

OFFICIAL



Australian Government
Office of Parliamentary Counsel

First Parliamentary Counsel

Office of Parliamentary Counsel's Statement of Intent

10 March 2026

This Statement of Intent outlines the response of the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (*OPC*) to the Government's Statement of Expectations given to OPC on 2 March 2026.

OPC's role

OPC is the Commonwealth's principal provider of professional legislative drafting and publishing services, established under the *Parliamentary Counsel Act 1970*. Our role focuses on the entire life cycle of legislation, from the early stages of drafting to ensuring that the Australian public have access to up-to-date and accessible Commonwealth laws.

Our drafters work collaboratively with instructing agencies to help them develop their instructions so that they can be drafted as legislation. Our publications team work with agencies on issues relating to legislative instruments: registering and compiling legislative and notifiable instruments; supporting the Parliamentary disallowance process for and sunseting of legislative instruments; and maintaining the Federal Register of Legislation websites.

Delivering the Government's policy priorities and objectives

We recognise the central role OPC plays in supporting the Government to deliver on its significant legislative reform agenda.

OPC will continue to provide high quality, timely legislative drafting services, including by supporting and working closely with the Parliamentary Business Committee, and providing our drafting services for Bills in accordance with the priorities set by that Committee. We will also work with agencies to identify priorities for tied subordinate instruments. Using our judgment and experience, we will draft untied subordinate instruments where we believe we can add maximum value for the Government.

In order to identify possible trends to support the Government in delivering on its legislative agenda, we will measure and report to the Attorney-General on OPC's and the APS' performance in relation to that agenda.

In collaboration with the Attorney-General's Department, we will also seek out opportunities to be more efficient in delivering on Government priorities and to better engage with instructing agencies.

Supporting Ministers and departments in the delivery of legislation

The Government's legislative agenda is a collaborative effort, requiring high level and high quality engagement across the APS.

We will continue to support Ministers and Departments in delivering legislative priorities by working closely and collaborating with instructing Departments in relation to their policy, their timeframes and legal issues in drafting legislation. In particular, First Parliamentary Counsel, Second Parliamentary Counsel, or other senior drafters, will continue to make themselves available to Senior Legislation Officers and other Departmental officers on a regular basis for significant, large or challenging projects to ensure timely advice and guidance is provided, and resolve any potential impediments.

Many of OPC's drafters have significant experience drafting and working with legislation, and as such, support Departments in developing their legislative reform packages through the drafting and instructing process. We see this as a key part of our role.

We will continue to complement this support with the formal training that we provide on the legislative process, legislative design and drafting instruments. OPC will continue to engage with the Secretary of the Attorney-General's Department, her Department, and the Australian Public Service Commission, to lead further training and capacity-building efforts in relation to the delivery of legislative projects.

Maximising drafting capacity

At the core of every high performing institution are wonderful people, who bring skill, expertise and professionalism to everything they do. We will continue to recruit, train and retain high quality, dedicated and professional staff to help us achieve our mission.

We will also continue to innovate and experiment with new ways of training our drafters, while also maintaining the teams drafting system, which has been at the heart of our success for so long. Recognising that the best training is on the job training, we will seek to fully utilise our existing drafting resources to provide maximum drafting capacity. This includes allocating drafting work in a way that optimises the training opportunities for our newer drafters without compromising on the need to deliver large, more complex projects in shorter timeframes.

In addition, innovative uses of IT can help to supplement the work of legislative drafters. Using OPC's additional funding, we will continue to investigate artificial intelligence and other technologies, exploring the additional capabilities that those systems might bring.

Maintaining best practice

As a committed agency within the Commonwealth family, with the responsibility for drafting laws, we understand the importance of complying with our obligations under the various pieces of legislation that bind us, including the *Public Service Act 1999*, the Australian Public Service Values and the Code of Code, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Archives Act 1983*. As Australian Government lawyers, we will also act consistently with the AGLS Statement of Expectations of Australian Government Lawyers and, as First Parliamentary Counsel, with the AGLS General Counsel Charter.

Relationship with Minister and portfolio

Delivering on the Government's legislative agenda is a genuinely collaborative effort across the APS. Collaboration requires trust. Trust can only be established with accountability and transparency.

OPC will continue to work collaboratively and cooperatively with the Attorney-General, and her office, as well as with the Attorney-General's Department. We will seek to continue to build on relationships with our key stakeholders, the Parliamentary Business Committee, Ministers, and their Departments. We recognise that accountability and transparency requires us to provide our advice, whether to the Attorney-General, or any other Minister or Department, in a timely, clear and comprehensive way.

In addition to reporting on OPC's and the APS' performance in delivering on the Government's legislative agenda, we will report on our progress in using the additional funding that has been provided to OPC, including in relation to artificial intelligence and other technologies.

We welcome this Statement of Expectations, which we will incorporate in our Corporate Plan and Annual Report, and publish on our website.

We look forward to continuing to support the Government to deliver on its legislative agenda.