Wall TD, Senator John Whelan, Olivia Mitchell TD, Ceanann Comhairle, Seán Barrett TD, (Chairperson), Senator Tom Sheahan, Dan Neville TD, Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, Senator Paddy Burke, (Deputy Chairperson), John Browne TD, Senator Marc MacSharry (not pictured), Secretary General (position vacant at present)



Members of the Management Advisory Committee (l to r): Mr. Michael Errity, Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Services Division, Ms. Deirdre Lane, Clerk of the Seanad, Mr. Peter Finnegan, Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Services Division and Clerk-Assistant of the Dáil, Ms. Patricia Doran, Principal Officer, Chair of People and Finance sub-Committee, Mr. Paul Conway, Superintendent, Chair of Business and Strategy sub-Committee, Mr. Mark Mulqueen, Principal Officer, Chair of Systems sub-Committee

THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION

The role of the Commission under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2013 is “to provide for the running of the Houses of the Oireachtas, to act as governing body of the Service, to consider and determine policy in relation to the Service, and to oversee the implementation of that policy by the Secretary General”.

The founding Commission legislation in 2003 led, in summary, to two consequences: (1) the Commission became the sanctioning authority for expenditure and for deciding on staff numbers, provision of services and related matters (where this authority formerly rested with the Department of Finance); and (2) the system for the allocation of budgets to the Oireachtas changed from the annual civil service Estimates and “Vote” procedure to a different procedure involving a three-year budget drawn from the Central Fund. The new budget is set every three years following negotiations with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The budget is approved at political level by the Commission and the necessary amending legislation is passed by both Houses.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission consists of 11 members as follows:

- the Chairman of Dáil Éireann (ex-officio member) (Chairperson of the Commission)

- the Chairman of Seanad Éireann (ex-officio member) (Deputy Chairperson)
- the Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service (ex-officio member)
- a member of one of the Houses of the Oireachtas appointed by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (the “representative of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform”)
- four ordinary members appointed by Dáil Éireann
- three ordinary members appointed by Seanad Éireann

Membership of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

Ex-Officio Members:

Ceann Comhairle
Seán Barrett TD (Chairperson)

Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann
Senator Paddy Burke
(Deputy Chairperson)

Secretary General of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service
(position vacant at present)

Member appointed by the Minister for Finance:
Jack Wall TD

Members appointed by Dáil Éireann:

John Browne TD
Bernard J. Durkan TD
Olivia Mitchell TD
Dan Neville TD

Members appointed by Seanad Éireann:

Senator Marc MacSharry
Senator Tom Sheahan
Senator John Whelan

The Commission operates on the general principle that it seeks to support the Houses and all members equally in carrying out their role as elected representatives. Members of the Commission (excluding ex-officio members) qualify for an annual allowance.

The Commission provides services to the 226 members of both Houses of the Oireachtas and the staff in their employment. It also provides services for Departmental officials, party staff, media and service personnel for whom Leinster House is a place of work. The Service consists of 401 civil servants of the State whose terms and conditions of employment are set down in the general civil service statutory code, the Staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Act 1959, and the Commission legislation.

The legislation sets out certain specific functions of the Commission, including to:

- oversee on-going expenditure – the Commission’s current three-year budget allocation is €324 million covering the period 2013 to 2015
- pay salaries and expenses of members, and their staff, and the Service (the total number on the payroll is almost 1,493 at present)
- keep annual accounts
- perform functions in relation to civil service staff of the Commission
- produce and publish strategic plans, annual reports, annual estimates and handbooks and information about the business

- of the Houses for members
- provide translation services in respect of Acts and Statutory Instruments
- prepare and publish guidelines for members on the use of publicly funded services and facilities and specify charges for same following a dissolution of the Dáil
- exercise certain functions previously exercised by the Minister for Finance regarding secretarial facilities for members and qualifying parties, for example, staff under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance, ICT technology, printing and graphic design facilities
- exercise certain legal functions (including participation in proceedings where necessary and arranging for legal advice)

Matters Outside the Remit of the Commission

The Commission does not have the authority to:

- set members' salaries or allowances
- set staff pay, conditions, pensions
- appoint staff at specified senior management grades, namely, at or above Principal Officer 1, without the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform
- control or manage any building works - this function is carried out by the Office of Public Works (OPW) for all Government Departments and Offices

- have a role in the day-to-day management of the Service which is a matter for the Secretary General and the Management Advisory Committee

Transparency and Accountability

The Commission is accountable to the Houses of the Oireachtas in the performance of its functions. It publishes an Annual Report each year which is laid before both Houses and also published on the Oireachtas website. This report sets out information on the work carried out by members of the Houses and the support services provided by the Service, as well as accounting for expenditure of public funds in running the Houses in that year.

The Commission, through the Secretary General, submits its accounts to the Comptroller and Auditor General for auditing by 31 March each year. The Commission is subject to annual audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General, is accountable to the Committee of Public Accounts of the Dáil for the findings of the public audit and is accountable to the relevant Oireachtas committees in respect of its strategic plan and related policy matters.

Minutes of the meetings of the Commission are published to the Oireachtas website. The Commission is also subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

Code of Conduct for Commission Members

The Commission is governed by a Code of Conduct which establishes ethical standards to guide the conduct of its members in performing their functions. The principles on which the Code is based are: *responsibility, integrity, loyalty, commitment, compliance, information and administration*. As members of the Houses of the Oireachtas, Commission members are also bound by the Codes of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Ethics Acts by Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann.

Disclosure of Interests by Commission Members

Under the Code of Conduct, and in addition to compliance with the general requirements of the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001:

- Commission members must disclose any material interest that they or any connected person may have in any matter under consideration at a meeting or otherwise in matters concerning the functions of the Commission
- a material interest arises if the consequence or effect of any decision on the matter may confer on or withhold from the member concerned a significant benefit without also conferring it on or withholding it from persons in general or a class of persons which is of a significant

size having regard to all the circumstances and to which the member belongs

- where such an interest has been disclosed, the member concerned shall take no further part in the proceedings and shall not participate in any decision or vote in connection with such matter
- if a member is in doubt as to whether an interest should be disclosed, advice should be sought from the Chairperson of the Commission and, if required, the disclosure should be made as soon as possible after the receipt of the advice

All disclosures of interest are recorded in the Commission minutes.

Communication between Commission and Members of the Houses

The formal mechanism for communication between the Commission and members of the Houses is via the Joint sub-Committee on Administration (JsCA) which communicates the views of members to the Commission on matters of policy and makes recommendations on such matters as appropriate.

In addition, in certain circumstances, as an input to decision making, Commission members may decide to consult informally with their parliamentary party colleagues on an issue under consideration.

To assist members discuss and communicate the rationale for Commission decisions to colleagues, the draft minutes of meetings are

circulated to Commission members as soon as practicable after the meeting taking place.

Committees of the Commission

The Commission has two key standing advisory Committees: the Finance Committee, which considers quarterly financial reports and submits them to the Commission for approval; and the Audit Committee, which oversees and advises on risk management, internal controls (including the internal audit function and issues identified by external audit) and value for money issues. The Audit Committee is established on a statutory basis pursuant to section 10 of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2009. It reports annually to the Commission and its report is published on the Oireachtas website. Further details on the work of the Audit Committee in 2014 can be found in Appendix 6. The Commission's Finance and Audit Committees meet on a quarterly basis.

The Commission may also establish ad-hoc sub-Committees as necessary to assist it in carrying out its responsibilities. There are currently two sub-Committees established by the Commission: a sub-Committee on Communications and a sub-Committee on Accommodation.

Summary of Commission Activities in 2014

The Commission met on 11 occasions in 2014.

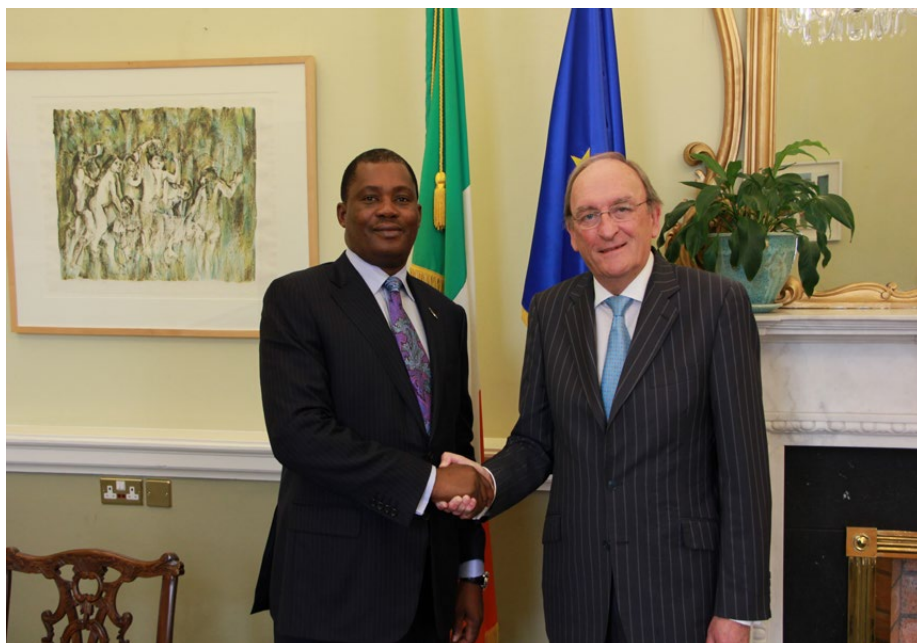
The business and activities addressed included the following:

- quarterly financial reports from the Finance Committee and examination of detailed information on the monthly spending by the Houses against spending forecasts
- Commission's Annual Accounts for 2013
- Commission's Annual Report to the Houses of the Oireachtas for 2013
- Statement of Estimates for 2015
- Houses of the Oireachtas Service Annual Resource Plan for 2014
- engagement of persons with specialist expertise to support the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis
- guidelines on inquiry legal costs and expenses to be issued in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act 2013
- protocol on the provision of legal and procedural advice to Oireachtas Committees with a view to minimising the use of public resources in legal services by the Houses
- defence of legal proceedings in accordance with the terms of the authorisation of the Dáil in relation to matters arising solely from the performance by members of their parliamentary functions
- development of an Oireachtas TV Channel
- approval of a proposal from the Finance Committee that the

Houses move to electronic only publishing and circulating in respect of certain parliamentary documents in order to achieve savings in parliamentary printing and circulation costs

The Commission also hosted a delegation from the Parliamentary Commission of the Parliament of Kenya, led by The Honourable Justin Muturi, Speaker of the National Assembly and Chairperson of the Commission. The purpose of the visit to the Houses was to learn about the role of the Commission and to discuss matters relating to governance of a bicameral parliament, accountability, and parliamentary procedure and administration. The visit also served to strengthen bilateral relations between the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Parliament of Kenya.

Further information on the business and activities of the Commission and the minutes of its meetings are available on the Oireachtas Web site at www.oireachtas.ie



Ceann Comhairle, Seán Barrett TD, meets the Hon. Justin Muturi, Speaker of the Kenyan National Assembly and Chairperson of the Parliamentary Commission of the Parliament of Kenya

Meetings of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission in 2014

11 Meetings of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

5 Meetings of the Commission's Finance Committee

4 Meetings of the Commission's Audit Committee

4 Meetings of the Sub-Committee on Communications





*Mr. Peter Finnegan
Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Services
Division and Clerk-Assistant of Dáil Éireann*

We are pleased to present this report on the work of the Service over the past year in providing services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their members.

The Service performs its functions in accordance with the legislative framework established by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts and the policies and decisions of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission. The Commission has adopted three strategic objectives:

- Improving Services to Parliament
- Improving Services to Members
- Enhancing Service Capability

Guided by this strategic framework, our overarching objective is to deliver effective, responsive and high quality programmes and services to support the Houses and their members in scrutinising legislation, holding the Government to account and contributing to public policy development.

There are many facets to this work, ranging from procedural, legal and administrative services, library and research services, translation services and information and communications technology services, to preparing the official report of the parliamentary proceedings, broadcasting the business of the Houses, managing financial and human resources and ensuring the maintenance and security of the parliamentary precinct. These services and functions work together cohesively to support the day-to-day running of the Houses.

Over the course of the past year we have seen a continued high level of parliamentary activity:

- the two Houses sat for a combined total of 227 sitting days lasting more than 1,571 hours (124 sittings of the Dáil and 103 sittings of the Seanad)
- there were 576 meetings of Oireachtas Committees
- more than 54,000 Parliamentary Questions were tabled
- there were 118 Bills initiated and 44 Bills enacted
- members of the public addressed 41 Public Petitions to the Houses on matters of general public interest or concern
- the Library and Research Service responded to 2,300 requests for information and research
- the number of visitors to the Houses exceeded 100,000

At the end of the year there were 401 civil service staff employed in the Service. This was an increase of 22 (5.79%) on the previous year which was mainly attributable to the recruitment of staff for the banking inquiry.

Planning for and putting in place the support structures for the Banking Inquiry was one of the principal priorities for the Service in 2014. This involved the design of the inquiry framework, recruitment of staff, development of new ICT systems and implementation of new governance and project management arrangements.

The Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis was formally



*Mr. Michael Errity
Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members'
Services Division*

established in November and began its public hearings in December. Public hearings are televised and webcast live. The Joint Committee is scheduled to present its final report to the Houses by 30 November 2015. To ensure the maximum degree of transparency, the Committee publishes a report on its running costs on a quarterly basis.

Building on the pilot parliamentary TV project which began in 2011, accompanied by a programme of capital investment in necessary infrastructure and technology, the Oireachtas TV Channel was launched in September. The Channel provides live unedited coverage of the parliamentary debates and business of the Houses and their Committees. This development underpins a key priority of the Commission to make the work of the Houses more accessible to the public and to improve access to the parliamentary proceedings. To complement the TV Channel, an Oireachtas App was launched in 2014 which allows convenient access to information on the Houses and facilitates greater public engagement with the parliamentary process.

Other notable initiatives over the last year included:

- the provision of specialist resources to Oireachtas Committees to support public policy analysis and advice in their respective subject areas
- the establishment of a new framework agreement for the Legislative Drafting Service to ensure the availability of legal expertise to members of the Houses in drafting Private Members' Bills
- the award of a new Parliamentary Printing and Publishing contract following a public procurement process. The new contract will deliver significant savings in parliamentary printing costs which are partly attributable to a new pricing structure and a reduction in the amount of documentation that will be printed under the contract
- the transition to a Managed Print Service on a pilot basis across the Service which will realise financial savings and efficiencies

Further information on the key achievements and activities of the Service in the past year is presented in this annual report.

This year was the second year of the Commission's current three-year budget cycle. As the Annual Accounts set out in Appendix 4 show, the cost of running the Houses in 2014 was €102.6m. This was €6m below

budget resulting in a 6% financial saving this year. Overall, there has been a 17% reduction in spend when compared with 2008, reflecting improved efficiency and cost-effectiveness across the Service.

The Public Service Stability Agreement 2013-2016 (Haddington Road Agreement) recognises the significant level of reform that has taken place across the public service under the Public Service Agreement 2010-2014, namely those of significantly reduced budgets and declining staff resources while also continuing to implement change and deliver service improvements. The Service continues to play its part in this reform initiative as evidenced by our ongoing reports on progress as part of the Integrated Reform Delivery Plan.

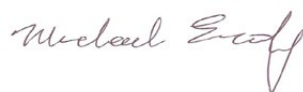
For the year ahead our focus will be to build on progress achieved and further enhance capacity to respond to the evolving requirements of the Houses and the needs of members. We will also ensure the highest levels of accountability, transparency and probity are at the forefront of decision-making at all times. The Service must be in a position to respond to new challenges and priorities in order that the constitutional functions of the Houses and their members are fully supported, while ensuring the efficient and cost effective use of resources.

We would like to thank the staff of the Service for their work and contribution over the past year. The achievements outlined in this report would not have been possible without their commitment and professionalism. We are fortunate to have staff who consistently deliver high quality services to Parliament and its members and ensure that the Service can adapt and meet the many new challenges it faces.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission which has been invaluable throughout the year and we look forward to working with it in 2015 to support the Houses and parliamentarians in performing their important constitutional functions.



Peter Finnegan
Assistant Secretary
Parliamentary Services
Clerk-Assistant of Dáil
Éireann



Michael Errity
Assistant Secretary
Corporate and Members'
Services

Managing Resources

- The annual estimate for on-going expenditure by the Houses for 2014 was €108.6m. Actual overall expenditure in 2014 was €102.6m which represents an underspend of €6m this year.

Sittings of the Houses and Committees

- 124 Dáil sittings (977 sitting hours)
- 103 Seanad sittings (594 sitting hours)
- 576 Committee meetings (1,112 sitting hours)

Business of the Houses and Committees

- 118 new Bills published
- 44 Bills passed
- 54,691 Parliamentary Questions processed
- 52 Committee Reports laid before both Houses
- 41 Public Petitions presented to the Houses

Procedural Developments arising from Implementation of the Parliamentary Inquiry Function

- The Houses were granted enhanced inquiry powers to undertake in-depth examination of matters of significant public interest and concern under the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act 2013. Following enactment of the legislation, a cross-functional working group was established to develop a procedural framework for undertaking inquiries, including guidelines for witnesses giving evidence to a committee of inquiry
- The Houses adopted new Standing Orders for the conduct of inquiries. These inquiry powers were implemented for the first time with the establishment of the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis. A dedicated Inquiry Unit was established to support the inquiry process. The Committee began public hearings in December and is scheduled to present a report to the Houses by 30 November 2015

Committee Outputs

In 2014, there were:

- 576 meetings of the Joint Committees, Select Committees, Standing Committees and sub-Committees of the Houses, involving some 1,707 speaking witnesses over the course of 1,112 sitting hours
- 26 policy reports, 19 pre-legislative reports and 7 EU scrutiny reports were published by the Committees

On-going Reform of the Parliamentary Committee system

In 2014, Oireachtas Committees continued to engage in a number of activities under the parliamentary reform agenda including:

- engagement of specialist resources to further strengthen the policy analysis and advice to the Committees in their respective subject areas
- continuation of pre-legislative scrutiny by sectoral committees of the heads of Bills, including analysis of submissions received from interested stakeholder groups and individuals and the holding of hearings with stakeholders
- implementation of structured annual work programmes for sectoral committees
- engagement by sectoral committees with Chairpersons designate of State Bodies and Agencies
- on-going mainstreaming of EU legislation scrutiny across all Sectoral Committees
- increased engagement with Ministers before and following meetings of the relevant EU Council and with Secretaries General on Departmental six-monthly EU scrutiny reports
- a new streamlined system for generating the committee schedule introduced in September 2014, realising efficiencies through the elimination of data entry duplication and staff inputs

North South Inter-Parliamentary Association

The Association met on two occasions in 2014:

- On 4 April, the fourth plenary was held in Parliament Buildings, Stormont. The Plenary was chaired by former Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr. William Hay MLA, and An Ceann Comhairle, Seán Barrett TD
- On 7 November, the fifth plenary was held in the Seanad Chamber, Leinster House. The plenary was chaired by An Ceann Comhairle, Seán Barrett TD, and Acting Deputy Chairs, Mr. Peter Weir MLA, and Ms. Caitríona Ruane MLA, of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The agenda included topics on the importance of tourism to the economies of the island, North and South, and student and teacher mobility between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

Seanad Engagement with Civic Society

In 2014 the Seanad was addressed by:

- Ms. Anne Brasseur, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- Mrs. Justice Catherine McGuinness, former Judge of the Supreme Court

Seanad Public Consultation Committee

The Seanad Public Consultation Committee published a report on *Ireland's Compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* which was informed by written submission received by the Committee and public hearings with individuals and organisations held in the Seanad Chamber in May 2014.

In December 2014 the Committee issued an invitation for public submissions on "farm safety" to inform its examination of this subject.

Public Petitions Addressed to the Houses

Members of the public addressed 41 petitions to the Houses on matters of public interest or concern in 2014. The Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions (sub-Committee on Public Petitions) considers petitions submitted to the Houses and decides what action should be taken on admissible petitions. The Committee received oral submissions on a number of public policy matters raised in petitions.

Parliamentary Library and Research Service

- 2,300 information and research requests from members and other users were responded to in 2014. Topics included *Reform of the Junior Cycle*, *Money follows the Patient*, *Regulation of Lobbying*, *Down's Syndrome - resource teaching allocation issues in primary schools*, and *Zero-hours Contracts*
- 40 Bills Digests and Debate Packs were produced and circulated to members
- 19 pre-legislative research papers were prepared for Oireachtas Committees

Documents Laid before the Houses

- 2,000 documents were laid before the Houses in 2014

Communications/Broadcasting

- In 2014 the Oireachtas App was launched allowing users to access the proceedings of the Houses whenever and wherever they wish
- There was greater use of the Oireachtas social media pages with over 17,000 followers on Facebook and Twitter
- A communications strategy for the Banking Inquiry was established which is principally web-based. All elements of the Inquiry are webstreamed, provided across social media and published through a dedicated website, <https://inquiries.oireachtas.ie/banking>
- The Houses of the Oireachtas took part in *Culture Night* in 2014

Training for Members and Political Personnel

In 2014, the Training Unit continued to provide training and information sessions to members and political personnel. Some of the key training initiatives provided included:

- Constituency Database Training
- Movavi Screen Capture
- Occupational First Aid
- Fire Warden Training
- Manual Handling

Information seminars provided in-house included:

- data protection obligations
- deaf awareness for front line staff
- safe TALK – suicide awareness
- study tips and techniques

Audit of Public Representation Allowance

The fourth audit of the Public Representation Allowance (PRA) was conducted in 2014 by an independent auditor:

- of the 219 Members who received vouched allowances in 2013, 22 (10%) were selected by random sample
- the audit report was considered by both the MAC and the Audit Committee

The Commission approved updated Audit Guidelines which were circulated to Members in January 2015.

Information and Communications Technology

- *The Plinth* intranet site was launched in October 2014. Responding to feedback received from on the People and Organisational Development Programme (POD) on the need to enhance organisational communication, a working group recommended the development of an intranet site to facilitate effective sharing of information across the Service. The ICT Unit developed *The Plinth* to give effect to this recommendation
- A Managed Print Service (MPS) initiative was undertaken to move away from the traditional printing

and copying process and its associated costs

- The ICT Strategy 2014-2017 was developed which provides a framework to support high standards of ICT services and the security of data and ICT systems and infrastructure
- A working group was established to review the technology resources in the Chambers with a view to updating and integrating the voting, broadcast and sound systems

Salaries Section

- Payroll software was updated to cater for salary payments to SEPA bank accounts
- Microfiche records were converted to electronic format making the retrieval of historical payroll information more efficient
- Merging of the National Renewal Plan grades with original entry levels grades, as part of the Haddington Road Agreement, was completed

Parliamentary Printing and Publishing

- In July 2014, the Service tendered for the printing and electronic publishing of parliamentary and other documents and related services. This was the first time the procurement process for this contract was undertaken by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service as all previous procurements processes had been managed by the Stationery Office (Office of Public Works)
- The new contract will deliver significant savings in parliamentary printing costs which are partly attributable to a new pricing structure and a reduction in the amount of documentation that will be printed under the contract

Houses of the Oireachtas Service Language Scheme

- 2014 was the third year of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service Irish Language Scheme. which sets out the Service's commitments regarding the use of the Irish language in its service delivery. Rannóg an Aistriúcháin manages the Scheme on behalf of the Service

Translation of Statutory Instruments

- In 2014, An Rannóg provided translation services to the Department of Justice and Equality in processing and publishing a series of Rules of the Superior Courts
- An Rannóg also provided translation services to government departments in relation to Statutory Instruments

Freedom of Information

- The Service processed 72 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests
- The L&RS provided assistance and support to decision makers in responding to these FOI requests

People and Organisational Development

- The People and Organisational Development Programme (POD) is an initiative to increase organisational capacity, to implement change and to enable the Service to develop as a high performing organisation. The POD programme objectives are consistent with the commitments of the Public Service Reform Agenda
- The Service focused on making best use of available resources and enhancing its capacity and capability through its POD Programme to work more efficiently with reduced staff numbers and budgets

Training for Staff of the Service

Some of the key training and learning initiatives provided include:

- Coaching Workshops
- Principal Officer Leadership/Development Programme
- High Performance Teams Programme

The Training Unit also supports the POD initiatives including:

- Business Coaching Workshops for Managers

- Senior Manager Network Programme
- Developing High Performance Teams

Procurement Unit

- In 2014, the Procurement Unit provided support services for 35 tendering processes across the Service

Internal Audit

- The Audit Committee met on four occasions in 2014.
- The Committee considered the following Internal Audit Reports in 2014:
 - Internal Audit on One-Stop-Shop
 - Internal Audit of Training
 - Internal Audit on Electronic Access
 - Internal Audit on Management of Administrative Changes to payee details
 - Internal Audit on the Fitness Room

Provision of Legal Services

- In 2014, the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Adviser provided 463 legal advices, of which 37% were in response to advices sought by Oireachtas Committees and 62% were in response to advices sought by the Service. 13 requests for legal advice were outsourced for specialist advice in 2014

Business Process Improvement (BPI) Projects

- During 2014, the Service continued to participate in the BPI Network established by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- A BPI report on the Parliamentary Question process was finalised

COMPARATIVE BENCHMARKING OF PARLIAMENTS - KEY FINDINGS

General methodology of this report:

In compiling this benchmarking report, international key statistics were compiled from desk-based research and information provided by parliaments in other jurisdictions. Most of the information gathered was obtained following the submission of an ECPRD request. Data obtained from Parliaments related to either the 2014 calendar year or the 2013-2014 Parliamentary session.

Headline Statistics

Overall findings of the benchmarking presented in this report are as follows:

The Houses of the Oireachtas has:

- more sitting days per year than the parliaments of the Netherlands, Spain and Canada
- second highest number of sitting hours in 2014 of 10 parliaments
- third highest number of parliamentary questions tabled annually across 12 parliaments and the highest number of parliamentary questions per member
- third highest number of visitors to parliament as a percentage of population out of 13 parliaments surveyed
- lowest number of citizens per TD, out of 19 parliaments, at 21,133

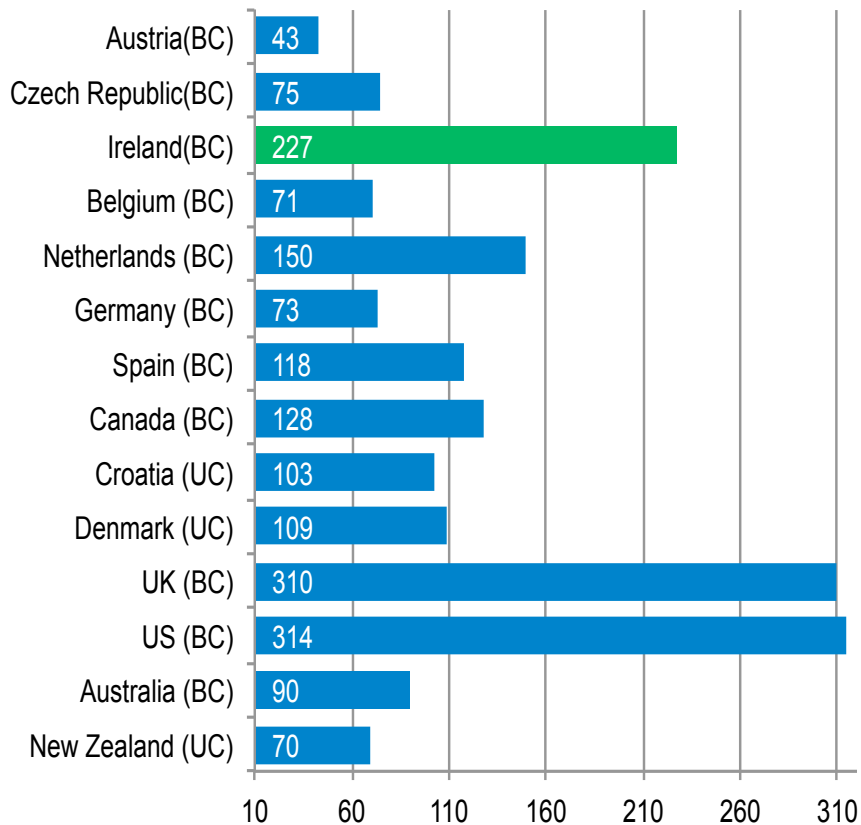
Further specific findings of the benchmarking initiative are included throughout this report.

Notes: In the following graphs, BC refers to bicameral parliaments and UC refers to unicameral parliaments. Statistics from the following Parliaments are included in the survey: Germany(BC), Czech Republic(BC), Netherlands(BC), Belgium(BC), Spain(BC), Poland (BC)- Upper House, Russia(BC)- Upper House, Croatia(UC), Denmark(UC), Austria(BC). Not all data was available from each Parliament and data was also sourced from the relevant Annual Report/parliamentary website where an ECPRD reply was not received. Data obtained from Parliaments related to either the 2014 calendar year or the 2013-2014 Parliamentary sessions.

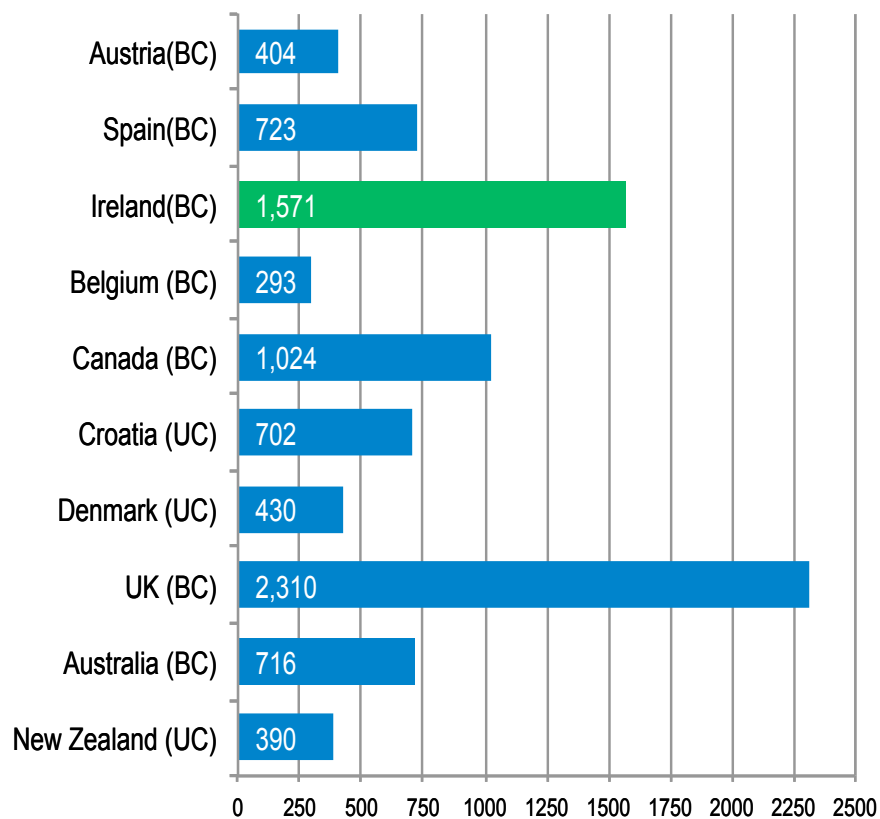
Number of Parliament sitting days

Sittings of the Houses

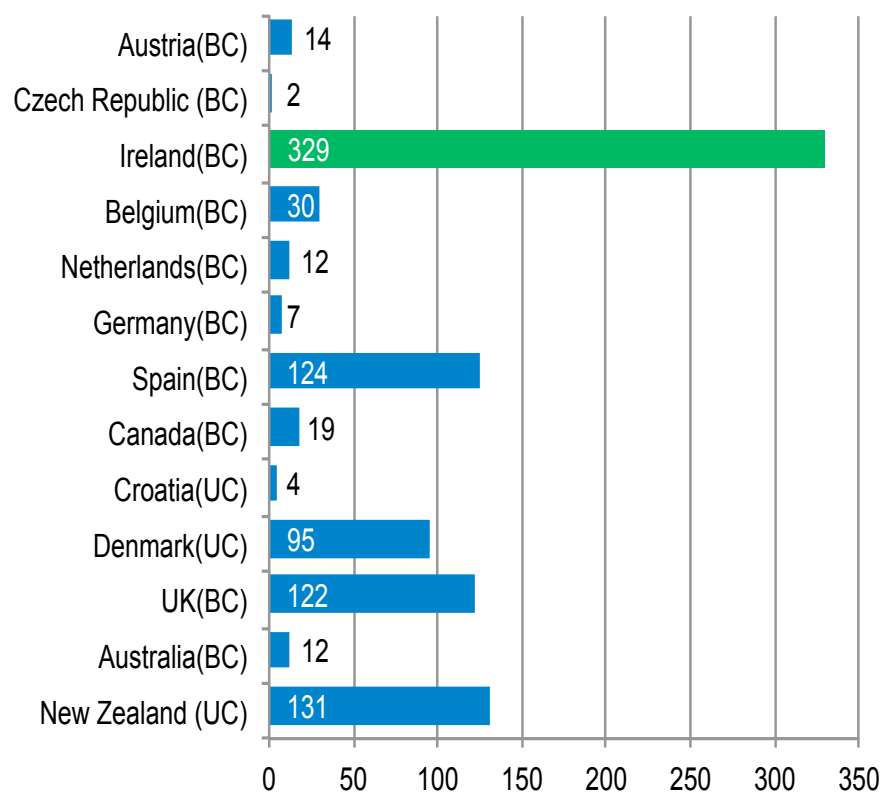
In 2014 the Houses of the Oireachtas sat on 227 days for a total of 1,571 hours.



Number of Parliament sitting hours



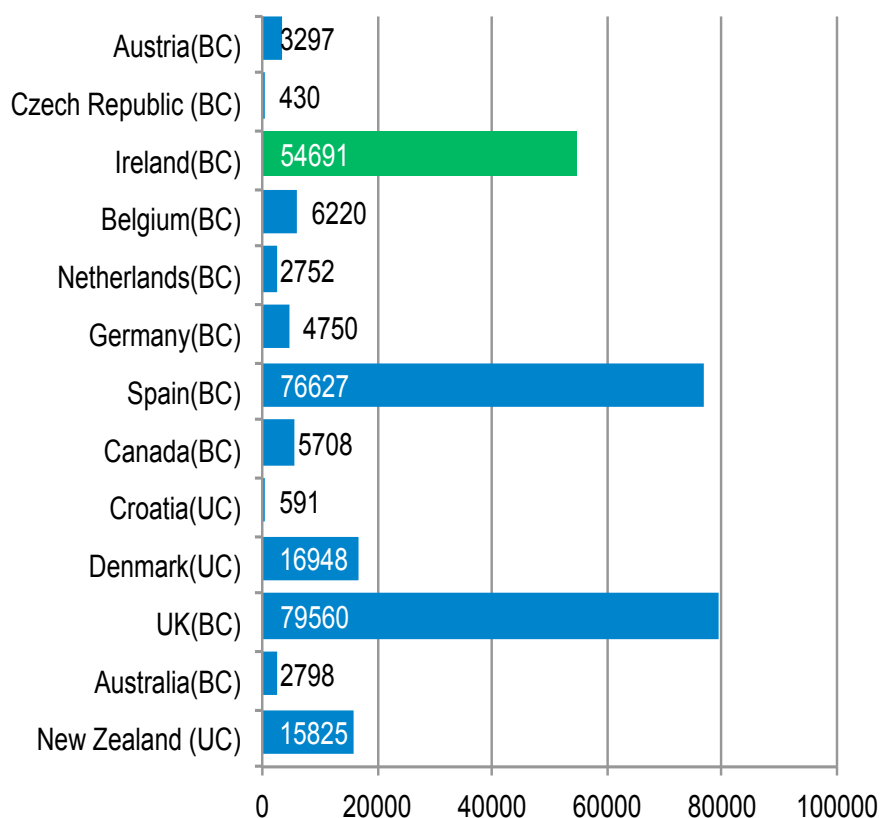
Number of Parliamentary Questions per Member



Parliamentary Questions

Comparing the number of PQs tabled with the number of members of the House in which the questions were tabled, shows that Dáil Éireann had 329 parliamentary questions per member, compared with the average of 74 questions.

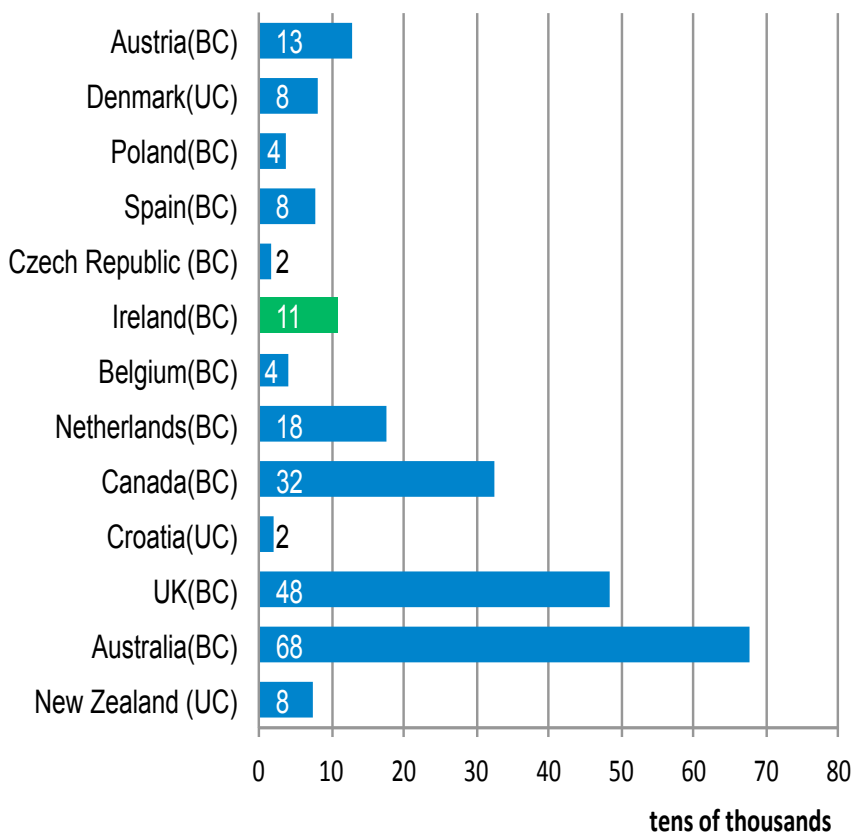
Number of Parliamentary Questions tabled



Parliamentary Questions

There were 54,691 PQs tabled in Dáil Éireann compared with the average of 20,784 in this study.

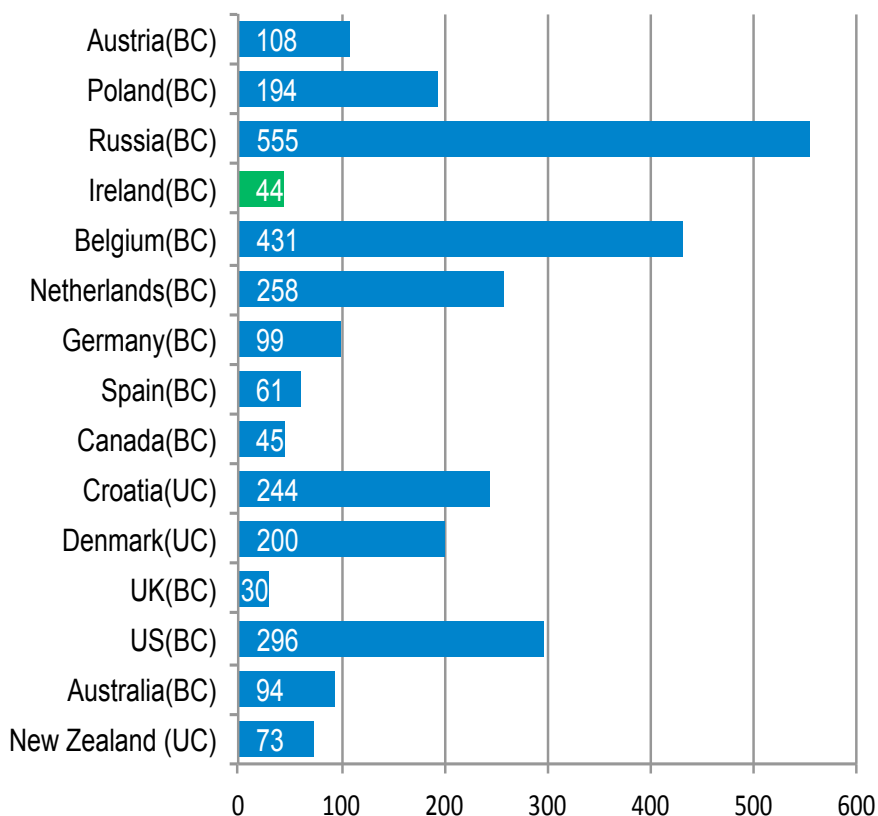
Number of Visitors



Visitors

There were more than 100,000 visitors to the Houses of the Oireachtas in 2014.

Number of Acts



Number of Bills passed in 2014

The Houses of the Oireachtas passed 44 Bills in 2014.





Improving Services to Parliament

The Chairpersons and Members of the Houses and their Committees can be assured of continuous, high quality parliamentary support services.

House and Committee Business

Strengthen our ability to provide advice and other services to Chairpersons and Members in the core business area of parliamentary procedure.

Public Engagement

Promote greater knowledge and perception of parliament through our public information, media relations, education and visitor programmes, and our official publications.

Parliamentary Library

Promote the parliamentary library as a research hub to support the legislative and scrutiny work of parliament.

Inter-Parliamentary Relations

Foster international and EU relations and North-South cooperation through participation in inter-parliamentary activities.

Records of Proceedings

Provide enhanced public access to the work and records of parliament through our reporting, broadcasting and Irish language translation services.

Parliament Buildings

Develop and improve the physical environment of parliament as an institution of State, a workplace and a place for visitors.

HOUSES AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Sittings and Business of the Houses

The Houses sat for a combined total of 227 days in 2014. The number of hours sat was 1,571.

Sittings of the Houses and their Committees in 2014

124 Dáil sittings (**977** sitting hours)

103 Seanad sittings (**594** sitting hrs)

576 Committee Meetings (**1,112** hrs)

118 Bills initiated

54,691 Parliamentary Questions processed

Parliamentary Printing and Publishing Services Contract

In July 2014, the Service tendered for the printing and electronic publishing of parliamentary and other documents and related services. This was the first time the procurement process for this contract was undertaken by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service as all previous procurement processes had been managed by the Stationery Office (Office of Public Works). The request for tender documentation included a “test” for potential tenderers to carry out so that the evaluation team could assess whether the tenderers had the necessary technical skills to undertake the required services, which is of critical importance to this contract.

A new contract was awarded which

will deliver significant savings in parliamentary printing costs, which are partly attributable to a new pricing structure and a reduction in the amount of documentation that will be printed under the contract.

Legislative Drafting Service for Members

In 2014, the Bills Office continued to facilitate members in availing of the legislative drafting service which began as a new initiative in 2011. The availability of legal expertise in drafting Private Members’ Bills is an important service for members of the Houses in undertaking their legislative role in the Parliament.

Legal drafters appointed to the framework agreement are required to draft Bills to the specifications of Private Members, and in consultation with those members. The pilot drafting scheme concluded at the end of 2014. A new framework agreement was established to ensure the continued availability of the legal drafting service for members.

Procedural Framework for Parliamentary Inquiries

Arising from the enactment of the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act 2013, a working group was established to prepare procedures for the holding of inquiries into matters of public concern and for conducting an inquiry into the banking crisis as the first inquiry to be held under the Act. The working group included staff from all relevant sections under the chairmanship

of the Clerk-Assistant of the Dáil/ Assistant Secretary Parliamentary Services Division. A procedural and legal sub-group drew up new draft Standing Orders for the conduct of inquiries and related procedures. These were subsequently adopted by the Committees on Procedure and Privileges of both Houses and agreed by resolution of each House.

The new Standing Orders establish a procedural framework for evaluating proposals for, and the terms of reference of, an inquiry. Guidelines for the conduct of inquiries were also prepared by the sub-group and were adopted by the two Committees on Procedure and Privileges in 2014.

Dáil Business Briefing Services

The panels of Temporary Chairpersons of the Dáil and Temporary Clerks receive notice by e-mail of the daily schedule of business and briefing for the Chairperson on the daily business in the House. Members of the panels also have direct access to these and other resources in a dedicated database.

Briefings on particular items of business is also provided to the Chairpersons, Deputy Chairpersons and members of the panels as necessary.

The Bills Office

Processing of Legislation

In 2014, 118 Bills were initiated, 46 of which were Government Bills and 72 were Private Members’ Bills. A notable development over the past number of years has been the



Ceann Comhairle, Seán Barrett TD, meets with a delegation from the Iranian Parliament

marked increase in the number of Private Members' Bills initiated in both Houses, from 30 in 2011 to 72 in 2014.

The Bills Office supports both Houses in initiating, scrutinising and amending legislation. It has responsibility for undertaking the procedural tasks relating to the legislative process, from initiation of a Bill to passage through both Houses, including the printing and circulation of all Bills and amendments tabled. It examines the texts of all Bills and amendments to ensure they comply with Standing Orders, Rulings of the Chair and other matters of order. On Committee and Report Stages, the Bills Office prepares the procedural brief for the Chairpersons of both Houses, Chairpersons of Select Committees and Clerks of the Houses and Committees. It also provides briefings on the legislative process and procedures to members, their staff and Department officials.

The Bills Office also undertakes tasks arising from the statutory responsibilities of the Clerk of the

Dáil under the Electoral Acts.

Bills Office

118 Bills were initiated (**46 Government Bills** and **72 Private Members' Bills**).

4,687 amendments processed

62 instances of Bills being reprinted after amendment

44 Bills enacted

The Journal Office

Support for Dáil sittings

The Journal Office provides support for the sittings and business of the Dáil. This involves the production of the daily Order Paper, including any Supplementary Order Papers, examination of all motions and amendments to motions to ensure compliance with Standing Orders, providing assistance in drafting technical motions, printing and circulation of notice of motions and updating the status of all business items. The Journal Office also provides procedural advice to the Ceann Comhairle, members of the Dáil, and the Clerks, and assists in preparing the daily procedural

briefing notes on the business to be conducted each day. Advice is also provided to the Government Chief Whip's Office on procedural aspects of proposals for Government business.

The maintenance of an archive of procedural records and supporting documentation is a key task of the Journal Office. The preservation of this archive includes maintaining Dáil Standing Orders, drafting amendments to Standing Orders, as required, recording Rulings of the Chair, periodically re-printing the updated Standing Orders and Salient Rulings of the Chair and producing Journals of the sittings.

The Journal Office administers the divisions in the Dáil Chamber. This role includes the provision of assistance to the Clerks in the Chamber for "list" or "manual" divisions, administering the e-voting system and recording the results of divisions.

Support for Dáil Committee on Procedure and Privileges

The Journal Office provides administrative support to the Dáil Committee on Procedure and Privileges (CPP) and its sub-Committee on Dáil Reform and the sub-Committee on Privileges. In 2014, the CPP met on 13 occasions and considered a range of matters including draft Standing Orders for parliamentary inquiries, the relevant proposal for the Inquiry into the banking crisis as well as guidelines for the conduct of the Inquiry. The CPP also established a Working Group on Art to consider, and make recommendations on, artwork in the

Leinster House complex.

Support for Seanad General Elections and Seanad Bye-Elections

The Journal Office provides support to the Seanad Returning Officer in the administration of Seanad general elections and Seanad bye-elections. The Journal Office compiled the electoral roll for the Seanad bye-election held in October 2014, as well as assisting with issuing the ballot papers and counting of votes.

Journal Office

124 Order Papers produced (totaling **2,087** printed pages)

38 supplementary Order Papers produced

13 meetings of the Committee on Procedure and Privilege provided with secretariat support

172 Dáil divisions (votes) recorded by the Journal Office

The Questions Office

Parliamentary Questions

In 2014, there were 54,691 Parliamentary Questions tabled for reply by members of the Government.

Parliamentary Questions (PQs) are the most visible aspect of the parliamentary accountability function. The Questions Office is responsible for processing PQs and for producing the Questions Paper for sittings of Dáil Éireann.

The Questions Office assists and advises members on the drafting of PQs in accordance with Standing Orders. It also advises the Ceann Comhairle on the procedural admissibility of questions and on requests tabled for topical issue debates.

Development of new Parliamentary Questions System

The database used for tracking and circulating PQs and the associated database for receiving and circulating replies were developed in the 1990s and have provided the required functionality to manage the PQs system since that time. However, the software platform has not kept pace with recent innovations in system development. Coupled with this there is a growing requirement to implement business process improvements and to provide improved services to members.

In 2014, a working group was established to consider a number of options, ranging from redevelopment of the current system in the same or different software, to developing a new system with added functionality. The key requirement is to provide a robust, future-proof system.

The Seanad Office

The primary role of the Seanad Office is to support the sittings and business of the Seanad. This involves producing procedural materials (e.g. Order Paper, procedural briefing notes) used in the course of proceedings and maintaining records of the House (e.g. Journal of Proceedings).

The Seanad Office supports the Cathaoirleach, the Leas-Chathaoirleach and temporary chairpersons by providing procedural advice and by assisting them in preparing for and presiding over sittings of the House. It also drafts and maintains the Standing Orders of the House.

The Seanad Office also operates as the Private Bills Office for the purpose of administering procedures in relation to private bills.

Parliamentary Questions 2011 - 2014

	2011*	2012	2013	2014
PQs Processed	37,397	56,027	50,926	54,691
Oral Replies	1,716	1,881	1,684	1,535
Written Replies	27,391	42,682	39,952	40,369
PQs Disallowed	753	1,301	1,456	1,354
% PQs Disallowed	2%	2%	2.9%	2.5%

* there was a general Election in 2011

Secretariat support is provided by the Seanad Office to the Committee on Procedure and Privileges, the Committee of Selection, the Seanad Public Consultation Committee and the Joint Committee on Standing Orders (Private Business).

The Office supports the Clerk of the Seanad in discharging her duties arising from a number of ex officio roles.

The Clerk is the Seanad returning officer for the 43 vocational panel members and, in this regard, organises and conducts general elections and bye-elections to Seanad Éireann. The returning officer also carries out an annual revision of the Register of Nominating Bodies.

The Clerk is also a member of the Standards in Public Office Commission, the Referendum Commission and the Constituency Commission.

The annual Register of Interests of Members of Seanad Éireann is compiled and published by the

Clerk.

The Seanad Office activities in 2014 included the provision of administrative and procedural support for the following key events:

- a Seanad bye-election to fill the vacancy arising from the election of former Senator Deirdre Clune to the European Parliament
- an address to the Seanad by Ms. Anne Brasseur, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- an address to the Seanad by Mrs. Justice Catherine McGuinness, former Judge of the Supreme Court, on Children's Rights in Ireland
- preparation by the Committee on Procedure and Privileges of a report and Standing Orders to provide for the establishment of the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis
- publication by the Seanad Public Consultation Committee (PCC) of a report on *Ireland's Compliance*

with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

- the Seanad PCC also issued an invitation for submissions from the public on "farm safety" to inform its examination of this subject, planned for 2015

Seanad Office

103 Seanad sitting days

594 Seanad sitting hours

103 Seanad Order Papers were produced

16 Supplementary Order Papers were produced

83 Journals of Proceedings were prepared

68 Motions were processed

Secretariat support and advice for **16** meetings of the Committee on Procedure and Privileges

172 Seanad divisions (votes) were recorded by the Office



Senator Maurice Cummins, Leader of the Seanad, and Senator Paddy Burke, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad, meeting with Mrs. Justice Catherine McGuinness, former Judge of the Supreme Court, on the occasion of her address to Seanad Éireann

OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE RELATED ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Oireachtas Committees play a key role in scrutiny and oversight of Government policy and activities.

Role of the Committee Secretariat

The role of the Committee Secretariat is to provide efficient and effective support services to the Committees of the Houses in their activities, and to plan and make provision for future developments in the Committee system. The Committee Secretariat seeks to ensure the highest standards in supporting Committee sittings.

Activities of Oireachtas Committees in 2014

In 2014, there were 576 meetings of the Joint, Select, Standing and sub-Committees involving 1,707 speaking witnesses and 1,112 sitting hours. Reports published included 26 policy reports, 19 pre-legislative reports and 7 EU scrutiny reports.

The Committee Secretariat provided on-going procedural and administrative support to:

- nine Joint Committees (which shadow the work of Government Departments), their Select and sub-Committees
- three Joint Committees with specific subject area remits



The Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine (sub-Committee on Fisheries) launched its report on "Sustainable Rural Coastal and Island Communities" in Inis Óírr

(Public Service Oversight and Petitions; Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement; and European Union Affairs)

- two Dáil Select Standing Committees (Committee of Public Accounts and Committee on Members' Interests of Dáil Éireann)
- one Joint Standing sub-Committee (Joint sub-Committee on Administration)
- one Seanad Select Standing Committee (Committee on Members' Interests of Seanad Éireann)

In May 2014, the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis was established by Dáil and Seanad Éireann. Procedural and administrative support is provided to this Committee by a dedicated Inquiry Unit in the Committee Secretariat.

The Committee Secretariat has responsibility for providing secretariat support to the British-

Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA) and the North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association (NSIPA).

The Committee Secretariat also provides secretariat support to the Working Group of Committee Chairpersons (WGCC) which liaises and consults on matters of interest to Chairpersons of Committees and on operational aspects of Committee-related activities. The WGCC also determines and monitors budget allocations made to each Committee.

Pre-legislative and Post-legislative Scrutiny

In late 2013, two new Standing Orders were adopted by Dáil and Seanad Éireann concerning pre-legislative and post-legislative scrutiny. Under this process Ministers are required to forward the general scheme of a Bill to the relevant Joint Committee for pre-legislative scrutiny. Ministers are also required to prepare and lay a report before the Dáil 12 months following the enactment of a Bill



Members of the Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection at the launch of the Committee's report on the "Draft General Scheme of an Education (Admission to Schools) Bill 2013"

reviewing the functioning of the legislation. As a result of these new Standing Orders, Joint Committees were granted powers to consider:

- the general scheme or draft heads of any Bill published by the Minister
- reports laid 12 months following the enactment of a Bill reviewing the functioning of the Act

Joint Committees undertook pre-legislative scrutiny in respect of 20 Bills in 2014. The Committees held hearings with stakeholders and made recommendations on the legislative proposals to the relevant Minister.

Activities of Sectoral Committees in 2014

In 2014, a broad range of policy matters were considered, and pre-legislative scrutiny (PLS) undertaken, by Joint Committees as follows:

Agriculture, Food and the Marine

- Promoting Sustainable Rural

Coastal and Island Communities [PLS Report published January 2014]

- Land Use - Maximising its potential [PLS Report published November 2014]
- General Scheme of the Horse Racing Ireland (Amendment) Bill [PLS Report published October 2014]

Education and Social Protection

- General Scheme of the Gender Recognition Bill [PLS Report published January 2014]
- General Scheme of the Education (Admission to Schools) Bill [PLS Report published March 2014]
- General Scheme of the Technological Universities Bill [PLS Report published April 2014]
- Report on Equality Budgeting and Social Enterprise in Scotland [Report published in July 2014]
- Engagement with stakeholders

in relation to the proposed amalgamation of schools in Ballyfermot, Dublin

Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht

- Utilising the Arts to combat disadvantage among the young, the old and socially disadvantaged and to encourage their greater integration and social inclusion within local communities. [Report published June 2014]
- General Scheme of the Dublin Docklands Development Authority (Dissolution) Bill [PLS Report published October 2014]
- General Scheme of the National Cultural Institutions (National Concert Hall) Bill [PLS Report published December 2014]
- General Scheme of the Official Languages (Amendment) Bill [PLS Report to be published 2015]
- Report on the Licensing and Harvesting of Seaweed in Ireland [Report to be published in 2015]
- The Joint Committee also sponsored a once-off donation of over 6,000 books, 1,000 recordings and free subscriptions to over 30 newspapers and magazines from Ireland to the London Irish Centre Library Project [March 2014]

Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform

- General Scheme of the Central Bank Bill [PLS Report published April 2014]

- General Scheme of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Bill [PLS Report published April 2014]
- Matters Relating to Mortgage Arrears Resolution Processes [Report published July 2014]
- 2015 Pre-Budget Submissions [Report published August 2014]
- General Scheme of the European Stability Mechanism (Amendment) Bill [PLS Report published September 2014]
- Ireland's Relationship with Global Corporate Taxation Architecture [Report published December 2014]
- Mortgage Insurance in an Irish Context [Report published December 2014]
- General Scheme of the Sale of Loan Books to Unregulated Third Parties Bill [PLS Report published December 2014]
- Engagement with the EU Semester Process including discussions on the Annual Growth Survey, Stability Programme Update and Ireland's National Reform Programme and publication of 2014 Country Specific Recommendations
- Engagement with the main financial institutions and Central Bank of Ireland on the future strategic direction of the banking sector in Ireland

Foreign Affairs and Trade

- Contribution of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to Economic Recovery [Report published December 2013 and

debated March 2014]

- The Irish Diaspora with particular reference to the furtherance of immigration reform in the US
- Contribution to the Review of Foreign Policy and External Relations [Report published February 2014]
- Items on the agenda for meetings of the EU Foreign Affairs Council
- The crisis in Ukraine
- Humanitarian and Development Aid with specific reference to the humanitarian impact of the conflict in Syria and the crisis of the Islamic State
- The crisis in Gaza
- The Ebola outbreak in West Africa

The Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality attended the biannual Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy, held in Athens [February 2014] and in Rome



Members of the Joint Committee on Health and Children at the launch of the Committee's report on "Concussion in Sport"

[November 2014]

The Joint Committee undertook a number of visits abroad including:

- China - the promotion of closer ties with BRIC countries and strengthening of inter-parliamentary relations
- The Philippines - the on-going recovery work after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. The delegation also attended political and trade meetings in Singapore and Manila as part of this visit

Health and Children

- General Scheme of the Public Health (Standardised Packaging of Tobacco) Bill [PLS Report published April 2014]
- Childhood Obesity [Report published June 2014]
- End of Life and Palliative Care [Report published July 2014]
- General Scheme of the Aftercare Bill [PLS Report published July 2014]
- Concussion in Sport [Report published December 2014]

<i>Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation</i>	[Report published October 2014]	(HSE)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the Action Plan for Jobs 2013 and priorities for the Action Plan for Jobs 2014 Access to Finance for SMEs [Report published July 2014] Measures to support business growth and job creation and retention in town and village centres [Report published in 2015] General Scheme of the Industrial Relations (Amendment Bill) [PLS Report published December 2014] Submission of political contribution to the European Commission, Parliament and Council titled <i>Political Contribution on the Proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion of the Trade Agreement between the European Union and Colombia and Peru</i> [political contribution submitted December 2014] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Firearms Licensing Gangland Crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the operation of the penalty points system for driving offences
	<i>Transport and Communications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> management and development of the six fishery harbour centres the development of a greyhound race track in Limerick by Bord na gCon investigation into the Ansbacher accounts by the Office of the Revenue Commissioners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Scheme of the Sport Ireland Bill [PLS Report published March 2014] General Scheme of the Harbours (Amendment) Bill [PLS Report published October 2014] Review of the Competition Authority's Study on Competition in the Irish Ports Sector Procurement process for the award of contracts under the School Transport Scheme Mobile phone coverage and access to quality broadband, particularly in rural areas 	<p>The Committee published the following reports in 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The operation of the penalty points system for driving offences the systems for reviewing eligibility for medical cards a composite report on the following matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> management of Waterford Institute of Technology land swops for social housing facilities for the State Pathology Service payments by the National Gallery of Ireland
	<i>Activities of Non-Sectoral Committees in 2014</i>	
	The Joint and Standing Committees considered a wide range of matters in 2014, including the following:	
<i>Justice, Defence and Equality</i>	<i>The Committee of Public Accounts [PAC]</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of Traveller Ethnicity [Report published April 2014] Community Courts [Report published July 2014] General Scheme of the Heads of the Children and Family Relationship Bill [PLS Report published July 2014] Review of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 [Report published October 2014] Domestic and Sexual Violence 	<p>Central to the PAC's examinations of public spending is the need to ensure that value for money is achieved and that public bodies operate efficiently.</p> <p>The PAC focused on a number of key areas in 2014 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> remuneration structures in bodies funded by the State and in particular bodies funded by the Health Service Executive 	
		<i>The Joint Committee on European Union Affairs [JCEUA]</i>
		<p>The JCEUA considered a wide range of EU related matters including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> foreign policy review voting rights for Irish Citizens abroad

- Europe Day 2014
- the outcome of the European Parliament Election
- Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)
- Hungary and the rule of law
- Europe 2020 Mid-term Review
- European Semester process and milestones including the National Reform Programme, Country Specific Recommendations and the Annual Growth Survey

priorities and held meetings with the Committee of the Regions and the Secretary General of the European Commission, Ms. Catherine Day. The Committee also considered the Annual Report 2013 of the Court of Auditors and the European Movement Accountability Report 2013.

The Joint Committee participated at the Conference of the Committees of the National Parliaments of the European Union Member States dealing with European Affairs (COSAC) in Athens and Rome.

As part of its commitment to



Members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly on a visit to the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge, Dublin

- Pre-General Affairs Council meetings with the Minister for European Affairs

The Joint Committee submitted reports and political contributions to the European Commission, Parliament and Council in respect of voting rights for Irish citizens abroad, Europe 2020 and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

The Committee considered the European Council Presidency

enhancing its interaction with other national parliaments, the Joint Committee met with its counterpart committees in Albania and Montenegro.

The Joint Committee also represented the Houses of the Oireachtas at Conferences in Brussels, Rome and Berlin.

The Joint Committee on Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement

The work of the Joint Committee focused on the following areas in 2014:

- the Civic Forum for Northern Ireland
- cross-border cooperation, with a particular focus on North-South cooperation on health, including support for family carers and palliative care
- road infrastructure along the border, with particular reference to the A5 road
- development of the North West region
- role of the arts and culture in enhancing reconciliation
- legacy issues, including the work of the *Commission for Victims and Survivors, Justice for the Forgotten* and the *Pat Finucane Centre*

In pursuance of its work programme, the Joint Committee continued its visits to Northern Ireland and the border region, meeting with local representatives and community leaders. In this context, the Chairman led a cross-party delegation from the Committee to visit Derry, the North-South Ministerial Council Secretariat in Armagh and the proposed site for the Narrow Water Bridge.

The Joint Committee held informal meetings with a number of youth groups, including political youth groups, North and South, the

American Council for Young Political Leaders and the North Down Community Assistance Group.

British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA)

The 48th BIPA Plenary was held in Dublin in 2014. The theme of the plenary was *The Future of Work* with a sub-theme of *Reform of the Public Sector*. An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD and former Minister of State, Brian Hayes TD addressed the Assembly. A number of business leaders and academics participated in discussions on a range of topics relating to employment and job creation and the future direction of the Irish public service.

The 49th BIPA Plenary was held in Ashford, Kent on 19 and 21 October 2014. The theme of the plenary was the *Commemoration of the Centenary Anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War* with a visit to Ypres Salient at Flanders. It included a memorial event at the Island of Ireland Peace Park, Messines and participation in the Ceremony of Remembrance at the Menin Gate, Ypres.

The four BIPA Committees continued to work on topical and important issues that affect citizens throughout both islands. Reports were adopted and published on *The Implementation of the Good Friday/Belfast and St. Andrews Agreements; Travellers, Gypsies and the Roma: Access to Public Services and Community Relations*; and the *Impact of the HGV Road User Levy Act 2013 on the Free Movement of Goods on the Island of Ireland*.

North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association (NSIPA)

The NSIPA met on two occasions in 2014 in accordance with its terms of reference: the fourth plenary was held in Parliament Buildings, Stormont on 4 April; and the fifth plenary was held in the Seanad Chamber, Leinster House on 7 November.

The fourth plenary, chaired by the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr. William Hay MLA, and An Ceann Comhairle, Mr. Seán Barrett TD, discussed European issues and considered:

- the EU's emergence from the financial and economic crisis

- the EU's multi-annual financial framework
- the Youth Guarantee
- the Common Agricultural Policy
- Horizon 2020
- the breadth of EU funding programmes

The plenary also discussed *substance misuse*, including the prevalence of drug use and the associated social and personal implications both at national and international level, and alternative approaches operating in other countries in addressing these problems.

The fifth plenary meeting, chaired by An Ceann Comhairle, Mr. Seán Barrett TD, and Acting Deputy Chairs, Mr. Peter Weir MLA, and Ms. Caitríona Ruane MLA, of the Northern Ireland Assembly, noted the importance of tourism to the economies of the island, North and South, and commended Tourism Ireland and the Northern Ireland Tourism Board for their work. This plenary also considered student mobility between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and teacher mobility across the two jurisdictions. The Association expressed the view that increased mobility within the student population would bear dividends for all citizens on the island and that it was important that student mobility across the island be encouraged and promoted.

The NSIPA Executive Committee also met on two occasions in this period.



Members of the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly at WW1 Commemoration Ceremony, Flanders, Belgium

Scrutiny of EU Legislation

In terms of mainstreaming scrutiny of EU legislation, activity is separately reported in the Annual Report of the Joint Committee on European Affairs on the operation of the European Union (Scrutiny) Act 2002. In summary, the Sectoral Committees considered a total of 532 decisions taken on 498 COMs; 13% of these proposals were deemed to have significant implications to warrant further scrutiny and a further 1.5% to warrant further action. Seven political contributions were made to the European Commission, the Parliament and the Council and a letter issued in respect of the role of national parliaments in free trade agreements. Four Secretaries General of Government Departments met with Joint Committees to discuss their six-monthly departmental EU scrutiny reports. In relation to structured engagement on EU matters, 20 pre-Council meetings were held with 11 Ministers and/or Ministers of State across seven Joint Committees.

The Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions

The Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions seeks to focus its work on investigating and identifying improvements in the delivery of public services to citizens. As part of its remit, the Committee receives and considers public petitions submitted to the Houses of the Oireachtas, and regularly engages with the Ombudsman and other oversight bodies.

The Joint Committee undertakes this work through two sub-Committees: the sub-Committee on Public Petitions; and the sub-Committee on the Ombudsman.

Public Petitions

The Public Petitions System presents an important avenue for individuals to participate in the democratic process. Through submitting petitions to the sub-Committee on Public Petitions, either online or by post, members of the public are able to take their policy concerns directly to the heart of the Oireachtas.

Information in relation to the petitions process is available on the web at www.petitions.oireachtas.ie

If a petition received is in order, the sub-Committee may seek oral or written evidence from relevant organisations such as Government Departments and other appropriate bodies or stakeholders. The sub-Committee also has the power to invite government ministers to attend meetings and answer questions about the petition and may also invite the petitioner to present the petition before the Committee.

As of 1 January 2014, 19 petitions were under consideration by the sub-Committee and a further 15 petitions were awaiting consideration. In 2014, the Committee received a further 41 new Petitions and completed consideration of 34 petitions.

In the course of 2014, the Committee decided that it was necessary or expedient to hear oral evidence in relation to a number of petitions

presented to it including:

- Public Petition No. P00062/12 – introduction of equality budgeting in Ireland
- Public Petition No P00072/12 – US Military and CIA use of Shannon airport and Irish airspace
- Public Petition No. P00025/13 – Professional Secrecy Provisions of the Central Bank Act 1942 and aspects of the Central Bank's Administrative Sanctions Procedure

Public Service Oversight

In the course of 2014, the Committee responded to reports by or otherwise heard evidence from Ombudsmen and An Coimisinéir Teanga as follows:

- Allegations of surveillance of offices of Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission and operation of the new protocols providing for enhanced co-operation between the Garda Síochána and the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission
- An Coimisinéir Teanga Annual Report 2012
- Annual Report of the Office of the Ombudsman 2013
- Special Report by the Ombudsman *Motorised Transport Grant* on the refusal by the Department of Health to implement a recommendation of the Ombudsman

- The Ombudsman Report *A Good Death*
 - Role and Work of the Ombudsman
 - Role and Work of the Pensions Ombudsman
 - Role and Work of the Financial Services Ombudsman
- of the public are required to direct any complaints to the Clerk of the Dáil or the Clerk of the Seanad as appropriate.
- In the course of the year, each Select Committee also undertook other work in relation to its statutory functions under the Acts, principally as follows:

Committees on Members' Interests of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann

Each House has established a Select Committee on Members' Interests under the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001. These Committees draw up and publish guidelines concerning the steps to be taken by members to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Ethics in Public Office Acts, draw up a code of conduct for non-Office Holders and investigate alleged contraventions of the Acts by members of the Houses.

- in January 2014, guidelines were issued by each Committee in respect of the registration period 1 January to 31 December 2014
- the Seanad Committee on Members' Interests investigated 2 alleged breaches of the Ethics in Public Office Acts

The summary position in relation to complaints made or referred to the Committees on Members Interests for 2014 is set out in the Table below.

Alleged contraventions of the Ethics in Public Office Acts

Members of the Houses may make a complaint directly to the Select Committee of the House of which the member complained of is a member. Under the Acts, members

Complaints made or referred to the Committees on Members' Interests for 2014

	Complaints before Committee on 1 January 2014	Complaints received in course of 2014	Complaints in respect of which investigation was discontinued	Reports made or other action taken by Dáil or Seanad arising from consideration of complaint	Referred to SIPO	Complaints before Committee as of 31 December 2014
Dáil Members Interests	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seanad Members Interests	1	1	2	0	0	0

Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis

The Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis was established by Orders of both Houses on 14 May 2014. The Committee was initially tasked with the development of a Relevant Proposal, including terms of reference, for the Inquiry. The Joint Committee met on seven occasions between 19 June and 24 September 2014 to draft the Relevant Proposal and was assisted in this work by an expert support group working on a pro bono basis.

On 26 September 2014, the Committee submitted a Relevant Proposal to the Committees on Procedure and Privileges (CPP) of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann for consideration in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas (Inquiries, Privileges and Procedures) Act 2013 ("the 2013 Act"). Both CPPs separately considered the Committee's proposal over the following number of weeks and reported to their respective Houses on 19 November 2014.

The Committee was formally empowered to conduct an Inquiry under Part 2 of the 2013 Act by agreement of Dáil and Seanad Éireann in November. The Inquiry into the Banking Crisis is the first inquiry to be carried out under the 2013 Act.

The purpose of the Inquiry is to inquire into the reasons Ireland experienced a systemic banking crisis, including the political, economic, social, cultural, financial and behavioural factors and policies



The Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis takes evidence from Mr. Peter Nyberg, sole member of the Commission of Investigation into the Banking Sector 2010-2011

which impacted on or contributed to the crisis and the preventative reforms implemented in the wake of the crisis. The Inquiry has two Phases: the aim of the *Context Phase* is to frame the broad context for the inquiry and set out the background to the banking crisis and to prepare the ground for the *Nexus Phase*.

During the *Nexus Phase*, the Committee will engage with institutions and individuals who had roles relating to the crisis and will focus on three broad elements:

- banking systems and practices
- regulatory and supervisory systems and practices
- crisis management systems and policy responses

and how these three elements interacted with each other.

The first public hearings of the *Context Phase* were held in December 2014 and continued up to April 2015.

The *Nexus Phase* public hearings will run from the end of April until

mid-September 2015. The Inquiry terms of reference require the Committee to report to both Houses by 30 November 2015.

Details of all public hearings and witnesses and quarterly updates on the activities of the Inquiry, are available on www.oireachtas.ie/bankinginquiry/

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS

International Visitors to the Houses of the Oireachtas

Each year, the Houses receive visits from members and staff of other national parliaments to discuss matters of mutual interest and to strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation.

In 2014, the Ceann Comhairle and the Executive Committee of Cumann Parlaiminteach na hÉireann (the Irish Parliamentary Association) welcomed parliamentary delegations to the Houses from the following countries:

- Kingdom of Bahrain: members of

Bahrain Shoura Council

- Isle of Man: members of Tynwald
- Iran: members of Iran-Ireland Parliamentary Friendship Group
- Australia: members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission of the Western Australian Parliament

The Houses hosted visits by Speakers and Deputy Speakers of parliaments and parliamentary assemblies during the year including:

- the President of the Chamber of Deputies of Romania
- the Deputy Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly
- the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

The Houses also hosted a number of official parliamentary visits as follows:

- the American Council of Young Political Leaders
- the Japanese Kids Homestay Programme

The Houses also maintains a close working relationship with the institutions of the European Union through its participation in:

- the Conference of Speakers of European Union Parliaments
- meetings of COSAC, the Association of European Affairs Committees of EU National Parliaments and the European Parliament



Ceann Comhairle, Seán Barrett TD, meeting Members of Tynwald (parliament of the Isle of Man)

- Joint Parliamentary Meetings, organised and chaired jointly by the parliament of the country holding the EU Presidency and the European Parliament
- Joint Sectoral Committee Meetings, organised and chaired jointly by the relevant sectoral committee or committees of the parliament of the Member State holding the EU Presidency and the relevant committee of the European Parliament

Official Bilateral Parliamentary Visits

Bilateral visits represent key opportunities for cementing bonds between parliaments and countries.

In 2014, one outgoing bilateral visit was undertaken by a delegation from the Houses of the Oireachtas to Japan.

Promoting Ireland's Influence Abroad - International Role of Members

Members of both Houses of the Oireachtas play an international political role through their membership of international bodies:

Inter-Parliamentary Union Assembly (IPU)

Ireland has been a member of the IPU since 1928. This is the key international co-operation forum between parliaments of the world. It has 163 member states and a further 10 with observer status. The IPU Assembly meets twice a year (March and October).

In 2014, delegations from the Houses of the Oireachtas attended the following IPU Assembly meetings in Geneva:

- 130th Assembly
- 131st Assembly
- First IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which is based in Strasbourg, is considered the oldest international parliamentary assembly with a pluralistic composition of democratically elected members of parliament.

In 2014, delegations from the Houses of the Oireachtas participated in the following PACE events:

- four plenary sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly held in Strasbourg
- twelve Parliamentary Assembly Committee meetings held throughout the year
- two Election Observation Missions - in Turkey and in Ukraine

European Conference of Presidents of Parliaments

In 2014, the biennial European Conference of Presidents of Parliament was hosted jointly by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Storting, the National Parliament of Norway. On 11-12 September 2014, the Storting welcomed 59 Presidents of Parliaments of the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe, including Ireland, together with observer countries and neighbouring countries.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (PA OSCE)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (PA OSCE) represents the parliamentary dimension of the OSCE, whose 56 participating States span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

The Parliamentary Assembly is

composed of 323 parliamentarians from its Member States whose primary task is to facilitate inter-parliamentary dialogue.

The members of the Assembly come together three times a year to debate a wide variety of issues relevant to the ultimate goal of human security for all in the OSCE region.

In 2014, a delegation from the Houses of the Oireachtas attended the following OSCE meetings:

- three plenary sessions held in Vienna, Baku, and Geneva
- two election observation Missions – in Washington and in Moldova

Official Speaker to Speaker Inter-Parliamentary Meetings

At the invitation of the Speakers of Parliaments, the Ceann Comhairle undertook an official visit to Iran, Poland and Ukraine to meet with the Speaker and members of the respective parliaments.

The purpose of the visits was to foster parliamentary dialogue and inter-parliamentary cooperation and to discuss matters of international and mutual interest.

Participation in other inter-parliamentary office holder meetings in 2014 included:

- Westminster: Parliamentary Broadcasting
- Washington: St. Patrick's Day
- Tynwald: Tynwald National Day
- Westminster: Upper Houses Consultation Forum

- Flanders: First World War Commemoration Ceremony
- Brussels: Bilateral meetings in the EU Commission and EU Parliament

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Communications/Broadcasting/Web

External communications, public engagement and information strategies are all led through the Communications, Broadcasting and Information Unit of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

2014 was the final year of the Communications Strategy, 2012-2014, adopted by the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission. Communications has had considerable success in increasing the level of public and media interest in the work of the Houses and their Committees.

A new Oireachtas App was developed and launched in 2014. This allows users to access the proceedings of the Houses whenever and wherever they wish.

A major focus in 2014 for all of the Communications, Broadcasting and Information Team was the launching of a new 24-7 Parliamentary TV Channel, Oireachtas TV, by the project deadline of September, 2014. This project was completed on time and within budget. To do so, the Communications Unit was restructured to ensure alignment of

resources to priorities.

The new Channel epitomised the spirit of innovation in this area and this was reflected in the roll-out of the first digital marketing campaign for the Houses. Facebook, Twitter, Google Adwords and mobile advertising all featured in the campaign.

Throughout 2014, followers of Oireachtas Twitter news increased by 8,000, from 9,500 to 17,500. In addition to this increase in followers, our Twitter account was voted the most influential public sector channel in Ireland in the *Wilson Hartnell Power 100* survey.

A Communications Strategy was established for the Banking Inquiry which is principally web-based. Every element of the inquiry is web-streamed and provided across social media and published through a dedicated website.

In addition to the App and the Inquiry website, a new look for the Oireachtas website homepage was introduced.

Culture Night 2014

To celebrate Culture Night in September 2014, Leinster House hosted a performance of traditional Irish music by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. This was a very successful event which saw more than 1,500 people pass through the House. Feedback on the night indicated that people welcomed the opportunity to enjoy a visit to their Parliament.

National Bravery Awards

The annual National Bravery Award Ceremony took place in October, 2014. This event received positive reviews in the national and regional media and a positive response from recipients and their families. The ceremony is undertaken with support from the Department of Justice and Equality, An Garda Síochána, the Irish Red Cross and the respective City Councils.

The Communications Unit continued



Members of the public on a guided tour of Leinster House on Culture Night 2014

its promotion of Oireachtas Committees beyond the gates of Leinster House. The sub-Committee on Fisheries launched their report on Inis Óírr in January 2014.

Broadcasting Parliamentary Proceedings

Parliamentary Channel

The Houses of the Oireachtas Television Channel – Oireachtas TV – was launched and began live broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings in September 2014. The Channel is now widely available on:

UPC 207

SKY 574

e-Vision 504

The channel is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Oireachtas TV provides live coverage of proceedings when the Houses are in session and recorded unedited coverage at other times. Features of the service include: on screen captions that provide timely and useful information about the proceedings being broadcast;

the names, party affiliation and constituency, or panel in the case of Senators, of all members; a squeeze-back feature for votes; and plain English information posts explaining the procedures and processes of Parliament.

The Oireachtas Broadcast Unit has also produced the Oireachtas Historical Series which features 16 addresses to the Dáil and Seanad by visiting dignitaries.

In 2015, the Broadcast Unit plans to further enhance the broadcast content by commencing



At the launch of Oireachtas TV in September 2014, An Ceann Comhairle, Seán Barrett TD, with Mr. John Bowman, broadcaster, and Mr. Magnus Ternsjo, UPC Ireland CEO

a programme of in-house post production initiatives which will provide the viewer with engaging, informational and easy to understand coverage of the Oireachtas proceedings.

Camera Replacement Project

Phase II of the camera replacement project was carried out in 2014 with 26 new cameras installed in the Seanad Chamber, the Audio Visual Room and four committee rooms. This means that for the first time the Audio Visual Room now supports the webcasting and broadcasting of Oireachtas Committee report launches.

Branding of Committee Rooms

To enhance broadcasting of committee meetings, the four committee rooms were upgraded in 2014 to include re-branding with bespoke backdrops and subtle in-room signage.

Committee Communications Strategy

A unified communications strategy promoting the work of Oireachtas Committees is a key element of the work of the Communications,

Broadcasting and Information Unit. The strategy for each Oireachtas Committee incorporates engagement with social media, local and regional media as well as the national media. Each Committee's web presence is updated and enhanced and pre-planned campaigns are developed to support events such as report launches and off-site events.

Local Media

Repeated surveys have shown that many people prefer local media when choosing where to find information on the work of the Houses of the Oireachtas. Each sitting week the Communications, Broadcasting and Information Unit commissions up to 30 local newspaper articles and local radio reports which highlight the parliamentary work of members.

Website Enhancement

In 2014, a new Web and Digital Marketing Manager was recruited as part of the preparation for a redesign of the parliamentary website www.oireachtas.ie to begin in 2015.

PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY AND RESEARCH SERVICE

The vision of the Library and Research Service (L&RS) is to contribute to a well-informed parliament.

The L&RS delivers expert information and research services which are impartial, value-added, responsive and accessible to the Houses, Committees and members. The L&RS also delivers professional information and records management services to the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

The L&RS strategic plan 2013-2015 includes three strategies to achieve its vision:

- research and analysis
- value-added information
- information governance and management

In 2014, the L&RS implemented its business plan which focussed on these three areas.

Library & Research Service key achievements in 2014:

Research and Analysis

Legislative Analysis Service (LAS): The LAS is designed to assist members in their scrutiny of legislation before the Houses at both pre-legislative stage and second stage of the legislative process.

Pre-legislative Scrutiny

The L&RS delivered a range of research products which assisted Oireachtas Committees in their scrutiny of General Schemes of Bills and in their preparation of reports setting out their views on proposed legislation.

Second Stage Debate on Bills

The L&RS published 40 Bill Digests which provided members with authoritative information to assist them in preparing for second stage debates on Bills in the Houses. Typical content for a Digest includes the policy background to the Bill, the stated policy objective, the current law, details of the principal legislative provisions, a summary of stakeholder reaction/media commentary and an examination of the potential implications of the Bill.

Information and Research Services to Committees

The L&RS drafted a series of research papers to inform the work of Committees, some of which were used as the basis for Committee reports.

The L&RS collaborated with the research service of the Northern Ireland Assembly (RaISe) to prepare research papers supporting the two plenaries of the North/ South Inter-Parliamentary Association.

The L&RS also collaborated with the research services of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the National Assembly for Wales, the Scottish Parliament and the House of Commons to publish a research



Oireachtas Library Reading Room

paper titled *CAP Reform 2014-20: EU agreement and implementation in the UK and in Ireland* (available to the public at www.oireachtas.ie). This paper was entered into a European Commission (DG Agri) competition - The "CAP Communication Awards" - aimed at showcasing the very best practice examples of communication initiatives related to the Common Agricultural Policy. The paper was submitted under the "Communication to Stakeholders" category and it was one of 58 projects shortlisted for evaluation in respect of three categories.

Information and Research Services to Members

The L&RS responded to 2,300 information and research requests from members and others during 2014. The majority of queries were received from members and their parliamentary assistants. The L&RS published a series of 40 Notes on topics of interest to members (and maximising the reuse of L&RS research). Topics included: *Reform of the Junior Cycle*; *Money follows the patient*; *Regulation of lobbying*;

Down Syndrome - resource teaching allocation issues in primary schools; and *'Zero hours' contracts*.

In 2015 the L&RS will complete implementation of its current strategy. The 2015 business plan includes projects to enhance legislative briefings, develop the financial scrutiny service, and develop L&RS capability in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and infographics. The L&RS will also develop its strategy for 2016 – 2018, together with a marketing strategy.

Value Added Information Services

The L&RS continued to inform members of new and topical publications through its intranet blog and focused on providing information aligned to debates in the Chambers.

The L&RS developed a "proof of concept" GIS project focussing on a constituency dashboard. This will be launched in 2015. The L&RS continued to use GIS software to supplement some of its research briefings with maps.

Information Governance and Management

Records Management

The L&RS managed the contract with the Service's professional records management consultants. The records management consultants produced three key reports (in consultation with relevant Service staff) on - offsite storage, electronic document and records management system and parliamentary archive. These reports provide the Service with frameworks for implementing good practice in each of these areas.

Documents Laid before the Houses

The L&RS processed the 2,000 documents that were laid before the Houses by Government Departments and agencies. Members of the public can access documents laid within 24 hours of receipt by the L&RS. This is facilitated via the L&RS's eDocs Laid system.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

The L&RS processed 72 FOI requests, and provided assistance and know-how resources to FOI decision makers in the Service.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS DEBATES OFFICE

The Debates Office produces the Official Report of the debates of both Houses of the Oireachtas and their Committees. This is an authoritative, complete and impartial record of the contributions of all speakers in the Chambers and Committees, in the language of the

contribution (Gaeilge or English).

The Official Report of the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis is also produced and published by the Debates Office.

The production of the Official Report is delivered through a team of Editors, Parliamentary Reporters and administrative staff. In recent years, the focus has moved from a printed version of the Official Report to publishing electronically on Lotus Notes and in HTML, XML and PDF formats on the website. The Official Report of the Dáil and Seanad debates is published incrementally on the Oireachtas website.

Parliamentary Questions tabled by members for written reply are collated, formatted and published in the Official Report at the end of each day's Dáil proceedings.

The Official Report of each Committee meeting is published on the Oireachtas website on the same day or within 2-4 working days, depending on the number of meetings in a particular day.

Debates Office Developments in 2014

The long-term strategic objective of the Service, to have ownership and control over the methods of producing and publishing the Official Report of the Dáil, Seanad and Committees, was achieved in 2014 with full implementation of the Debates Authoring System.

The System has eliminated dependencies on external suppliers and has resulted in more timely publication of the Official Report to the Oireachtas website for the

benefit of all users.

The Official Report of the Dáil, Seanad and Committee meetings (in 2014 a total of 2,683 hours of debate and 54,691 Parliamentary Questions) is now produced and published, end-to-end, by the Debates Office and made available in a timely manner on Lotus Notes for users across the Houses, Government Departments and the media, and in HTML, XML and PDF format on the Oireachtas website.

Debates Office developments for 2015

The Debates Office proposes to supplement its own resources by taking on, as and when necessary, additional staff procured through an open tendering process to transcribe and publish the Official Report of the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis. In line with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's open data initiative, the Debates Office is currently engaged in a Debates Metadata Project, the results of which, when implemented, will allow users to interrogate the Debates data in a more flexible and user-friendly format.

Debates Office Statistics

5,864 Dáil takes recorded and published

3,854 Seanad takes recorded and published

6,301 Committee takes recorded and published

RANNÓG AN AISTRIÚCHÁIN – TRANSLATION SERVICE

Under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2006, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin provides official translations of the Acts of the Oireachtas.

It also produces official translations of Statutory Instruments, Standing Orders of the Houses, Order Papers, Proceedings of the Houses, Strategic Plans and Annual Reports of the Commission and miscellaneous items for the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

Official translations of the Acts of the Oireachtas are published and made available on the Oireachtas website and on the www.achtanna.ie website.

An Rannóg also manages and publishes An Caighdeán Oifigiúil (the official standard grammar of the Irish language) and is the national authority of the State as regards the Irish language version of EU Treaties.

As well as producing official translations of documents, Rannóg an Aistriúcháin provides a simultaneous translation service to Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and their Committees.

An Rannóg also manages the Houses of the Oireachtas Service Language Scheme.

Arrears Acts Translation

While focusing on the production of official translations of current Acts, An Rannóg also advanced its Arrears Acts Clearance Strategy during 2014.



Advisory Committee for An Caighdeán Oifigiúil

Translation of Statutory Instruments

In 2014, An Rannóg provided translation services to the Department of Justice and Equality by processing and publishing a series of Rules of the Superior Courts. It also provided translation services in relation to Statutory Instruments for other Government Departments.

Houses of the Oireachtas Service Irish Language Scheme

2014 was the third year of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service Irish Language Scheme. The Scheme sets out the Service's commitments regarding the use of the Irish language in its service delivery.

Miscellaneous Translations

In 2014, An Rannóg provided a range of general translation services for the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

An Caighdeán Oifigiúil

Rannóg an Aistriúcháin has statutory responsibility for An Caighdeán Oifigiúil (the official standard

grammar for the Irish language).

In 2014 it commenced a statutory review of An Caighdeán Oifigiúil in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2013. An Advisory Committee was appointed and a work programme agreed and initiated.

HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS BUILDINGS, ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Visitors and Events

The number of visitors to the Leinster House exceeded 100,000 in 2014. A broad spectrum of visitors were catered for including international visitors, parliamentary delegations, Committee witnesses and members' constituents. Over 50,000 visitors undertook tours which included walk-up tours on non-sitting days.

A new electronic management system for registering visitors, to replace the current paper based system is planned for 2015.

Health and Safety Policy

In 2014, the Service continued to implement its health and safety management plan to protect the safety and health of all those who work in and visit Leinster House. The Service also carried out a Health and Safety Audit throughout the complex.

The Health and Safety Committee meets regularly to discuss health and safety issues, takes any necessary measures and also acts as a communications forum for all staff.

Catering Facilities

Bar and restaurant catering facilities are provided to members, staff and visitors to Leinster House. In 2014, the focus was on continuous improvement to services and effective administration and management of the catering facilities. In this context, a restaurant supervisor was appointed to manage the front of house operations and to enhance service provided across the catering venues.

In October 2014, the tender for the supply of the ePOS system (including related hardware and support services) was published on 23 October 2014. Tenders received were evaluated in December 2014 and a contract was awarded. A key 2015 target is to have the ePOS hardware installed and software commissioned in the early months of the year so that the new system is fully operational by mid-year.

Energy Management

Improvements in the Houses of the

Oireachtas energy usage have been made over the past number of years. A report on the Energy Usage in the Houses of the Oireachtas in 2014 is set out in Appendix 10.

An Energy Awareness Day for members and staff was held to provide updates on the energy reduction programme being run in the Leinster House complex and to provide advice on how to save energy (and therefore money) at home. The energy management team ensured that an extensive and full review of all energy sub-meters was carried out in 2014 thus ensuring accurate readings for all stakeholders.

Oireachtas Crèche and Fitness Room

The Oireachtas crèche provides an on-site childcare facility for children up to school-going age, as well as late evening care and drop-in services and is operated by a third-party service provider. The facility is open to the children of members and staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas as well as staff of Government Departments. Services are paid for directly by the users to the service provider. In 2014, there were 4432 individual visits to the fitness room.

A request for tender for the provision of instructor services in the Oireachtas Fitness Room was published in December 2014 and a new contract will be in place in 2015.

Business Continuity Planning/ Disaster Recovery

Work in relation to *Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Planning* continued in 2014. The current ICT systems support all critical services that are required to facilitate simultaneous sittings of both Houses and their Committees in an alternative location to the Leinster House complex. In 2014 the following work was undertaken:

- WARP (Work Area Recovery Plan) and IMP (Incident Management Plan) were updated
- simulation exercise successfully carried out
- consultation was undertaken to identify the technical infrastructure and accommodation requirements for all political parties
- expansion of the Plan to include Captain of the Guard, Broadcasting Unit and the Joint Committee on the Banking Inquiry
- plans for all procedural sections updated
- arrangements made to carry out simulation exercise in the off-site location in May 2015

Office Accommodation

In 2014, the following three significant projects were implemented in conjunction with the Office of Public Works (OPW):

- provision of accommodation for the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis
- a secure, self-contained workspace was created for the

Inquiry Unit

- provisions of support to the Oireachtas Broadcasting Unit's development of the Oireachtas TV Channel and an extensive camera replacement project in the Seanad Chamber, Committee Rooms and the Audio Visual room
- work was undertaken by OPW to enhance Health and Safety in the Dáil Chamber including the installation of energy efficient lights and a fire suppression system. The new systems can be maintained remotely with much greater safety and efficiency

staff are encouraged to be more energy efficient. This includes a continuous review of the heating and ventilation systems to ensure they are operating only when required with significant savings achieved

- undertaking night energy audits to identify areas where energy savings can be made
- changing heating and ventilation times to reflect the opening hours of the Houses
- commissioning wood chip boilers to provide a portion of the complex's heating load requirements
- monthly energy monitoring and reporting
- energy awareness day which included a display of energy efficient lighting
- reduction of the MTHW (Medium Temperature Hot Water) in summertime
- building management system maintenance and adjustments
- upgrade of lighting systems in various parts of the complex
- replacement of two electricity meters on site with one main meter
- additional metering added to the site

Energy Management Overview 2014

The energy consumption figures for the Houses of the Oireachtas are set out in Appendix 10. Over one third of energy consumption was for space heating, while lighting, ventilation, hot water, office (IT) and catering equipment accounted for the vast majority of the remaining energy consumption.

Overall, energy consumption in the Houses of the Oireachtas for the period of 2014 vs 2008 has shown a decrease of 28.8%. This is due to various actions including heating and lighting upgrade and maintaining the momentum of the "Optimising Power @ Work" energy awareness campaign.

Energy Management Actions Undertaken in 2014

In 2014, the Houses of the Oireachtas undertook a range of initiatives aimed at improving energy performance, including:

- participation in the "Optimising Power @ Work campaign", where





Improving Services to Members

Members will receive the services they need to fulfil their roles as public representatives through their parliamentary work.

Human Resources

Support Members as employers by providing best-practice employer advice and personnel administration and training supports under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance.

Financial Resources

Provide expert advice services and financial systems to ensure that Members receive their pay, allowances, pensions, entitlements information and other financial supports for their work.

Technology and Office Support

Provide ICT systems, office equipment, supplies and other office services that Members need to conduct their parliamentary business.

Research and Information

Deliver expert research and information services to Members that meet their needs as parliamentarians and public representatives.

Accommodation and Facilities

Provide office accommodation, refreshment and other workplace facilities that enable Members and their staff to work effectively and in comfort.

MEMBERS' SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Joint sub-Committee on Administration (Js-CA)

The Js-CA represents the views of members in relation to services provided for and by the Houses and makes recommendations on these to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.

In 2014, the sub-Committee considered a range of matters including:

- the Parliamentary Internship Programme in the Houses of the Oireachtas
- the Public Representative Allowance System
- training programme for members and political personnel
- use of the Audio Visual Room for external groups
- catering services in the Houses
- use of mobile phones and electronic devices in the Dáil and Seanad Chambers and Committee rooms

MEMBERS' SERVICES

Members' Services section provides a One Stop Shop service, giving members a single access point for information and services. The Section processes resources provided to members to support them in carrying out their

parliamentary functions.

In 2014 the section received 9,120 information requests. Information seminars were also organised as required.

Conduct of the 2014 Audit - Public Representation Allowance

The fourth annual audit of the Public Representation Allowance (PRA) was conducted by an independent auditor in 2014. The purpose of the audit is to provide an objective independent examination of members' expenditure to determine whether expenditure is applied in accordance with the relevant regulations.

The auditor is responsible, independently of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service, for preparing an audit plan and for communicating with the members selected for audit.

The independent auditor implemented a system to select the members for audit by random sample. Of the 219 members who received the PRA in 2013, 22 (10%) of these were selected for audit by random sample.

The members selected for audit were invited to an information seminar conducted by the auditor prior to the commencement of the process. The purpose of the seminar was to provide clarity on the audit process.

Information on expenditure under the PRA is published on the Oireachtas website on a monthly basis. The report of the independent auditor is published on the website on an

annual basis.

The audit report for 2013 was considered by the MAC and the Audit Committee in December 2014. The independent auditor provided the necessary certification in respect of all members audited and made recommendations relating to the expenses system. These recommendations and other administrative amendments were included in updated Audit Guidelines approved by the Commission and provided to members in January 2015.

TECHNOLOGY AND OFFICE SUPPORT

Information and Communications Technologies

Development of "The Plinth" Intranet

The Service responded to feedback received through the People and Organisational Development (POD) programme on the need to improve internal communications by establishing a Working Group to examine and make recommendations in this area. The Group recommended development of the intranet to facilitate effective sharing of information and to enhance communication throughout the organisation.

The new intranet site, named *The Plinth*, was developed by the ICT Unit and launched in October 2014. It provides easy access to information through links to dedicated pages, including:

- a homepage with quick links to news and announcements and a calendar of events
- a Parliamentary Business page with information relating to sittings of the Houses and Committees
- a Corporate Services page with information on Human Resources, Training and Development, ICT Services, Members' Services and Inter-Parliamentary activities
- access to the Library & Research Service
- information on health and safety and recreational facilities

The Managed Print Service

The Managed Print Service (MPS) initiative involves a move away from the traditional printing and copying process with its associated costs (toner, service, capital outlay) to a "managed print service". The key principle of MPS is that the supplier provides a "total office print solution" on an all-inclusive cost per printed page/image basis which includes:

- supply of print devices
- toner and drums
- service, repairs, maintenance
- reporting tools and reports
- a training and helpdesk facility
- all the required licensing and software

A contract was awarded in 2014 under the National Procurement



Framework and the infrastructure was installed and tested. The MPS solution will be piloted in early 2015 and, if successful, rolled out to all users across the Houses.

ICT Strategy

The ICT Strategy 2014 - 2017 provides a framework to support high standards of ICT services and the security of data and ICT systems and infrastructure. It incorporates many of the values and vision statements of the first strategy as they remain valid. However, it differs significantly in reflecting changing business needs, the economic environment, advances in technology and the need for greater efficiency and flexibility in the workplace. The Strategy is also aligned to the other key strategies and priorities of the Service.

The ICT Strategic Plan identifies high level principles and four strategies, based on a consultation process undertaken with key stakeholders. These principles and strategies will guide the development, delivery and support of efficient

and innovative ICT services in support of our business objectives. This will underpin our approach to the delivery of services, guiding technical and resource decisions relating to the development, support and evolution of ICT services over the course of the strategy.

The MAC approved an action plan for the development and implementation of ICT services in 2015.

Integrated Parliamentary Support Systems

A Working Group was established to review the technology resources in the Chambers with a view to updating and integrating the voting, broadcast and sound systems. A preliminary assessment was undertaken to determine the business requirements of these systems.

In December 2014, the MAC agreed that the successful implementation of the project would deliver electronic support of functions necessary for streamlined operation of parliamentary business in the



Dáil, Seanad, committee rooms and across the parliamentary campus.

These functions include: member identification and authentication; eVoting; sound production and recording; video production and recording; audio/video mixing, recording, archiving and broadcast; operation, management of division bells; and provision of integrated ICT infrastructure to support these functions.

Significant ICT Activities Undertaken in 2014

- Procurement of the following:
 - a new central and disaster recovery firewall and the replacement of remote firewalls at constituency offices which provide full network access SSL VPN remote access connectivity
 - a Visitor Management System
 - ePOS solution
 - Mobile Voice and Data

supplier

- installation of a SharePoint platform
- pilot of Microsoft Lync
- development of a new database for the management of new entrants and leavers
- network expansion into new accommodation in Merrion Square Buildings and Agriculture House
- committees audio upgrade
- expansion and upgrade of the Service's WiFi infrastructure
- upgrade to the Service's remote access systems
- upgrade to the Service's Email Gateway
- upgrade to the Service's Web Gateway
- The existing storage area network (SAN) and backup system reached its end of life in 2014. With a view to obtaining the most efficient replacement and best value for money, ICT

undertook an extensive review of its current and projected capacities and system performance requirements for the next five years. This information was used to tender for a new replacement system. The tender was awarded and the new hardware delivered and installation commenced

- Provision of ICT Services and a Document Management System for the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis
- A review of the power supply resilience to the ICT infrastructure spread throughout the campus

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery

Ongoing tests and reviews of ICT capacity to meet business continuity and disaster recovery requirements for business areas identified as in scope were undertaken in 2014. The new Storage Area Network and Backup systems will be located both on the Leinster House campus and at the remote data centre to ensure high resilience of the systems both on the campus and at the off-site disaster recovery site.

Network Security

The new Intrusion Detection and Protection System for the Service's ICT network went fully live in 2014 as part of the ongoing enhancement of the network's security management.

Members' ICT Helpdesk

The ICT helpdesk received 11,515 calls from members and their staff.





Enhancing Service Capability

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will achieve the highest standards in public service and parliamentary administration.

Managing People and Budgets

Make best use of our people through strategic recruitment and effective resource planning, by implementing our policies on performance management, career planning and training and by fostering our values of professional excellence.

Provide financial management systems to ensure that best economic use is made of the financial resources of the Commission

Customer Focus

Renew our commitment to quality service by engaging with members and other key customers and building on our existing service improvement and feedback initiatives.

Transforming the Way We Work

Increase our service agility by continuously reviewing our structures, systems and policies in keeping with best practice in public service management.

Foster collaborative approaches to working through team-building and cross-functional initiatives.

Support effective working through our policies on knowledge and records management, better internal communications and sustainable working.

Governance and Future Planning

Modernise our legislative framework to enhance our systems of governance and optimise our senior management structures under the Commission.

Strengthen our future planning and critical review capabilities by improving our systems of risk management, business continuity planning and audit.

Redefine our approaches to the provision of legal advisory services and the discharge of our electoral and other statutory functions.

Managing and Measuring Performance

Implement these strategies through our local business plans, measure our performance and review our efficiency and effectiveness to ensure our services deliver value for money.

MANAGING PEOPLE AND BUDGETS

Human Resources (HR) Services - overview of current operating environment.

As at December 2014, there were 411 sanctioned civil service posts in the Service of which 385 posts were filled. There are also non-established civil service staff comprising five civilian drivers and seven staff of Office Holders. A further 45 staff were employed in the Catering Services and in the Print Facility.

Staffing Levels Statistics

385 Civil Service staff

45 State Industrial staff

16 Banking Inquiry Support staff (Civil Servants)

8 Banking Inquiry Support staff (Investigative Staff)

12 Staff of Office Holders

In 2014, the focus of the HR Unit was to ensure appropriate staffing levels to support the operations of the Service within sanctioned numbers. The main demand for additional staff was to support Dáil reform initiatives such as pre-legislative scrutiny and the provision of policy analysis and advice to Oireachtas Committees.

To support the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis, 48 temporary posts were sanctioned of which 24 posts were filled by the end of the year by civil servants and specialist staff. These posts were filled through reassignment of staff from within the Service, redeployment of staff from other civil

service organisations and, where appropriate, recruitment of additional staff.

There were 465 staff employed in 381 full time equivalent posts under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance at the end of 2014. Staff employed under the Scheme are the employees of the member or party concerned and are not public servants. However, they are paid by the Commission. Accordingly, all personnel administration functions in relation to pay, leave and related employment matters are undertaken by the HR Unit for Members.

While the HR Unit provides services to the civil service staff and the HR Unit for Members provides services to members and their staff, the Training and Development Unit, Pensions Unit and Salaries Section provide services to all groups.

In addition to maintaining key support services, HR Services undertakes a lead role in supporting the:

- Reform Delivery Programme
- People and Organisational Development Programme

Reform Delivery Programme

The Service is represented at Assistant Secretary level on the Reform Delivery Board for the civil service, convened by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, which is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the delivery of public service reform at organisational and sectoral level.

In addition to participating fully in central public service reform initiatives, including the move to HR and Pensions Shared Service Centre (PeoplePoint) the Service has focused on taking an integrated approach to strengthening procedural capability across the Service and upgrading systems in key procedural areas that are essential to the sittings of the Houses and their Committees.

Reform Delivery Plan

A reform plan for the Service was approved for 2014. The reform plan sets out approximately 60 actions over the key areas of public service reform. A progress report on their implementation was submitted to the Reform Delivery Office, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in July 2014.

HR Services also provides secretariat and other support services for the Partnership Committee which considered the Reform Programme and actions relating to changes in the workplace.

People and Organisational Development

The People and Organisational Development (POD) Programme is an initiative to enhance organisational capacity, to implement change and to enable the Service to develop as a high performing organisation. The objectives of the POD Programme are consistent with the commitments of the Public Service Reform Agenda.

In addition to meeting operational targets, key activities of each of the units of HR Services in 2014 were:

HR Unit (providing services to civil service staff of the Commission)

- provision of information, advice and HR services to civil service staff of the Commission
- preparation for the transition to HR and Pensions Shared Service Centre (People Point) scheduled for 2015
- resource management through use of redeployment, secondments and mobility to match the skills required to fill staff vacancies
- recruitment - competitions held both internally and externally
- implementation of changes arising from the Haddington Road Agreement
- disability survey conducted and provision of the Disability Liaison Officer Service provided
- administrative support provided to the Health and Safety Committee

HR Unit for Members

- liaison with Party Administrators
- management of changes in staffing arrangements
- provision of advice in relation to employment matters

Training and Development

Training for Members and Political Personnel

In 2014, Training Unit continued to provide training interventions and information seminars to members and political personnel.

Some of the key training initiatives provided include:

- Constituency Database Training
- Movavi Screen Capture
- Occupational First Aid.
- Fire Warden Training
- Manual Handling

Training for staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas

Training and learning interventions were provided to civil service staff in a wide range of areas encompassing technical, professional and personal development training. Training interventions were provided both in-house and externally, as appropriate. Concerted efforts were made to provide in-house training wherever

practicable. Apart from the cost savings and Value for Money (VFM) benefits, in-house training targets a wider audience and encourages staff from different sections to meet and learn from each other's experiences.

Some of the key training initiatives provided include:

- Coaching Workshops
- Principal Officer Leadership/ Development Programme
- High Performance Teams Programme

Information seminars also proved a popular and effective way of enhancing knowledge in particular areas for members, political personnel and civil service staff.

Information seminars provided in-house include:

- Data Protection obligations
- Deaf Awareness for Front Line Staff
- SafeTALK – Suicide Awareness
- Study Tips and Techniques



Seanad Public Consultation Committee



The Irish Association of Former Parliamentarians meeting in the Seanad Chamber

Language Training

Language training in Irish and French is provided at three levels. The courses are held weekly, for one hour, and are attended by members, political personnel and civil service staff. There were 204 hours of language classes delivered in 2014.

Refund/Advance of Fees Scheme

The Refund/Advance of Fees Scheme has operated throughout the civil service very successfully for many years. Fifty five staff of the Service availed of the Scheme in the academic year 2014. The Scheme continues to play an important role in career and personal development for staff members as it gives individuals the opportunity to pursue an area of study that assists the Service in the delivery of organisational and business unit objectives

Inter-parliamentary Staff Exchange Programmes and Study Visits

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service participates in an annual bilateral parliamentary staff exchange programme with the German Bundestag. In addition, each year the Service hosts study visits to the Houses by officials from other parliaments.

In 2014 the Service participated in the following inter-parliamentary exchange programmes:

- two members of staff of the Service participated in the annual parliamentary staff exchange programme with the German Bundestag, which was hosted by the Bundestag in 2014
- two officials from the Hungarian parliament undertook a study visit to the Service to learn about the parliamentary practices and procedures
- three officials from the Northern Ireland Assembly Bills Office

undertook a study visit to the Service to be briefed on the work of the Bills Office

Pensions Unit

The work of the Pensions Unit in 2014 included:

- introduction and management of the Single Pension Service Scheme that applies to all new entrants who commenced employment on or after 1 January 2013
- implementation of the aggregation of pensions for the purposes of the reduction of pension costs under the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act 2013

Salaries Section

The work of the Salaries Section in 2014 included:

- updating of payroll software to cater for salary payments to SEPA bank accounts
- conversion of microfiche records to electronic format making the retrieval of historical payroll information more efficient
- completion of the merging of the National Renewal Plan grades with original entry levels grades as part of the Haddington Road Agreement

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Financial Control, Reporting and Governance Systems

The responsibilities of the Finance Unit include:

- managing and monitoring expenditure by the Houses
- assisting in the preparation of the annual Estimates for presentation to the Dáil by the Commission
- preparation of Commission's Annual Account to be submitted by the Secretary General to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for annual audit by 31 March each year
- preparation of management financial accounts for the MAC, the Finance Committee and the Commission
- assisting the Comptroller and Auditor General's Office in respect of the annual audit of the Commission's annual account by the C&AG

2014 was the second year of the three-year budgetary framework for the Houses which was set in legislation at €324m. Actual expenditure for 2014 was €102.6m.

Financial reporting in the Service continues to be carefully managed. Detailed expenditure reports are examined by the MAC on a monthly basis. Quarterly financial reports and detailed information on the monthly spending by the Houses against spending forecasts are examined by the Finance Committee

of the Commission. Following its consideration, the Finance Committee presents a report of its findings to the Commission where these matters are considered further.

The annual accounts of the Service are signed by the Accounting Officer. The Comptroller and Auditor General conducts an audit of the Commission's annual account. The annual account is published in the Commission's Annual Report (see Appendix 4).

TRANSFORMING THE WAY WE WORK

On-going Reform of the Committee System

In 2014, Oireachtas Committees continued to engage in a number of activities under the reform agenda including:

- engagement of specialist resources to further strengthen policy analysis and advice to Committees
- implementation of structured annual work programmes for sectoral Committees
- continuation of pre-legislative scrutiny by sectoral Committees of the heads of Bills, including analysis of submissions received from interested groups and individuals and hearings with stakeholders
- engagement by sectoral Committees with Chairpersons designate of State Bodies and Agencies
- ongoing mainstreaming of EU

scrutiny across all sectoral Committees relevant to their area of responsibility

- increased engagement with Ministers before and following EU Council meetings and with Secretaries General on the six-monthly EU Departmental scrutiny reports
- new streamlined system for generating the weekly Committee schedule of business, eliminating data entry duplication and staff inputs, resulting in a more efficient process

GOVERNANCE AND FUTURE PLANNING

The Management Advisory Committee

The Management Advisory Committee (MAC) is the senior management body of the Service which acts in a strategic oversight, advisory and co-ordinating capacity in support of the Secretary General.

The MAC consists of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary with responsibility for Corporate and Members' Services Division, the Assistant Secretary with responsibility for Parliamentary Services Division, the Clerk of the Seanad and the Chairpersons of the three sub-Committees of the MAC.

The MAC meets on a monthly basis to consider and decide on strategic, operational and financial policies for the Service, which may then be submitted to the Commission for decision as appropriate.

There are a number of standing items on the MAC agenda including:

- financial and human resource
- management information reporting
- risk management
- updates on topical issues across the Service

The MAC agenda is closely aligned with the agenda of Commission meetings.

The MAC met on 11 occasions in 2014. The main policy issues considered included the following:

- monthly financial reports
- Estimates for 2015
- the Annual Resource Plan for the Service
- review of risk materialisation reports
- implementation of the Haddington Road Agreement, as well as the Integrated Reform Delivery Plan
- replacement of broadcasting equipment
- Special Collection and Attribution Policy from the Library and Research Services
- Business Process Improvement Report on Receipt and Processing of Written PQ Replies
- Value for Money (VFM) and Policy Review on the Library & Research Service
- Records Management policy implementation plan
- review of catering services in the Houses
- internal audit reports;
- Strategic Statement for the Service for 2015;
- Integrated Parliamentary Support System;
- review of the Service's Efficiency

Review Programme 2015-2016

- business case proposal for a Visitor Management System

MAC sub-Committees

The MAC is assisted by three sub-committees as follows:

- People and Finance
- Systems
- Business and Strategy

Each sub-Committee is chaired by a Principal Officer, with each Principal Officer in the Service being a member of one of the sub-Committees. The chair positions are filled on a rotating basis and the chairperson of each sub-Committee is a full participatory member of the MAC. Each sub-Committee reports to the MAC and/or the Secretary General, as appropriate and reports annually to the MAC on its work in general.

People and Finance sub-Committee

The People and Finance sub-Committee considers such matters as human and financial resources for the Service, as are referred to it by the MAC/Secretary General. It met on three occasions in 2014 to consider:

- the 2014 Annual Resource Plan
- business cases for the assignment of additional resources in the Service.

Systems sub-Committee

The Systems sub-Committee has responsibility for oversight of the development of information and ICT services and strategies for the Service, including monitoring progress on ICT projects and

expenditure, as are referred to it by the MAC/Secretary General.

The sub-Committee met on five occasions in 2014. The key issues considered included:

- the introduction of an Electronic Point of Sale (ePOS) system for the Catering Services
- the report on the Integrated Parliamentary Support System proposal;
- ICT Security Charter and Policies and Strategies.

Business and Strategy sub-Committee

The sub-Committee on Business and Strategy considers such matters of strategy, business operations and organisation development for the Service as are referred to it by MAC/Secretary General. It met on two occasions in 2014. The key issues considered included:

- a review of the FOI process in the Service
- the Records Management Policy for the Service
- a Business Process Improvement report on the processing of PQ replies
- a draft Strategic Statement for the Service for 2015

PRINCIPAL OFFICER NETWORK

The Principal Officer Network provides a forum for Principal Officers (POs) to:

- collaborate and cooperate to achieve outcomes that are in the best interest of the Service
- share information about Service-

wide matters and section-level strategies and priorities

- share feedback from across the organisation
- learn from each other's expertise, knowledge and experience
- learn from other organisations through presentations from external senior managers

The PO Network normally meets on a bimonthly basis. In 2014 the Network held four meetings. The Training Unit organised a leadership programme for members comprising a series of workshops as part of the *People and Organisational Development Programme*.

The Network meetings provided a forum for POs to contribute to the development of a Statement of Strategy for 2015 and an ICT Strategy for the Houses as well as an examination of business review mechanisms. The Network also reviewed the Service's current governance structure. The outcome of this review will facilitate closer alignment of the Network and the Management Advisory Committee.

The POs were updated by their peers at Network meetings on strategic Risk Management, the Public Service Reform Programme, People and Organisational Development Programme, Information and Communications Technology and Human Resources Services.

The Network received presentations

from invited speakers on the following topics:

- Public Service Reform Program (Reform and Delivery Office, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER))
- Agile Project Management (Programme Management Office, Office of the Revenue Commissioners)

At the end of 2014 plans were underway to host the first annual conference of the Network.

Management Advisory Committee Membership

Mr. Peter Finnegan

Assistant Secretary Parliamentary Services Division and Clerk-Assistant of Dáil Éireann.

Mr. Michael Errity

Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Services Division.

Ms. Deirdre Lane

Clerk of the Seanad.

Mr. Mark Mulqueen

PO, Chair of Systems sub-Committee

Ms. Patricia Doran

PO, Chair of People and Finance sub-Committee.

Mr. Paul Conway

Superintendent, Chair of Business and Strategy sub-Committee

Risk Management

The Risk Management Committee has responsibility for oversight of the Service's risk management policy. To provide an appropriate level of assurance

the Committee reviews the Service's risk management processes and internal controls to ensure that they are rigorous and effective in identifying and managing risk so that potential risks can be mitigated. The Committee also has responsibility for building and enhancing a risk awareness culture in the Service.

The Committee reports as necessary to the Audit Committee and to MAC.

In 2014, the work of the Committee focused on reviewing the strategic risks being faced by the Service and will finalise this process in 2015.

The Committee was briefed by Mr. Aidan Horan, Director at the Institute of Public Administration, specialising in governance, audit, assurance and risk management systems.

Internal Audit and Oversight Functions

The Internal Audit function of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service contributes to the oversight and accountability of the Service. Through its internal audits it provides assurance to the MAC and the Commission that controls are effective and risks are mitigated.

Reporting to the Head of the Office of the Commission and Secretary General (OCSG), the Internal Audit Unit's responsibilities include:

- reporting on the Service's compliance with relevant policies, circulars, regulations and guidelines
- analysing the financial and other risks to which the Service is

exposed

- reporting on the implementation of internal audit recommendations
- supporting the Audit Committee in its work

The Audit Committee met on four occasions in 2014 and considered the following matters:

- five Internal Audit reports;
- nine information notes and briefings
- the Comptroller and Auditor General Report on the 2013 Accounts of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission
- an independent audit report of the Members' Public Representation Allowance
- a Value For Money and Policy Review Report on the L&RS

The Audit Committee continues to monitor the implementation of internal audit recommendations.

The Internal Audit Unit presents implementation reports to the Audit Committee twice yearly.

In 2015, the Audit Committee will carry out a review of its Charter in light of the recent Audit Committee Guidance issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

The Internal Audit Unit is represented on the Risk Management Committee where its role includes advising on the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Service's procedures relating to risk management and providing

assurance on the processes for the management of risk. Risk materialisation reports are presented to the Audit Committee on a quarterly basis and the Committee was briefed during the year on the Service's Risk Framework approach.

To help ensure that it operates in accordance with best practice, the Internal Audit Unit participates in the Heads of Internal Audit Forum (a civil service Internal Audit network) and a group of Heads of Internal Audit of Parliaments and Assemblies in Ireland and the UK.

Parliamentary Legal Services

The responsibilities of the Office of the Parliamentary Legal Advisor (OPLA) are to provide timely legal advice as may be required to:

- the Ceann Comhairle and Cathaoirleach in relation to their parliamentary roles
- individual Members of the Houses in relation to their parliamentary functions
- Clerks of both Houses in relation to any legal matters arising in the discharge of their statutory functions
- the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission in relation to any legal matters arising in the discharge of their statutory functions
- staff of the Service in respect of matters arising in a corporate setting.

The OPLA also:

- drafts Statutory Instruments made by the Commission in exercising its regulatory function;
- manages the conduct of any legal proceedings involving either House of the Oireachtas, a Committee, the Commission or any Member of either House in respect of proceedings arising solely from the performance by them of their parliamentary functions.
- manages the provision of legal advice to the Banking Inquiry, including the management of the external legal team to support the Banking Inquiry and related matters.

In 2014, the OPLA provided 463 legal advices, of which 37% were in response to advices sought by Oireachtas Committees and 62% were in response to advices sought by the Service. 13 requests for legal advice were outsourced for specialist advice in 2014.

Procurement Unit

The Procurement Unit provides procurement advice in relation to procurement activities in the Service. It ensures compliance with the EU Public Procurement guidelines while seeking to reduce costs and achieve value for money outcomes in all public procurement activities across the Service.

In 2014, the Procurement Unit proactively engaged with and

provided high quality advice and support services for 35 tendering processes across the Service.

A core element of the Government's Reform Agenda is the extension of a range of shared services introduced across the Civil Service. One element of this initiative is in the area of Public Procurement. The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) commenced operations in late 2014. It deals with all procurement initiatives across the Civil Service.

The Service's Procurement Officer is liaising with the OGP outlining the Service's procurement priorities for 2015 and beyond. It is expected that a Service Level Agreement will be completed with the OGP in 2015 to ensure that the Service's business requirements and priorities are aligned with OGP operational plans and capacities. Progress on this initiative is reported at meetings of the MAC on a monthly basis.

Transfer of general purchasing function to Facilities Management Unit

To streamline and enhance the service provided by the Procurement Unit, non-procurement related functions will transfer to the Facilities Management Unit in 2015. This will allow the Procurement Unit to focus its resources on the provision of timely expert procurement advice and assistance and managing the transition to the centralised procurement function under the OGP.

VALUE FOR MONEY AND POLICY REVIEWS

The Value For Money and Policy Review (VFMPR) initiative is part of a framework introduced by the Government to achieve better value for money from public expenditure and to provide greater accountability. Implemented by the Service on the basis of best practice in public service, Reviews are conducted in accordance with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Public Spending Code.

In 2014, the findings of the Value for Money and Policy Review (VFM&PR) of the Oireachtas Library & Research Service (L&RS) were published to the Oireachtas website.

The review found that the L&RS's objectives are stated clearly, that these objectives are valid and relevant in the context of the Commission's statements of strategy. The Committee concluded that since 2006, the L&RS has achieved its objectives and is efficient and effective in the delivery of its services.

The Committee reported that the Oireachtas Library has been transformed since the Commission's investment in it and the establishment of the L&RS in 2006. It found that the Oireachtas is on par with other Parliaments in the breadth of information and research services that it provides to Members and that it delivers these services with lower staffing levels and resources than most equivalent parliamentary library

and research services.

Efficiency Evaluation Programme for 2015-2016

The Service's approach to its Efficiency Evaluation Programme was reviewed in 2014. Following the review the MAC agreed an Efficiency Evaluation Programme for 2015-2016. The programme will use a four pillar approach – business process improvement, efficiency reviews of discretionary spend, post-project benefits assessments, and performance measurement. The Programme identifies actions for the 2015-2016 period, including key business process improvement projects.

Business Process Improvement (BPI)

Business Process Improvement (BPI) Projects are a key component of the Service's efficiency programme. BPI is aimed at systematically improving the performance of a system of work by streamlining the underlying processes. For the 2015 to 2016 period, the BPI projects will focus on achieving greater interoperability between the procedural processes and systems that support the running of the Houses.

The following processes were examined in 2014:

Parliamentary Questions and Replies Process

Arising from the findings of two BPI reports on the parliamentary questions (PQ) and replies process, and an ICT Unit report on the PQ infrastructure operations between

the Questions Office in the Houses of the Oireachtas and Government Departments, a working group was convened to examine the options for the future development of the Parliamentary Questions and Replies processes and systems. The work of the Group will continue into 2015.

Review of Committees' Administration Report

A review of the Committees' Secretariat systems is planned for 2015 arising from the finding of the Business Process Improvement Review of Committees' Administration.

Pre-paid Envelopes Distribution Process

A draft BPI report on the process for the pre-paid envelopes process was prepared and is under consideration. The report will be finalised in 2015.

Project Management

Project management training to support the implementation of the Service's Project Management Guidelines and Toolkit was provided for nominated staff at the end of 2014 and will continue into 2015.



APPENDIX 1

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

COM Documents - COM documents are working documents of the European Commission. There are three types of COM documents:

- Proposals for legislation
- Communications - these are pre-legislative consultative documents
- Reports on the implementation of policy - these reports analyse and evaluate the implementation of existing EU laws or policies.

COSAC - (Conférence des Organes Spécialisés dans les Affaires Communautaires) is the Conference of the committees of the national parliaments of the European Union Member States dealing with European affairs as well as representatives of the European Parliament. Each year COSAC meets twice in plenary session usually in May and October. Each plenary session is preceded by a meeting of Chairpersons of Committees to prepare the agenda for the plenary session and usually meeting in February and July.

Commission – the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is the governing body which oversees the provision of services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Members by the parliamentary administration, the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

Corporate Governance – the system by which an organisation is directed and controlled. Corporate governance is concerned with the way corporate entities are governed, as distinct from the way businesses within those organisations are managed. Corporate governance addresses the issues facing boards of directors, such as the interaction with top management, and relationships with the owners and others interested in the affairs of the company.

ECPRD – The European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation. The ECPRD acts as a channel for inter-parliamentary cooperation and information exchange for parliamentary staff.

Legislative Drafting Service – Legal drafting expertise available to members of the Houses of the Oireachtas in drafting Private Members' Bills. Legal drafters, who are qualified lawyers, act on the instructions of Members regarding the purpose and objective of a proposed Private Member's Bill.

Library & Research Service (L&RS) – the Library & Research Service delivers information and research services to support the work of the Houses of the Oireachtas and Members of the Houses. The L&RS also has a corporate information management role with responsibility for freedom of information and records management.

The MAC – the Management Advisory Committee. The MAC of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service consists of the Secretary General, the Assistant Secretary, Corporate and Members' Services, the Assistant Secretary, Parliamentary Services, the Clerk of the Seanad, and the chairs of the three sub-Committees of the MAC. The MAC meets to consider and decide on issues of key strategic, operational or financial importance, which may then be referred to the Commission as appropriate.

Procedural Services – procedural services are those concerned with advice to the Chairpersons of the Houses and their Committees (e.g. clerking services concerned with Standing Orders, Rulings of the Chair and parliamentary conventions) as well as services provided by the Committee secretariat and the procedural offices e.g. the General Office (Parliamentary Questions, adjournment matters), the Bills Office (Bills, Amendment Lists) and the Journal Office (Journals of Proceedings, Standing Orders, Rulings of the Chair, Order Papers).

Risk – is defined as “the effect of uncertainty on objectives” (ISO 3000). It implies the likelihood of an event occurring and the impact if it does occur. Risk management involves proactively identifying and mitigating the threats so that potential risk can be minimised or responded to appropriately.

Risk Materialisation Reporting - a system where, if a risk does come about and cause difficulties, the person responsible has to formally report on what happened, why, what the impact was and what new things have been learned in order to prevent a recurrence.

Sectoral Committees – Committees made up of members of one or both Houses which “shadow” Government Departments. The sectoral committees undertake scrutiny of the work of the relevant Government Department and related policy areas e.g. the Joint Committees on Transport, Foreign Affairs, etc.

Statement of Resources – the staffing resource requirements for each business unit to carry out its functions is determined following an annual review process and includes necessary adjustments to ensure that requirements are kept up to date.

The Service – The Houses of the Oireachtas Service (formerly called the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas) is the public service body which provides administrative services to the Houses of the Oireachtas and their Members. It is headed by the Secretary General and Clerk of the Dáil, who has responsibility for managing the Service on a day-to-day basis and for implementing Commission policies.

APPENDIX 2

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

3 Year Budget 2013—2015 fixed by 2012 Act = €324m

Breaks down as follows:	
	€m
2013 Outturn	€101
2014 Provisional Outturn	€102.6
2015 Forecast	€112.3
Current 3 Year Projection	€315.9

Category	2014 Outturn	2014 Budget	Variance	
	€000	€000		
Administration and Services	41,311	43,630	-5%	Underspend
International Parliamentary Activities	338	508	-33%	Underspend
Members' Staff Pay and Pensions	20,736	20,569	1%	Overspend
Members (incl. MEPs) Pay and Pensions	30,534	32,277	-5%	Underspend
Members and Former Members Allowances and Expenses	9,536	11,396	-16%	Underspend
Committee Travel	69	100	-31%	Underspend
Other Committee Expenses	53	167	-68%	Underspend
	102,577	108,642	-6%	Underspend

Statement of Resources (Civil Service staff only) 2014 - 2015 [at 31 December 2014]¹

Grades	Numbers as approved by Commission in 2008	Approved numbers in 2014 including fixed term contracts	Total numbers in place December 2014
Sec Gen	1	1	0
Assistant Secretary	1	2	2
Director (PO (higher))	3	1	1
PO (standard)	17.5	17	16
AP	45.5	46	39
Advisory Counsel Grade III			2
AO	0	4	4
Senior Clerk	40	43	38
Junior Clerk	52	49	46
Staff Officer	-	1	1
Telephonist	-	3	3
CO	84	65	62
Head Usher/Deputy Head Usher	3	3	3
Usher Grade Team Leader	9	8	7
Superintendent's Section	81	71	69
Assistant Editor	7	7	6
Deputy Editor	3	3	2
Translator Grad I	2	2	2
Translator Grad II	4	8	5
Translator Grad III	14	8	10
Outreach Officer	4	0	0
Reporters	39	39	38
Assistant Librarian	5.5	5	5
Senior Researchers	4.5	6	6
Researchers	15	16	16
Records Manager post	0	0	0
Specialist , Temporary and Other	0	2	2
3 ICT ringfenced posts	3	0	0
Total Civil Service Staff in Place (excluding Inquiry staff)	438	410	385²
Oireachtas Banking Inquiry			
Support Staffing (Civil Servants)			16
Investigative Staff			8
Total			24
Cumulative totals			409

1. Figures by grade have been rounded.

2. The figures in the above column do not include the 16 Civil Servants assigned to the Banking Inquiry support team at end-December 2014.

3. These figures are exclusive of State industrial staff (45), Civilian Drivers and Staff of Office Holders (12). Should these staff be included, the cumulative total would read 466 (Full Time Equivalents).

These accounts have been prepared and signed by the Accounting Officer in accordance with the statutory obligations under section 14 (as amended) of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2013 and have been submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for audit. The Report of the C&AG on these accounts was not received within the timeframe of the statutory deadline of the publication of this Annual Report and therefore the accounts may be subject to change. The final version of the accounts will be published to the Oireachtas website when certified.



HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION

ACCOUNTS OF THE
HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION
FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2014

*(kept in accordance with the Houses of the
Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2013)*

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Introduction

As Accounting Officer for the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission ("the Commission"), I am required each year to prepare the Appropriation Account and to submit the account to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.

In accordance with this requirement, I have prepared the attached account of the amount expended in the year ended 31 December 2014 for the salaries and expenses of the Commission, including certain grants-in-aid, and for certain expenses in connection with the European Parliament.

The expenditure outturn is compared with the statement of estimates, prepared and published by the Commission in accordance with the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Acts 2003 to 2013 ("the Acts"), of the amount of moneys required by the Commission in respect of ongoing expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2014.

The Commission is funded on a three year statutory cycle under the Acts. The format of the account is specifically laid out in Schedule 1 of the Acts. In the event that there are differences between the format of the Commission Accounts and the circulars governing the rules and format of the accounts from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, I am legally obliged to adhere to the Commission Acts as this primary legislation takes precedence over administrative Department circulars.

There was a surplus for the year of €6,446,272.

The accounts of grant-in-aid in respect of inter-parliamentary activities and the grant-in-aid to the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly are presented in Note 8.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles and notes 1 to 8 form part of the account.

Statement on Internal Financial Control

Responsibility for system of Internal Financial Control

As Accounting Officer, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Houses of the Oireachtas Service ("the Service"). This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to me. Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

The position in regard to the financial control environment, the framework of administrative procedures, management reporting and internal audit is as follows:

Financial Control Environment

I confirm that a control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability;
- reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned;
- formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action;
- there is an Audit Committee to advise me in discharging my responsibilities for the internal financial control system.

Administrative Controls and Management Reporting

I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that -

- there is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management;
- there are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts;
- a risk management system operates within the Service;
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems;
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines; and
- the Service ensures that there is an appropriate focus on good practice in purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines. The Service is compliant with all relevant guidelines regarding procurement with the exception of nine contracts to the value of €131,132 that did not comply with the relevant procurement guidelines. Included in this figure is an amount of €82,470 relating to ICT supplies details of which have been included on the 40/02 return. The Service is actively managing these contracts and reviewing procurement arrangements.

Internal Audit and Audit Committee

I confirm that the Service has an internal audit function, which operates in accordance with a written charter which the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) have approved. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial and other risks to which the Service is exposed and its annual internal audit plans, approved by me, are based on this analysis. These plans aim to cover the key controls on a rolling basis over a reasonable period. The internal audit function is reviewed periodically by me and the Audit Committee.

The Audit Committee operates in accordance with the terms of reference set out in the Acts. Its work is also governed by the Audit Charter, approved by the MAC and subject to regular review. Its responsibilities include advising on the form of accounts of the Commission as well as on risk management, internal audit and internal controls.

I have put procedures in place to ensure that all internal audit recommendations are followed up and progress on implementation is reported on regularly to both me, the MAC and the Audit Committee.



MICHAEL ERRITY

Accounting Officer

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION

31 March 2015

Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles

Reporting Period

The reporting period is the year ended 31 December 2014.

Basis of Accounts

The accounts of the Commission are prepared in accordance with the Acts and with accounting rules and procedures laid down by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. The Acts require that the Commission keep the accounts in such form as may be approved of by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. The Minister has directed that the accounts be kept in the form of an appropriation account.

The accounts are a cash-based record of the receipts and payments in the year compared with the amount of moneys stated in the statement of estimates that is (a) prepared and published by the Commission (b) presented to Dáil Éireann and (c) furnished to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in accordance with the Acts.

Receipts

Receipts of the Commission specified in Schedule 2 of the Acts shall be used by the Commission for the purposes of the performance of its functions. Receipts other than those specified in Schedule 2 are payable to the Central Fund.

Superannuation

Superannuation payments for former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas, former secretarial assistants employed by members of the Houses and former members of the European Parliament are met on a current basis by the Commission.

Superannuation payments for retired civil servants and catering staff are met on a current basis from Vote 12- Superannuation and Retired Allowances. Provision for superannuation does not appear in the Appropriation Accounts of other Votes.

Payments

Payments consist of those sums which have come in course of payment during the year. Sums are deemed to have come in course of payment where the liability has been incurred, payment is due and the cheque or payable order has been drawn.

Matured Liabilities

Where a liability has been incurred and payment is due (i.e. the liability has matured), payment should be completed before the year end to ensure the integrity of the Account. In cases where payment has not been effected and matured liabilities are outstanding at year end, the amount of such liabilities are reported in a note to the Account (Note 2).

Accruals

The account incorporates information of an accruals nature in the notes to the Account, including:

- an operating cost statement (Note 1), showing the total amount of resources consumed by the Commission in the year.
- a balance sheet showing the Commission's assets and liabilities at year end (Note 2), with further explanatory notes including details regarding capital assets, capital assets under development, the net liability to the Exchequer and commitments.

-

The balance sheet includes the position at year-end in relation to the following:

- **Accrued expenses** — these represent all liabilities at the balance sheet date with the exception of liabilities in regard to remuneration and pensions. In the case of goods and services, an accrued liability is recognised when the payee has met the contractual requirement to provide the goods or services ordered. Amounts due for goods delivered, but not yet paid for, even if un-inspected and not taken to stock, are treated as a liability. In the case of grants, a liability is recognised when the grantee has met all the requirements of the grant scheme but has yet to receive payment. Travel and subsistence liabilities are recognised when travel has been completed.
- **Prepayments** — payments made during the year of account to meet expenses which will arise in whole or in part in a subsequent financial year.
- **Accrued income** — this income due to the Commission at the end of the year of account which has yet to be received.
- **Deferred Income** — this represents income received by the Commission during the year of account for goods/ services which it has yet to provide.

Capital Assets

Leinster House is vested in the Office of Public Works and is therefore not included in these accounts.

The opening and closing values of capital assets on the Commission's register and details of depreciation are shown by way of note to the balance sheet.

The following are not included in the statement of capital assets:

- assets worth less than €318 acquired from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 2003, or assets worth less than €1,000 acquired since 1 January 2004.

Valuation of Assets

Equipment, Furniture and Fittings

Since 1995 equipment, furniture and fittings are valued at cost.

Depreciation

Equipment, furniture and fittings are depreciated on a straight-line basis at the following annual rates over their estimated useful lives:

- furniture and fittings, and telecommunications equipment — 10%.
- IT equipment and software, scientific and laboratory equipment and other office machinery — 20%.
- Major operational software systems — 10%.

Stocks

Consumables are stated at the lower of cost or departmental valuations.

Net Amount due from/to the Exchequer

The net amount due from/to the Exchequer note shows the funding position at the balance sheet date taking into account the issues from the Exchequer on a cumulative/rolling basis. The breakdown of that figure in terms of bank/cash balances, debtors' receipts due and current liabilities are also shown.

Commitments

A commitment is a contractual obligation to pay on delivery for goods or services which have yet to be supplied at year-end.

A note provides figures for commitments likely to materialise in subsequent years under procurement.

Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability arises in any situation where past or current actions or events create a risk of a call on the Exchequer funds in the future. Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the account but are disclosed by way of a note unless the possibility of an outflow of resources is remote.

Foreign Currency Transactions

Transactions arising in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the rates of exchange ruling at the dates of the transactions. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the year-end rates of exchange.

Other Notes to the Accounts

General Principles

In general, the other notes to the Accounts aim to draw the attention of Dáil Éireann and of the Committee of Public Accounts to matters bearing on parliamentary control, or to provide fuller information about material transactions of an unusual nature recorded in the Account e.g. losses, special or *ex gratia* payments, and extra remuneration. Except in the cases outlined below, notes are provided where an individual transaction, or a category of transactions taken together, involves a sum of €50,000 or more.

Where amounts lower than the threshold values are involved, notes are also provided where a serious issue of principle arises or where the Comptroller and Auditor General or the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform considers that a note should be given.

Legal Costs

In cases where cumulative legal costs incurred in the year of account exceed €50,000 a note is provided with a breakdown of the total costs into:

- Legal fees, and
- Compensation paid.

Variations from Grant

In the case of variations from grant (Note 3), a note is provided where the variation:

- is €100,000 or more; and
- represents 5% or more of the subhead (25% in the case of administrative subheads).

Where special circumstances warrant, a lower percentage variation may be explained by way of note.

Notes in relation to variations in the categories of appropriations-in-aid are included on a similar basis.

Extra Remuneration

In the case of extra remuneration, the details given (Note 5) include the total amount paid under each category, the total number of recipients, the number of individuals that received €10,000 or more, and the maximum individual payment, if over €10,000. Severance/redundancy amounts are also disclosed where material.

Late Payments

In the case of interest payments under the Late Payment in Commercial Transactions Regulations, 2012 (as revised in 2013), information is supplied where:

- the total of interest payments due was €10,000 or more; or

- an individual payment was €10,000 or more.

-

Fraud or Suspected Fraud

- In the case of losses due to fraud or suspected fraud, information is supplied where;
- The total losses during the accounting period were €100,000 or more; or
- an individual loss was €10,000 or more; or
- for losses under €10,000, a serious issue of principle arises or where the Comptroller and Auditor General or the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform considers that a disclosure should be made.

Commissions and Inquiries

Where appropriate, Miscellaneous Notes (Note 6) include a statement of expenditure on each Commission or Inquiry financed by the Commission. Where a Commission or Inquiry has been established on a temporary basis, the total expenditure since its establishment is also given.

Petty Cash

Amounts relating to petty cash are included in the PMG balance disclosure.

Grant-in-Aid Fund and Miscellaneous Accounts

Where relevant, accounts of grant-in-aid funds financed from this account and of other miscellaneous accounts are presented in (Note 8).

Houses of the Oireachtas Commission Appropriation Account 2014

	2014 Estimate provision €000	2014 Outturn €000	2013 Outturn €000
1. Administration			
(a) Salaries, wages and allowances in respect of staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service	23,870	23,286	22,776
(b) Travel and subsistence	327	223	279
(c) Training and development and incidental expenses	2,768	1,423	603
(d) Postal and telecommunications services	863	678	801
(e) Office equipment and external IT services	6,269	7,240	5,568
(f) Office premises expenses	2,602	2,039	2,837
(g) Consultancy services and value for money and policy review	560	430	343
(h) Parliamentary printing	1,620	956	1,165
(i) Library and research services	572	435	421
(j) Public relations and communications	57	56	76
2. Other services			
(a) Payment in respect of catering and bar staff	1,713	1,587	1,647
(b) Expenses of delegates to other parliamentary assemblies	141	118	95
(c) Televising of proceedings of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and other services	2,409	2,958	2,899
(d) Grant-in-aid in respect of inter-parliamentary activities	210	116	85
(e) Grant-in-aid to British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly	125	95	110
(f) North/South Inter-Parliamentary Association	32	9	5
(g) Termination allowances in respect of former members of the Houses of the Oireachtas	62	15	11
(h) Grant to Irish Parliamentary (former Members) Society	10	10	10
(i) Grant-in-aid in respect of "Ciste Pinsean Thithe an Oireachtais"	11,604	11,076	11,411
(j) Pension scheme for secretarial assistants	777	973	690
3. Membership of Dáil Éireann			
(a) Salaries of members (including Office Holders and Chairpersons of Committees)	15,760	14,720	15,251
(b) Payments in respect of secretarial assistance for non-office holding members	17,214	17,100	16,601
(c) Travel and Accommodation Allowance	3,328	3,199	3,226
(d) Public Representation Allowance	3,248	2,977	2,954
(e) Other allowances	2,442	1,630	1,415
4. Membership of Seanad Éireann			
(a) Salaries of members (including Office Holders and Chairpersons of Committees)	4,112	3,992	4,034
(b) Payments in respect of secretarial assistance for non-office holding members	2,578	2,663	2,475
(c) Travel and Accommodation Allowance	1,218	1,157	1,191
(d) Public Representation Allowance	734	516	574
(e) Other allowances	416	47	46
5. Membership of Oireachtas Committees			
(a) Travel expenses	100	69	135
(b) Other expenses relating to Committees	167	53	518
6. Membership of European Parliament			
(a) Salaries of members of the European Parliament	93	87	90
(b) Pensions of former members of the European Parliament	646	644	645
Gross Expenditure	108,642	102,577	100,986
DEDUCT			
Receipts of the Commission	_____	(381)	(39)
Net Expenditure	<u>108,642</u>	<u>102,196</u>	<u>100,948</u>
Surplus for the year		<u>€6,446,272</u>	<u>€11,090,788</u>

Notes to the Appropriation Account

1 Operating Cost Statement 2014

	Note	€000	2014 €000	2013 €000
Pay			76,143	75,631
Non-Pay			<u>26,434</u>	<u>25,356</u>
Gross expenditure			102,577	100,987
Deduct				
Receipts			<u>(381)</u>	<u>(39)</u>
Net expenditure			102,196	100,948
Changes in capital assets	2.2			
Purchases Cash		(1,213)		
Depreciation		909		
Loss on disposals		<u>17</u>	(287)	30
Changes in net current assets				
Increase in closing accruals		99		
Increase in stock	2.5	<u>(76)</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>876</u>
Direct expenditure			101,932	101,854
Net allied services expenditure (Cash)	1.1		23,253	20,824
Notional Rents	1.2		<u>4,928</u>	<u>2,936</u>
Net Programme cost			<u>130,113</u>	<u>125,614</u>

1.1 Net Allied Services

The net allied services expenditure amount is made up of the following amounts in relation to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission borne elsewhere

		2014 €000	2013 €000
Vote 9	Revenue Commissioners	90	-
Vote 12	Superannuation and Retired Allowances	3,172	2,076
Vote 13	Office of Public Works	5,178	4,508
	Central Fund:		
	Allowances to Leaders of certain Parties in Dáil Éireann	7,930	8,332
	Re-imbursements of Electoral Expenses	1,091	26
	Pensions in respect of former Cinn Comhairle (No. 38 of 1938, etc.)	336	426
	Payments to qualified parties under the Electoral Acts 1992 to 2014	<u>5,456</u>	<u>5,456</u>
		<u>23,253</u>	<u>20,824</u>

- 1.2** The notional rents figure above relates to the amount of rent estimated by the Office of Public Works that it could earn based on the market rental of a building of similar size to Leinster House in Dublin city centre.

2 Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2014

	Note	2014 €000	2013 €000
Capital Assets	2.2	<u>2,167</u>	<u>1,880</u>
Current Assets			
Bank and cash	2.3	1,514	(858)
Net Exchequer funding due	2.7	1,188	17
Stocks	2.4	200	124
Prepayments		2,105	1,693
Accrued income		586	971
Other debit balances	2.5	<u>224</u>	<u>876</u>
Total Current Assets		<u>5,817</u>	<u>2,823</u>
Less Current Liabilities			
Accrued expenses		893	768
Other credit balances	2.6	<u>2,926</u>	<u>34</u>
Total Current Liabilities		<u>3,819</u>	<u>802</u>
Net Current Assets		<u>1,998</u>	<u>2,021</u>
Net Assets		<u>4,165</u>	<u>3,901</u>
Represented By:			
State Funding Account		<u>4,165</u>	<u>3,901</u>

2.1 State Funding Account

		2014 €000	2013 €000
Balance at 1 January		3,901	4,807
Disbursements by the Commission			
Estimate provision	Account*	108,642	
Surplus	Account*	<u>(6,446)</u>	100,948
Expenditure (cash) borne elsewhere	Note 1	23,253	20,824
Non cash expenditure - notional rent	Note 1	4,928	2,936
Net programme cost	Note 1	<u>(130,113)</u>	<u>(125,614)</u>
Balance at 31 December		<u>4,165</u>	<u>3,901</u>

*Note: "Account" refers to the face of the Appropriation Account

2.2 Capital Assets

	IT Equipment €000	Furniture and Fittings €000	Office Equipment €000	Total €000
Gross Assets				
Cost or valuation at 1 January 2014	7,565	2,392	15,259	25,217
Additions	397	19	796	1,213
Disposals	(176)	(71)	(37)	(284)
Gross assets at 31 December 2014	<u>7,787</u>	<u>2,340</u>	<u>16,019</u>	<u>26,145</u>
Accumulated Depreciation:				
Opening balance at 1 January 2014	6,785	2,023	14,529	23,337
Depreciation for the year	389	178	342	909
Depreciation on disposals	(161)	(71)	(35)	(268)
Cumulative depreciation at 31 December 2014	<u>7,013</u>	<u>2,129</u>	<u>14,836</u>	<u>23,978</u>
Net Assets at 31 December 2014	<u>773</u>	<u>211</u>	<u>1,183</u>	<u>2,167</u>
Net Assets at 31 December 2013	<u>780</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>730</u>	<u>1,880</u>

2.3 Bank and Cash

	2014 €000	2013 €000
at 31 December		
PMG balances	1,514	(859)
Commercial Bank Account	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	<u>1,514</u>	<u>(858)</u>

2.4 Stocks

	2014 €000	2013 €000
at 31 December		
Stationery	69	34
IT consumables	85	54
Other	<u>46</u>	<u>36</u>
	<u>200</u>	<u>124</u>
Catering Stock *	<u>37</u>	<u>-</u>

* Stock total in the balance sheet does not include Catering Stock

2.5 Other Debit Balances

	2014 €000	2013 €000
at 31 December		
Recoupable salaries	13	13
Recoupment of travel schemes	204	184
Other debit items	<u>7</u>	<u>679</u>
	<u><u>224</u></u>	<u><u>876</u></u>

2.6 Other Credit Balances

	2014 €000	2013 €000
at 31 December		
Amounts due to the State		
Income tax	1,099	-
Pay Related Social Insurance	574	-
Professional Services Withholding Tax	141	9
Value Added Tax	31	5
Pension Contributions	169	0
Income to be surrendered	-	20
Pension levy	282	-
Universal Social Charge	<u>335</u>	<u>-</u>
	2,631	34
Payroll deductions held in suspense	295	-
Other credit suspense items	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u><u>2,926</u></u>	<u><u>34</u></u>

2.7 Net amount due from the Exchequer

	2014 €000	2013 €000
at 31 December		
Surplus	6,446	11,091
Exchequer grant undrawn	<u>(7,617)</u>	<u>(10,860)</u>
Net Exchequer Funding Due	(1,171)	231
Balance brought forward at 1 January	<u>(17)</u>	<u>(248)</u>
	<u>(1,188)</u>	<u>(17)</u>

Represented by:

Debtors

Bank	2.3	1,514	(858)
Debit balances: suspense	2.5	<u>224</u>	<u>876</u>
		1,738	17

Creditors

Due to State	2.6	(2,631)	(34)
Credit balances: suspense	2.6	<u>(295)</u>	<u>-</u>
		(2,926)	(34)
		<u>(1,188)</u>	<u>(17)</u>

2.8 Commitments

	2014 €000	2013 €000
at 31 December		
Global commitments		
Procurement subheads	708	361

2.9 Matured Liabilities

	2014 €000	2013 €000
at 31 December		
Estimate of matured liabilities not discharged at year end	-	194

3 Variations in Expenditure

An explanation is provided below in the case of each expenditure subhead where the outturn varied from the amount provided by more than €100,000 and by more than 5% (25% in the case of administrative subheads).

Under section 13(3)(b) of the Acts, the Statement of Estimates of the Commission, following its noting by Dáil Éireann, must be furnished by the Secretary General to the Minister not later than thirty days before the presentation by the Minister to Dáil Éireann of the Estimates of Receipts and Expenditure in that year. Therefore, as the Budget has now been brought forward from December to October, the practical issue here is that the Estimate for the Commission for any year must be completed as early as mid-July of the preceding year. It is intended to remedy this issue in up-coming legislation.

Description	Sub-Head	Less/(more) than provided €000	Explanation
Administration Non-Pay			
Travel and subsistence	1(b)	104	The saving arose due to (i) less than anticipated expenditure on domestic travel and (ii) meal allowances due in 2014 were not paid until 2015.
Training and development and incidental expenses	1(c)	1,345	The saving arose because the Banking Inquiry commenced later in the year than anticipated.
Parliamentary printing	1(h)	664	The saving arose due to reduced demand and costs savings as a result of work undertaken in-house therefore reducing the level of work required by the contracted printer.
Other Services			
Payment in Respect of Catering and Bar Staff	2(a)	126	The saving arose due to an underspend in overtime due to decreased sitting hours.
Televising of proceedings of Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann and other services	2(c)	(549)	The excess arose due to higher than anticipated costs associated with the establishment of the Parliamentary Channel. It was difficult to estimate the start-up costs of the Channel at the time of preparing the estimate until the tender process was completed in 2014.
Grant-in-aid in respect of "Ciste Pinsean Thithe an Oireachtais"	2(i)	528	The saving arose as provision was made for one resignation and for a number of former members drawing down their actuarially reduced pension at 45. Whilst there was a resignation the former member is not yet at pensionable age and the pension is preserved and only 1 of the former members who could draw down an actuarially reduced pension chose to do so. This, in addition to deaths of pensioners during the year contributed to the saving.
Pension Scheme for Secretarial Assistants	2(i)	(196)	The overspend arose as a higher number of former employees claimed a pension than that anticipated. In addition pensioners were notified of their entitlement to claim supplementary pension if they were not in employment or in receipt of a social welfare payment. This resulted in arrears of approx. €50k paid out to 7 current pensioners.

Description	Sub-Head	Less/(more) than provided €000	Explanation
Membership of Dáil Éireann			
Salaries of Members (including Office Holders and Chairpersons of Committees)	3(a)	1,040	The saving arose due to lower rates of pay as a result of the Haddington Road Agreement. The lower rates of pay were not taken into account at the estimate stage in early 2013.
Public Representation Allowance	3(d)	271	The saving arose due to a requirement to make a provision for full drawdown.
Other allowances	3(e)	812	The saving arose due to a requirement to make a provision for full drawdown.
Membership of Seanad Éireann			
Public Representation Allowance	4(d)	218	The saving arose due to a requirement to make a provision for full drawdown.
Other allowances	4(e)	369	The saving arose due to a requirement to make a provision for full drawdown.
Membership of Oireachtas Committees			
Expenses relating to Committees	5(b)	114	The saving arose due to underspends on consultancy and legal advice. These amounts are provided as a contingency in the event outside advice is required. Legal advice is procured by the PLA on behalf of Committees where it cannot be provided, in-house, in the first instance. The Library and Research Service provided the necessary expertise and only three consultancies were outsourced in 2014.

4 Receipts

4.1 Receipts of the Commission

In accordance with the provisions of the Acts receipts of the Commission specified in Schedule 2 to the Act shall be used by it for the purposes of the performance of its functions.

The 2014 financial statements record total receipts of €479,259.00. Receipts of €93,888.00 (mainly relating to costs associated with seconded staff which had been reimbursed to the Commission) were remitted to the Central Fund and receipts of €3,926.61 also recouped in respect of an MEP pension deduction was off-set against Pensions of former members of the European Parliament. The remaining €381,444 received in 2014 was retained by the Commission and offset against its gross expenditure.

	2014 Estimated €000	2014 Realised €000	2013 Realised €000
1 Sales of services of Broadcasting Unit	-	30	28
2 Net income of catering and bar services	-	332	-
3 Members' contributions under the European Parliament (Irish Representatives) Pension Scheme, 1979	-	7	5
4 Any other receipts obtained by the Commission in the performance of its functions except where they consist of expenses paid by the Commission on behalf of its members and staff which have been recouped by it from them	-	111	57
	<u>300</u>	<u>480</u>	<u>90</u>

Explanation of significant variations

An explanation is provided below in the case of each heading where the outturn varied from the amount estimated by more than €100,000, and by more than 5%.

Heading	Less/(more) than estimated €000	Explanation
Income from catering and bar services	(200)	Income from the catering and bar services amounting to €200,000 due in 2013 was paid over in 2014.

4.2 Extra Receipts payable to the Exchequer

Balance at 1 January

	2014	2013
4 Receipt in respect of superannuation costs associated with seconded staff	68	-
Transferred to Exchequer	(56)	-
Balance at 31 December	12	-

5 Employee Numbers and Pay

Houses of the Oireachtas Service*

	2014	2013
Number of staff at year end (full time equivalents)		
Departments	466	426
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>466</u>	<u>426</u>
	€000	€000
Pay	21,683	20,974
Redundancy payments	-	34
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	249	211
Other allowances	200	165
Overtime	1,053	1,254
Shift and roster allowances	392	390
Employer's PRSI	<u>1,675</u>	<u>1,589</u>
Total pay	<u>25,252</u>	<u>24,617</u>

Scheme of Secretarial Assistance for Non-Office Holding Members/Parties*

	2014	2013
Number of staff at year end (full time equivalents)		
	<u>381</u>	<u>400</u>
	€000	€000
Pay	16,470	15,815
Redundancy payments	96	-
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	-	1
Overtime and extra attendance	2,082	2,045
Employer's PRSI	<u>1,925</u>	<u>1,811</u>
Total pay	<u>20,573</u>	<u>19,672</u>

*On the payroll of the Houses of the Oireachtas Service

5.1 Allowances and Overtime Payments

	Number of recipients	Recipients of €10,000 or more	Maximum individual payment 2014 €	Maximum individual payment 2013 €
Houses of the Oireachtas Service				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	67	6	20,111	19,585
Other allowances	137	1	34,345	35,137
Overtime	199	45	20,301	28,009
Shift and roster allowances	69	-	7,724	7,578
Scheme of Secretarial Assistance for Non-Office Holding Members/Parties				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	-	-	-	901
Overtime and extra attendance	479	2	19,119	11,125

5.2 Other Remuneration Arrangements

Payments totalling €107,467 were paid to retired civil servants whose services were employed on various interview boards, specialist parliamentary and governance tasks. Pension abatement rules were applied in full compliance with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circulars.

Voluntary Early Retirement payments of €95,938.67 were paid to six secretarial assistants and statutory redundancy payments of €36,592.12 were paid to eight secretarial assistants.

Under the terms of the AHCPS/IMPACT 1% PCW restructuring agreement, in 39 instances a total of €62,522.48 was paid in respect of Seniority Allowances and Special Service Payments.

5.3 Salary overpayments

There were 35 instances of overpayments totalling €91,541. In relation to 31 of these instances the overpayments were either recovered in full or are being recouped on an on-going basis through payback arrangements. The Service is in correspondence in the remaining 4 instances with regard to putting repayment arrangements in place.

6 Miscellaneous Items

6.1 Contingent Liabilities

The Commission is involved in a number of legal proceedings which may generate liabilities depending on the outcome but due to this uncertainty no estimate of the amount involved can be determined at this point.

6.2 Write-offs	2014 €000	2013 €000
The following sum was written off in the year:		
Suspense account balance	-	91
	<u>-</u>	<u>91</u>

6.3 Late Payment Interest	2014 €	2013 €
Total of interest due	1,553	1,072

6.4 Commissions and Special Inquiries	2014 €000	2013 €000
Banking Inquiry Costs	907	-

7 Accrued Pay and Pension Liabilities

The provision for Prepayments at the end of December 2014 includes an amount of €235,886 for Exchequer pay and Employer's PRSI prepaid in respect of the 1 day (fortnightly) and 2 days (weekly) payrolls that fell due on 1st and 2nd January 2015 respectively and were paid on the 31st December 2014. This is net of the associated pension related deductions on these payrolls, which amounts to €6,640.

The corresponding figure for 31 December 2013, and 31 December 2015, together with the net annual impact on 2014 and 2015 on an accruals basis, are shown in the below table.

	31-Dec-13 Exchequer Pay Bill		31-Dec-14 Exchequer Pay Bill		31-Dec-15 Exchequer Pay Bill	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000
End Year Accruals	668	632	1,215	1,162	243	236
Net Impact on an Accruals Basis				530		(926)

8 Grant in Aid and Miscellaneous Accounts

8.1 CUMANN PARLAIMINTEACH NA hÉIREANN

ACCOUNT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

	2014 €	2013 €
Receipts		
Grant-in-Aid	116,473	85,400
Members Subscriptions	2,165	2,222
Reimbursements	917	71
Miscellaneous	19	-
Total Receipts	119,574	87,693
Payments		
Expenses of Irish delegations on foreign visits	19,601	1,725
Expenses of foreign delegations visiting Ireland	9,626	4,941
Inter Parliamentary Union Conference Expenses	19,886	25,933
Other Expenses	57,870	75,807
Total Payments	106,983	108,406
Surplus / (Deficit) for year	12,591	(20,713)
Opening Balance	20,041	40,754
Balance as at 31 December	32,632	20,041

8.2 BRITISH-IRISH PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

ACCOUNT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014

	2014 €	2013 €
Balance at 1 January	11,214	21,617
Receipts		
Grant-in-Aid [subhead 2(e)]	95,000	110,000
Miscellaneous receipts	80	539
Total Receipts	95,080	110,539
Payments		
Plenary sessions	67,215	84,527
Committees	21,004	30,777
Miscellaneous	4,615	5,638
Total Payments	92,834	120,942
Balance as at 31 December	<u>13,460</u>	<u>11,214</u>

8.3 CISTE PINSEAN THITHE AN OIREACHTAIS (COMHALTAÍ)

Grant-in-Aid funding of €11.076m in respect of Ciste Pinsean Thithe an Oireachtais is charged to subhead 2(i). The pension fund is governed by three trustees who are responsible for preparing an account and for ensuring the regularity of the transactions. The account is separately audited by the Comptroller & Auditor General.

INTRODUCTION

The Statement sets out the key objectives and associated actions contained in the Strategic Plan. Output targets for each key objective for 2015 are listed alongside comparative information for 2014. The numbers of staff assigned to each business function in 2014 are also stated.

In recommending an annual statement that links outputs, resources and strategic objectives, the intention of the Department of Finance was that the statements would be available to Dáil Éireann and its committees when considering the revised estimates of expenditure for Government departments and offices. As the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is independent of this process and as its estimates procedures are set out separately in legislation, the Commission's statement is published in its annual report.

The Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is committed to good governance, use of resources and modernisation and aims to meet best public service practice in this regard. The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will continue to monitor developments in relation to systems for the alignment of strategic and financial information and will implement change in a manner that advances the achievement of its key objectives.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF THE HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION'S KEY OBJECTIVES

The mission of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission is to enable the Houses of the Oireachtas, their Committees and members to do their work, to deliver services to members that respond to their needs and to promote public understanding of the work of our parliament.

Summary of key objectives	Combined performance indicators
<i>Improving Services to Parliament</i> - The Chairpersons and Members of the Houses and their Committees can be assured of continuous, high quality parliamentary support services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys of officeholders and members on core procedural services • Compliance self-audit of key support services for House and Committee sittings
<i>Improving Services to Members</i> - Members will receive the services they need to fulfil their roles as public representatives through their parliamentary work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys of members on administrative support services
<i>Enhancing Service Capability</i> - The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will achieve the highest standards in public service and parliamentary administration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of initiatives under Towards 2016 and Transforming Public Services • International benchmarking against other parliaments and their administrations • Surveys of staff and Members on facilities and services provided

IMPROVING SERVICES TO PARLIAMENT

Objectives:

House and Committee Business

Strengthen our ability to provide advice and other services to chairpersons and members in the core business area of parliamentary procedure.

Public Engagement

Promote greater knowledge and perception of parliament through our public information, media relations, education and visitor programmes, and our official publications.

Parliamentary Library

Promote the parliamentary library as a research hub to support the legislative and scrutiny work of parliament.

Inter-Parliamentary Relations

Foster international and EU relations and North-South co-operation through participation in inter-parliamentary activities.

Records of Proceedings

Provide enhanced public access to the work and records of parliament through our reporting, broadcasting and Irish language translation services.

Parliament Buildings

Develop and improve the physical environment of parliament as an institution of State, a workplace and a place for visitors.

Key Operational Outputs Achieved:

- 118 Bills published and 3884 amendments tabled to Bills
- 54,691 Parliamentary Questions processed
- 16,019 takes completed of Dáil, Seanad and Committee proceedings
- 3,945 pages of text translated into the Irish language
- 8,522 financial transactions processed by the Finance Unit
- 1,381 requests for information related to the Houses were responded to by the Communications Unit including 413 requests received from members of the public
- overall number of visitors to the Houses exceeded 100,000 with 50,357 visitors taking guided tours of Leinster House to learn about the building and to view the proceedings of the Houses on sitting days
- 384 students visited as part of the Educational Outreach Programme
- Oireachtas TV Channel dedicated solely to providing live broadcast of the proceedings of the Houses
- 52 committee reports, presenting recommendations and conclusions on the development of public policy

IMPROVING SERVICES TO MEMBERS

Objectives:**Human Resources**

Support Members as employers by providing best-practice employer advice and personnel administration and training supports under the Scheme for Secretarial Assistance.

Financial Resources

Provide expert advice services and financial systems to ensure that Members receive their pay, allowances, pensions, entitlements, information and other financial supports for their work.

Technology and Office Support

Provide ICT systems, office equipment, supplies and other office services that Members need to conduct their parliamentary business.

Research and Information

Deliver expert research and information services to Members that meet their needs as parliamentarians and public representatives.

Accommodation and Facilities

Provide office accommodation, refreshment and other workplace facilities that enable Members and their staff to work effectively and in comfort.

Key Operational Outputs Achieved:

- ICT Unit – 18,405 helpdesk calls from members, members' staff and staff of the Service
- 7 official visits hosted and 8 foreign visits supported by Travel and Inter-parliamentary Section
- 2,911 members' allowances payments to support members in carrying out their parliamentary functions
- 3,476 members' pension payments
- 463 legal advices provided to Oireachtas Committees
- 2,300 research requests from members and members' staff responded to by Library & Research Services
- 236 members and members' staff attended training programmes provided in 2014

STAFF NUMBERS BY DIRECTORATE

Function	Full time Equivalent	% of staff by Directorate
OCSG and Office of the Clerk of the Dáil	11.5	2.81%
Clerk of the Seanad	5	1.22%
Corporate and Members' Services	169.32	41.41%
Parliamentary Services	223.03	54.56%
Total	408.85	100%

ENHANCING SERVICE CAPABILITY

Objectives

Managing and Developing People

Make best use of our people through strategic recruitment and effective resource planning, by implementing our policies on performance management, career planning and training and by fostering our values of professional excellence.

Provide financial management systems to ensure that best economic use is made of the financial resources of the Commission.

Customer Focus

Renew our commitment to quality service by engaging with Members and other key customers and building on our existing service improvement and feedback initiatives.

Transforming the Way We Work

Increase our service agility by continuously reviewing our structures, systems and policies in keeping with best practise in public service management.

Foster collaborative approaches to working through team-building and cross-functional initiatives. Support effective working through our policies on knowledge and records management, better internal communications and sustainable working.

Governance and Future Planning

Modernise our legislative framework to enhance our systems of governance and optimise our senior management structures under the Commission.

Strengthen our future planning and critical review capabilities by improving our systems of risk management, business continuity planning and audit.

Redefine our approaches to the provision of legal advisory services and the discharge of our electoral and other statutory functions.

Managing and Measuring Performance

Implement these strategies through our local business plans, measure our performance and review our efficiency and effectiveness to ensure our services deliver value for money.

Key Operational Outputs Achieved

- Web now primary means of publishing the Official Report
- Electronic submission of documents to the Oireachtas Library from departments and agencies implemented on a phased basis, including the delivery of briefing and training sessions as required
- eDocs now primary mechanism for laying documents
- Publicised availability of walk-up guided tours of the Houses on non-sitting days and customer-friendly ways of joining these tours introduced
- Records Management Policy and Information Strategy implemented
- Use of resources in Rannóg an Aistriúcháin optimised by taking on new work related to the provision of an SI translation service
- 131 training interventions facilitated by Training Unit in 2014 including 780 persons attending language courses and 1,560 attending in-house training

APPENDIX 5

ANNUAL OUTPUT STATEMENT 2014

- 48 temporary posts allocated to support the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Banking Crisis. Twenty four of these posts were filled by the end of the year by civil servants and specialist staff
- The People and Organisational Development Programme continued to support and enhance organisational capacity to meet key objectives and strategies
- The Business Continuity Plan for the Houses was updated, tested and validated to ensure continuity of critical services to support the business of the Houses
- The Legislative Drafting Service re-tendered and a new framework agreement was put in place to ensure the availability of legal expertise to members of the Houses in drafting Private Members' Bills
- A new Parliamentary Printing and Publishing contract awarded following a public procurement process
- A Managed Print Service on course to be introduced across the Service which will realise financial savings and efficiencies

FINANCIAL INFORMATION				
	Actual 2014	Actual 2013	Variance	
	€000	€000	€000	%
Dáil Éireann				
Pay	31,857	31,852	5	0
Non-pay	7,806	7,954	212	3
	39,663	39,446	217	1
Seanad Éireann				
Pay	6,670	6,510	161	2
Non-pay	1,720	1,811	-91	-5
	8,391	8,321	70	11
Oireachtas Committees	122	652	-531	-435
MEPs	733	735	-2	0
Administration and Other Services				
Pay	24,871	24,424	447	2
Non-pay	16,786	15,297	1,489	9
Pensions and Redundancy	12,012	12,112	-100	-1
	53,669	51,833	1,836	3
Gross Expenditure	102,577	100,986	1,591	2
Appropriations in Aid	(382)	(21)		
Net Expenditure	102,195	100,965	1,229	1

STAFF NUMBERS BY BUSINESS FUNCTION		
Function	Full time Equivalent	% of staff by business function
Front Line Services	112.33	27%
Professional Services	116.70	29%
Support Services	96.72	23%
Security ServicesFunction	85.10	21%
Total	408.85	100%



APPENDIX 6

ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

1. ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Audit Committee was placed on a statutory footing in 2010. The relevant provisions were made under the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission (Amendment) Act 2009 which was enacted on 21 December 2009 and came into effect on 1 January 2010.

The Committee is composed of between five and eight members appointed by the Commission as follows:

1. one member of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission;
2. at least one but not more than 3 other members of either House of the Oireachtas who are not members of the Commission;
3. at least 2 but not more than 3 external persons nominated by the Secretary General, one of whom is designated by the Commission as Chairperson of the Committee; and
4. one member of the staff of the Service nominated by the Secretary General.

2. CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

- Mr. Eddie Sullivan (Chairperson)
- Deputy John Browne (Commission member)
- Deputy Joe Costello*
- Deputy Seán Fleming
- Deputy Peter Mathews
- Mr. Cyril Maybury (External member)
- Mr. Bryan O'Sullivan (External member)
- Mr. Charles Hearne, Principal Officer**

* Deputy Joe Costello was

appointed by the Commission on 21 October 2014 in place of Deputy Kevin Humphreys following his appointment as Minister of State.

** Mr. Charles Hearne, Principal Officer, was appointed as the staff representative on the Committee by the Commission on 21 October 2014, following the retirement of Mr. Padraic Donlon.

3. ROLE OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The role of the Committee is:

1. to advise the Secretary General on financial matters relating to his or her functions,
2. to advise the Commission on matters of corporate governance relating to its functions, and
3. to meet at least 4 times annually and report in writing at least once a year to the Commission on its activities in the previous year.

The Committee's duties include advising the Secretary General on financial matters relating to his or her functions including the following:

1. the proper implementation of public service guidelines on financial matters,
2. compliance with section 22 of the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1866, section 19 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 and any other obligations imposed by law relating to financial matters,
3. the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission's procedures relating

to public procurement, seeking sanction for expenditure and complying with that sanction, acquiring, keeping custody of and disposing of assets, risk management, financial reporting, internal audit, internal controls, and

4. the form of accounts of the Commission for approval by the Minister for Finance.

The Head of Internal Audit and the Internal Auditor attend meetings of the Committee, save where the Committee otherwise decides. The Committee may also invite the person who has responsibility for financial matters in the Service (or any other person it considers appropriate) to attend specific meetings.

4. REPORTING PERIOD

The reporting period for this report is on a calendar year basis to align with the reporting period of the Commission's Annual Report with which it is published.

5. COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES DURING 2014

The Audit Committee met four times during 2014.

The Committee considered the following Internal Audit Reports in 2014:

(i) Internal Audit on One-Stop-Shop

This audit was undertaken to provide assurance that risks are being managed and that the Service is operating in compliance with relevant policies, regulations and guidelines.

(ii) Internal Audit of Training and PMDS

This audit was conducted to provide

assurance that risks relating to the operation of PMDS and Training and Development by the Service have been adequately considered and recorded and that both are operating in compliance with relevant circulars, regulations and guidelines.

(iii) Internal Audit on Electronic Access

This audit was carried out to determine the ICT and other policies in place governing access to electronic information by staff who either transfer internally; move to a new post within the same section; are promoted or leave the Service.

(iv) Internal Audit on Management of Administrative Changes to payee details

The audit ascertained the systems which are in place to manage requested changes to payee and address details of both organisations or individuals with whom the Service has a commercial relationship, as well as individuals in receipt of salary or pension from the Service.

(v) Internal Audit on the Fitness Room

This Audit assessed the systems which are in place to operate the Fitness Room and examined internal controls and determined whether it is operating in accordance with procurement and health and safety guidelines. The audit also determined whether the facility has delivered in its establishment purpose of offering a healthy recreational outlet to counterbalance some of the negative lifestyle aspects of working long irregular hours in Parliament.

Other reports considered by the

Committee:

(vi) Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) Audit Reports

The Audit Committee considered the 2012 and 2013 C&AG Reports on the accounts of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.

(vii) External Auditor's Report of the Public Representation Allowance (PRA) 2013

The Committee considered the fourth external audit of the Public Representation Allowance since the allowance was introduced by Regulations in March 2010.

The audit established whether members had valid evidence of vouchers, receipts and bills in respect of the amounts paid to them for expenses which come within the allowable categories under the Regulations. All members in receipt of this allowance are now eligible to be selected for audit for the allowance they receive.

(viii) Implementation of Internal Audit recommendations

The Internal Audit Unit presented reports in March and November regarding the implementation of internal audit recommendations arising from previous Internal Audit reports.

(ix) Risk Management

The Committee considered four risk materialisation reports. The risk management process in the Service is monitored and controlled by the Risk Management Committee which ensures that risk management activities are carried out effectively and in a timely manner. The Committee also received a comprehensive briefing on the Service's Risk Framework approach.

(x) VFM & Policy Review Report on the Library and Research Service (L&RS)

The Committee considered the Value for Money & Policy Review Report on the L&RS.

The purpose of the VFM & Policy Review was to evaluate the degree to which the objectives of the L&RS have been achieved; to determine what has been achieved by the investment made in the L&RS and to evaluate to what degree the delivery of L&RS services are still valid and compatible with overall Commission's strategy and warrants the allocation of public funding on an on-going basis.

The Steering Committee found the Library & Research Service's objectives are stated clearly, that these objectives are valid and relevant in the context of the Oireachtas Commission's Statements of Strategy, and that the L&RS has achieved its objectives and is efficient and effective in the delivery of its services since its establishment in 2006.

(xi) Governance Structures in the Houses of the Oireachtas Service

The Committee were briefed on the Corporate Governance structures in the Houses of the Oireachtas Service.

6. REPRESENTATION ON INTERNAL AUDIT NETWORKS

The Committee noted that the Internal Audit Unit participates in the Heads of Internal Audit Forum (a public service Internal Audit network) and in a group of Heads of Internal Audit of Parliaments and Assemblies in Ireland and the UK.

APPENDIX 7

BILLS 2014

No.	Bill Title	Date Initiated
1	Roads Bill 2014	08/01/2014
2	Finance (Local Property Tax) (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	16/01/2014
3	Charities (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	16/01/2014
4	Water Services (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	22/01/2014
5	Companies (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	30/01/2014
6	Seanad Reform Bill 2014 [PMB]	04/02/2014
7	Freedom of Information (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	05/02/2014
8	Valuation Bill 2014 [PMB]	11/02/2014
9	Judicial Appointments Bill 2014 [PMB]	12/02/2014
10	Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas) Bill 2014 [PMB]	18/02/2014
11	Protection of Residential Mortgage Account Holders Bill 2014 [PMB]	19/02/2014
12	Garda Síochána (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	19/02/2014
13	Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	27/02/2014
14	Equality (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	05/03/2014
15	Broadcasting (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	05/03/2014
16	Finance (Local Property Tax) (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2014 [PMB]	06/03/2014
17	Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Presidential Voting) Bill 2014 [PMB]	11/03/2014
18	Open Adoption Bill 2014 [PMB]	11/03/2014
19	Wind Turbine Regulation Bill 2014 [PMB]	13/03/2014
20	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Bill 2014	19/03/2014
21	Competition and Consumer Protection Bill 2014	27/03/2014
22	Higher Education and Research (Consolidation and Improvement) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	01/04/2014

No.	Bill Title	Date Initiated
23	Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Voting Rights in Referenda) Bill 2014 [PMB]	01/04/2014
24	Electoral (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	01/04/2014
25	Employment Equality (Abolition of Mandatory Retirement Age) Bill 2014 [PMB]	01/04/2014
26	Building Control (Carbon Monoxide Detection) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	03/04/2014
27	Central Bank Bill 2014	03/04/2014
28	Electoral (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2014	07/04/2014
29	Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	08/04/2014
30	Children First Bill 2014	10/04/2014
31	Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	15/04/2014
32	Ombudsman (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	16/04/2014
33	Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Inclusive Budget Reform) Bill 2014 [PMB]	16/04/2014
34	Health (General Practitioner Service) Bill 2014	17/04/2014
35	State Airports (Shannon Group) Bill 2014 [Seanad]	17/04/2014
36	Employment Permits (Amendment) Bill 2014	17/04/2014
37	High Pay and Wealth Commission Bill 2014 [PMB]	06/05/2014
38	Electoral (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill 2014 [PMB]	07/05/2014
39	Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014	07/05/2014
40	Ombudsman for Children (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	08/05/2014
41	Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	09/05/2014
42	Seanad Electoral (Panel Members) (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	13/05/2014
43	Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	14/05/2014
44	National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Bill 2014	14/05/2014

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BILLS 2014

No.	Bill Title	Date Initiated
45	Garda Síochána (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2014 [PMB]	15/05/2014
46	Johnstown Castle Agricultural College (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad]	15/05/2014
47	Social Welfare and Pensions Bill 2014	28/05/2014
48	Public Service Management (Transparency of Boards) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	29/05/2014
49	Parliamentary Scrutiny of Appointments (European Commission) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	05/06/2014
50	Freedom of Movement (Common Travel Area) (Travel Documentation) Bill 2014 [PMB]	05/06/2014
51	Vehicle Clamping Bill 2014 [Seanad]	05/06/2014
52	Radiological Protection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014	05/06/2014
53	Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	12/06/2014
54	Public Health (Standardised Packaging of Tobacco) Bill 2014 [Seanad]	11/06/2014
55	Public Sector Management (Appointment of Senior Members of the Garda Síochána) Bill 2014 [PMB]	12/06/2014
56	Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Fund Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	18/06/2014
57	Nursing Home Support Scheme (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	18/06/2014
58	Local Government (Rates and Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014 [PMB]	18/06/2014
59	Regulation of Lobbying Bill 2014 changed from Registration of Lobbying Bill 2014	18/06/2014
60	Health Insurance (Reform) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	19/06/2014
61	Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014 [Seanad]	24/06/2014
62	Intoxicating Liquor (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	01/07/2014
63	Defamation (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	03/07/2014
64	Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	03/07/2014
65	Parliamentary Scrutiny of Appointments (European Commission) (No. 2) Bill 2014 [PMB]	03/07/2014

No.	Bill Title	Date Initiated
67	Electoral (Amendment) (No. 4) Bill 2014	02/07/2014
68	Court of Appeal Bill 2014	02/07/2014
69	Water Services (Exempt Charges) Bill 2014 [PMB]	08/07/2014
70	Water Services (Taking in Charge of Estates by Local Authorities) (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	08/07/2014
71	Civil Registration (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad]	08/07/2014
72	Committee of Public Accounts of Dáil Éireann (Compellability of Witnesses) Bill 2014 [PMB]	10/07/2014
73	Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	10/07/2014
74	Criminal Law (Protection of Older People) (Sentencing) (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	15/07/2014
75	Houses of the Oireachtas (Appointments to Certain Offices) Bill 2014	15/07/2014
76	Planning and Development (Temporary Moratorium) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	15/07/2014
77	Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014	18/07/2014
78	Irish Collective Asset-management Vehicles Bill 2014	25/07/2014
79	Workplace Relations Bill 2014	28/07/2014
80	Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad]	30/07/2014
81	Intellectual Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014	31/07/2014
82	Criminal Justice (Terrorist Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad]	15/08/2014
83	Garda Síochána (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill 2014	18/08/2014
84	Criminal Justice (Mutual Assistance) (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad]	18/08/2014
85	Sport Ireland Bill 2014	26/08/2014
86	Environment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2014	02/09/2014
87	European Stability Mechanism (Amendment) Bill 2014	24/09/2014

APPENDIX 7

BILLS 2014

No.	Bill Title	Date Initiated
89	Criminal Law (Child Grooming) Bill 2014 [PMB]	25/09/2014
90	Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution Bill 2014 [PMB]	25/09/2014
91	Electoral (Amendment) (No. 5) Bill 2014 [PMB]	30/09/2014
92	Customs Bill 2014	01/10/2014
93	Immigration Reform for U.S. Citizens Living in Ireland Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	08/10/2014
94	Immigration (Reform) (Regularisation of Residency Status) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	16/10/2014
95	Finance Bill 2014	21/10/2014
96	Personal Insolvency (Amendment) Bill 2014	21/10/2014
97	Social Welfare and Pensions (No. 2) Bill 2014 changed from Social Welfare Bill 2014	21/10/2014
98	Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (No. 2) Bill 2014 [PMB]	23/10/2014
99	Social Welfare and Pensions (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	04/11/2014
100	Housing (Homeless Prevention) Bill 2014 [PMB]	04/11/2014
101	Health Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2014	04/11/2014
102	Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (No. 3) Bill 2014 [PMB]	04/11/2014
103	Adoption (Identity and Information) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	11/11/2014
104	State Boards (Appointments) Bill 2014 [PMB]	26/11/2014
105	Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Right to Personal Autonomy and Bodily Integrity) Bill 2014 [PMB]	27/11/2014
106	Water Services Bill 2014	28/11/2014
107	Water Services (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2014 [PMB]	02/12/2014
108	Central Bank (Amendment) Bill 2014 [Seanad]	03/12/2014
109	Health (Professional Home Care) Bill 2014 [Seanad] [PMB]	09/12/2014
110	Road Traffic Bill 2014	10/12/2014

No.	Bill Title	Date Initiated
111	Redress for Women Resident in Certain Institutions Bill 2014	10/12/2014
112	Appropriation Bill 2014	11/12/2014
113	Road Traffic (No. 2) Bill 2014 [Seanad]	12/12/2014
114	Health (Amendment) Bill 2014 [PMB]	16/12/2014
115	Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) Bill 2014 [PMB]	17/12/2014
116	Gender Recognition Bill 2014 [Seanad]	17/12/2014
117	Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Peace and Neutrality) Bill 2014 [PMB]	18/12/2014
118	Family Home Mortgage Settlement Arrangement Bill 2014 [PMB]	16/12/2014

APPENDIX 8

ACTS 2014

No.	Act Title	Date of Signature
1	Local Government Reform Act 2014	27/01/2014
2	European Parliament Elections (Amendment) Act 2014	05/02/2014
3	Road Traffic Act 2014	25/02/2014
4	County Enterprise Boards (Dissolution) Act 2014	12/03/2014
5	ESB (Electronic Communications Networks) Act 2014	18/03/2014
6	Oireachtas (Ministerial and Parliamentary Offices) (Amendment) Act 2014	12/04/2014
7	Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014	16/04/2014
8	Electoral (Amendment) Act 2014	16/04/2014
9	Central Bank Act 2014	04/06/2014
10	Johnstown Castle Agricultural College (Amendment) Act 2014	22/06/2014
11	Criminal Justice (Forensic Evidence and DNA Database System) Act 2014	22/06/2014
12	Public Health (Sunbeds) Act 2014	24/06/2014
13	Industrial Development (Forfás Dissolution) Act 2014	29/06/2014
14	Protected Disclosures Act 2014	08/07/2014
15	Health Identifiers Act 2014	08/07/2014
16	Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2014	17/07/2014
17	Health Service Executive (Financial Matters) Act 2014	17/07/2014
18	Court of Appeal Act 2014	20/07/2014
19	Friendly Societies and Industrial and Provident Societies (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014	21/07/2014
20	Radiological Protection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014	23/07/2014
21	Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014	23/07/2014
22	Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland Act 2014	26/07/2014
23	National Treasury Management Agency (Amendment) Act 2014	26/07/2014
24	Electoral (Amendment) (No. 2) Act 2014	26/07/2014

No.	Act Title	Date of Signature
25	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014	27/07/2014
26	Employment Permits (Amendment) Act 2014	27/07/2014
27	State Airports (Shannon Group) Act 2014	27/07/2014
28	Health (General Practitioner Service) Act 2014	28/07/2014
29	Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2014	28/07/2014
30	Freedom of Information Act 2014	14/10/2014
31	Forestry Act 2014	26/10/2014
32	European Stability Mechanism (Amendment) Act 2014	30/10/2014
33	Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014	19/11/2014
34	Civil Registration (Amendment) Act 2014	04/12/2014
35	Appropriation Act 2014	19/12/2014
36	Intellectual Property (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014	23/12/2014
37	Finance Act 2014	23/12/2014
38	Companies Act 2014	23/12/2014
39	Road Traffic (No. 2) Act 2014	25/12/2014
40	Protection of Children's Health (Tobacco Smoke in Mechanically Propelled Vehicles) Act 2014	25/12/2014
41	Social Welfare and Pensions (No. 2) Act 2014	25/12/2014
42	Health Insurance (Amendment) Act 2014	25/12/2014
43	Merchant Shipping (Registration of Ships) Act 2014	25/12/2014
44	Water Services Act 2014	28/12/2014

Report on Compliance with the Provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 388 of 2002)

Period covered by this review: 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014

Statement of Compliance

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service complies with the provisions of the Prompt Payment of Accounts Act 1997 and the European Communities (Late Payment in Commercial Transactions) Regulations 2002 (S.I. No. 388 of 2002).

The Act has been implemented in full since 10 May 2002 within the Service. It is the policy of the Service to settle all invoices promptly with due regard to contractual terms where applicable, good financial and cash management practices and the provisions of the legislation.

Instructions have been issued by the Finance Unit to all staff processing payments to ensure that the provisions of the legislation are complied with. While the procedures are designed to ensure compliance with the Act, they can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against material non-compliance with the Act.

Payments that fell due under the terms of the Act within the relevant period

In the period under review there were a total of 37 late payments and the amount of interest (€132.70) and penalties (€1420.00) paid in respect of these late payments was €1552.70.

12 of these payments involved invoices in excess of €317; the total value of the 12 payments was €13,260.15. The average delay in making these payments was 28 days.

During the period in question the proportion of the total value of payments (€18,847,116 in 2014) represented by payments which involved prompt payment interest was 0.6%.

Reduction of payment period to 15 days

With effect from 15 June 2009, the Service reduced its maximum target period for payments to suppliers from 30 days to 15 days to reflect a change in Government policy. Had the 15 day target been in place on a statutory basis, a further 46 payments would have incurred prompt payment interest, representing 1% of the total number of payments processed from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2014.



Michael Errity,
Assistant Secretary,
Corporate and Members' Services

January 2015

2014 ENERGY MANAGEMENT REPORT

The energy consumption figures for the Houses of the Oireachtas are given below. Over one third of energy consumption was for space heating, while lighting, ventilation, hot water, office (IT) and catering equipment accounted for the vast majority of the remaining energy consumption.

The relevant figures for 2014 are:

Location	Electricity (MWh)	Gas (MWh)	Renewable Fuels (MWh)	Total (MWh)	% Baseline Year Comparison (2008)
Houses of the Oireachtas	5,222	2,162	207	7,592	-28.8%*

*based on floor area apportionment from Leinster House and government buildings complex

The baseline year of 2008 is the first calendar year the Oireachtas participated in the OPW “Optimising Power @ Work” scheme, a staff energy awareness campaign in 250 large buildings owned/leased by the OPW for use by Government Departments and state agencies to reduce CO₂ emissions and energy by reducing energy consumption in the public sector. The main focus of the initiative is an intensive staff energy awareness campaign in all participating buildings, while at the same time ensuring that the buildings are being operated in the most efficient manner possible regarding all energy consuming processes.

The first phase of the Optimising Power @ Work scheme achieved a 14% reduction in CO₂ emissions by May 2010 for the entire public sector (i.e. all participating buildings) and savings continue to rise. The current target is to surpass a reduction of 20% by end 2014. With a saving achieved of 20.15% overall, this target was surpassed.

Overall energy consumption in the Houses of the Oireachtas for the period of 2014 vs 2008 has shown a decrease of 28.8%. This is due to various actions including heating and lighting upgrade, good housekeeping and maintaining the momentum of the Optimising Power @ Work, energy awareness campaign.

APPENDIX 11

ORGANISATION CHART

