



OFFICE OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETARY  
TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

CORPORATE PLAN

2018-2019

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OFFICE OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETARY  
TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

**Statement of preparation and period of coverage**

I, Paul Singer, as the accountable authority of the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General (OOSGG), present the 2018-19 OOSGG Corporate Plan, in accordance with my responsibilities under Section 35 of the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#) (PGPA Act).

A key element of the PGPA Act is the implementation of an enhanced whole-of-government performance framework. The performance framework is based on Section 38 of the PGPA Act, which requires all Commonwealth entities to measure and assess their performance.

Key elements of the performance framework for the OOSGG are its:

- **Corporate plan** – Prepared under section 35 of the PGPA Act for submission to relevant Minister and publication on the Office's website.
- **Annual performance statement** – To be prepared under section 39 of the PGPA Act for inclusion in the Annual Report from 2016-17 onward.

This Plan operates from the 2018-19 financial year and has a four-year planning horizon. The plan has been prepared in accordance with guidance issued by the Department of Finance on the enhanced [Commonwealth performance framework](#).

**Paul Singer MVO**

Acting Official Secretary to the Governor-General  
30 August 2018



## INTRODUCTION

### Functions

The Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General (OOSGG) was established in 1984, by amendment to the *Governor-General Act 1974*, to support the Governor-General in the fulfilment of their responsibilities.

The OOSGG's Outcome supports the performance of the Governor-General's role, which is facilitated through the organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official households and properties, and administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

The OOSGG's provision of support includes enabling the Governor-General to perform official duties, which are constitutional, statutory, ceremonial or community in nature, and the management and maintenance of Government House in Canberra and Admiralty House in Sydney. The OOSGG is also responsible for supporting the effective administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

*See page 15 for the performance criteria and targets for the OOSGG.*

### Priorities from 2018-19 to 2022-23

Over the next four years, the OOSGG plans to achieve its Outcome by:

- providing a high standard of advice and service delivery to the Governor-General and stakeholders;
- delivering effective governance and management arrangements in support of the official duties of the Governor-General;
- ensuring efficient and effective stewardship of the properties in accordance with heritage requirements and approved capital works and maintenance programs;
- educating and informing Australians about the role of the Governor-General;
- delivering efficient and effective administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

It is expected that the term of the Governor-General will conclude at the end of March 2019 (although there is no set term it is generally understood to be five years). During this time, the OOSGG will be focused on relevant transitional arrangements including for the departure of Governor-General Cosgrove and the arrival of a new Governor-General.

### Outcome

The planned outcome for the OOSGG is the facilitation of the performance of the Governor-General's role through the organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official household and properties, and administration of the Australian honours and awards system. The OOSGG delivers its planned outcome through one program, being support for the Governor-General and official functions. The objective of this program is to support the Governor-General and official functions and comprises two components:

1. Support for the Governor-General; and
2. Administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

### Component 1: Support of the Governor-General

#### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the OOSGG is to provide the necessary support to enable the Governor-General to perform their official duties, which are constitutional, statutory, ceremonial or community in nature. This includes the management and maintenance of the official residences at Government House in Canberra and Admiralty House in Sydney.

#### 1.2 Environment

The OOSGG operates within and responds to a dynamic, challenging and contemporary environment. It is a small Commonwealth budget-funded statutory agency with its offices located at Government House in Canberra and Admiralty House in Sydney. The OOSGG is not part of the Australian Public Service, and employs staff under Section 13 of the *Governor-General Act 1974*. It has a unique role and a broad workforce performing functions that are both typical and atypical (for example, hospitality and horticulture) of other Commonwealth agencies. The OOSGG is a small agency with a modest Departmental budget, declining in real terms, and a growing cost base. It is continually looking for ways to become more efficient. The OOSGG is not specifically exempt from the application of Government savings and efficiency dividend measures, and must adopt a practical and pragmatic approach to process efficiencies and improvements in the implementation of broader Commonwealth reforms.

The OOSGG works closely with other agencies, in particular with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, its portfolio agency, on matters including the Governor-General's constitutional and statutory duties. The OOSGG also works closely with the Department of Defence, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Veterans' Affairs and numerous other government and non-

government bodies. As the Australian community becomes more engaged with social media, the OOSGG has implemented a social media strategy designed to better communicate the role and activities of the Governor-General, and highlight community achievement and endeavour.

In the four years ahead, the OOSGG will continue to seek to strengthen community engagement and outreach, and to maintain its heritage assets to the best of its ability, with limited resources.

### *1.2.1 Influencing factors*

In providing support to the Governor-General, the OOSGG is subject to varying degrees of influence by external factors, including:

- a requirement to control the Governor-General's program, while being responsive to the needs and expectations of community and government;
- the management of the official properties, including being conscious of the risk of latent conditions;
- administration of the OOSGG, and operation of the internal budget in line with Government policy; and
- having partial control of the overall security environment – including both physical and cyber security – but taking active steps to mitigate against potential risks.

Beyond the control of the OOSGG is the overall budgetary context, which may influence the operating income available to the agency over the four-year period.

With respect to ongoing budget viability, the OOSGG may seek supplementation through the Commonwealth budget process to ensure it is best placed to meet the emerging challenges ahead.

## 1.3 Performance

The performance of the Governor-General's role is facilitated through the organisation and management of official duties, and the management and maintenance of the official households and properties.

### *1.3.1 Performance objectives*

The OOSGG performance objectives for the Corporate Plan's four-year reporting period are:

- to provide a high level of advice and administrative support to the Governor-General in their performance of official duties; and
- to effectively and efficiently manage and maintain the Governor-General's official residences in Canberra and Sydney, including preserving capability and condition, building and grounds maintenance, and caretaker responsibilities.

### *1.3.2 Delivering objectives*

The OOSGG will deliver on its performance objectives through:

- Executive support—including providing advice to the Governor-General, planning, implementing and managing Their Excellencies' forward program of engagements, and liaising with representatives of governments, related authorities, and community groups;
- Personal support—including providing support for Their Excellencies and hospitality services for official functions; and
- Administrative services—including providing governance advice and administrative services to OOSGG and managing the Governor-General's official residences, including maintenance of property, equipment and grounds.

### *1.3.3 Measurement and assessment of overall performance*

The overall performance of objectives delivered will be measured and assessed by:

- The Governor-General's level of satisfaction with the quality of advice and administrative support provided to enable the successful performance of official duties;
- The Governor-General's satisfaction with the management of the households; and
- The properties are managed in accordance with the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and government policies relating to heritage properties, and with due consideration of advice provided by the National Capital Authority and other relevant authorities.

## 1.4 Capability

### *1.4.1 Organisational capacity*

The OOSGG has a highly skilled, diverse and flexible workforce. Over 42 per cent of staff are over 50 years of age. Over the past few years, the OOSGG has experienced an increase in the number of staff accessing maternity or paternity leave. The OOSGG develops strategies and work-unit specific succession plans to manage the risk of loss of key skills and corporate knowledge.

The Office has recently reviewed our recruitment process to ensure that we attract and engage high performing staff.

### *1.4.2 Capital investment strategy*

The Administered Capital Budget funding provided to the Office as part of the 2015-16 Budget process is supporting a program to sustain the condition and capability of the heritage properties in the national estate at Government House, Canberra and at Admiralty House, Sydney, for which the Office has statutory stewardship responsibilities.

This property program is proceeding under the direction of the Management Committee through the Property Sub-Committee (PSC). Planned expenditure under this program is approximately \$2.6 million per annum and will be prioritised to meet WHS, accessibility and compliance requirements.

The OOSGG also has a program in place, under the broad oversight of the PSC, to replace assets and equipment to maximise operational effectiveness and support Component deliverables. This program utilises Departmental Capital Budget funding of approximately \$400,000 per annum.

#### *1.4.3 Information and communications technology*

The OOSGG is responsible for its own Information and Communication Technology (ICT) environment and sets out to provide a mostly in-house ICT system that is focused on providing core ICT functions to staff while ensuring reliability, timeliness, control and management of associated risks. While some components are outsourced or managed by third parties, the OOSGG maintains control over them. The OOSGG's ICT framework and resources are managed under the direction of the Management Committee through the Information Technology Sub-Committee (ITSC).

The OOSGG's approach to ICT innovation is to look for opportunities that can maximise benefit within available resources. This usually means the Office looks for technology that has matured and become more affordable (due to time in the market and economies of scale) rather than implementing or experimenting with the latest technology.

Results from benchmarking indicate that the Office's ICT function is very efficient, with total annual expenditure around 40 per cent of that of comparable agencies, and per head ICT costs around 50 per cent less.

The OOSGG has recently implemented a significant upgrade to its information and records management arrangements, including the introduction of an Electronic Documents and Records Management System and a redeveloped policy and procedural framework. The new framework features an OOSGG-specific Records Authority that was developed in collaboration with the National Archives of Australia. The new arrangements provide the basis for improvements in business processes and ensure the OOSGG's ongoing compliance with legislative and government policy requirements, such as the Digital Continuity 2020 policy.

As a non-corporate Government agency, the OOSGG is required to meet the whole-of-government security policies set out in the *Australian Signals Directorate Information Security Manual* as well as the Protective Security Policy Framework.



## Component 2: Administration of the Australian honours and awards system

### 2.1 Purpose

The OOSGG, through the Australian Honours and Awards Branch, provides effective administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

### 2.2 Environment

The Australian Honours and Awards Branch, operating under the OOSGG, is located at Government House, Canberra and was established in 1975 when a distinctive Australian honours system was instituted. Its role is to provide the support necessary for the Governor-General to carry out responsibilities relating to the independent administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

The Branch works with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the OOSGG's portfolio agency, on matters including policy, administration and the promotion of Australian honours and awards.

#### *2.2.1 Influencing factors*

In administering the Australian honours system, the OOSGG is subject to varying degrees of influence by external factors. These include:

- Budget – funding is static, however expenditure fluctuates with the cost of medals (including the price of precious metals) and the demand on medal stocks, depending on the number of awards approved;
- Government policy – the honours system is responsive to changes in honours policy, regulations and the creation of new awards. This places new demands on budgets and staff, through administration and procurement of insignia;
- Promotion – the level of promotional activities undertaken by the Government influences the volume of nominations;
- Community engagement – nomination volumes are influenced by broad community engagement. The introduction of an on-line nomination form and the streamlining of the nomination process have resulted in a notable increase of nominations. This places demands on resources and requires the Office to introduce initiatives to meet that demand; and
- Community sentiment and diversity – the ongoing need to ensure the honours system is reflective of a contemporary Australian population.

### 2.3 Performance

The administration of the Australian honours and awards system is a responsibility of the OOSGG. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet is responsible for managing Government policy in relation to honours, as well as the promotion of the system.

### *2.3.1 Performance objective*

The OOSGG performance objective for the Corporate Plan's four-year reporting period is to administer, on behalf of the Governor-General, the Australian honours and awards system, including all civilian honours, and awards for members of the Australian Defence Force.

### *2.3.2 Performance criteria*

The OOSGG will deliver on its performance criteria through:

- researching and preparing nominations for consideration by the Council for the Order of Australia, the Australian Bravery Decorations Council and the National Emergency Medal Committee;
- providing secretariat support to the Australian honours advisory bodies;
- undertaking the administrative tasks associated with the approval of recipients in the Australian honours system and subsequent announcement where applicable;
- procuring Australian honours insignia, warrants and investiture items;
- facilitating the approval of, and changes to, governing instruments within the Australian honours system; and
- providing insignia to State/Territory Government Houses, service organisations and individuals for issue at local investitures.

### *2.3.3 Measurement and assessment of the performance criteria*

The targets relating to the performance criteria seek to ensure:

- the Governor-General and other key stakeholders express satisfaction with the administration of the Australian honours and awards system and support provided;
- activities comply with the governing instruments for honours and awards, including the Constitution for the Order of Australia;
- medals and insignia meet design specifications, adequate stock levels are maintained and control processes are adhered to; and
- the accurate and timely issue of insignia and other resources for investitures and honours list announcements.

## 2.4 Capability

### *2.4.1 Organisational capacity*

The OOSGG coordinates an Honours and Awards Branch Case Officer Trainee program, which develops Case Officers' required research and writing skills over several years. The OOSGG periodically employs trainees to help grow relevant skills and to ensure its workforce is well trained and well supported to deliver its important work.

## GOVERNANCE

The Official Secretary, in his role as Chief Executive Officer and the accountable authority, is accountable for the efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of resources and the Office performance. The OOSGG's Management Committee assists the Official Secretary to meet his statutory responsibilities under the *Governor-General Act 1974* and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*. The OOSGG recognises the need for a high level of accountability, and places a strong emphasis in meeting its governance obligations and responsibilities.

The Deputy Official Secretary, assisted by the Branch Directors and the Chief Financial Officer, support the Official Secretary's overall governance responsibilities by facilitating the development of corporate and business plans, establishing policy and accountability frameworks, managing risk, fraud and security planning, setting frameworks for advising on people management, managing industrial relations, managing information and communications technology (including through the use of an Electronic Documents and Records Management System), and overseeing budget management of the OOSGG. The People and Services Branch also manages the official properties and coordinates physical security services.

The OOSGG has established several committees to support the Official Secretary:

- Management Committee (including the Property Sub-Committee and Information Technology Sub-Committee)
- Audit Committee
- Workplace Consultative Committee (WCC)
- Work Health and Safety Committee (WHS)

The Management Committee comprises the Official Secretary as Chief Executive Officer; the Deputy Official Secretary as Deputy Chief Executive Officer; the Directors of the People and Services, Honours and Awards and Strategic Engagement Branches; and the Chief Financial Officer. The group generally meets monthly, and considers strategic issues affecting the OOSGG (including emerging or ongoing risks), and monitors the delivery of performance outcomes.

The three-person Audit Committee (with a majority of external members) is responsible for providing independent assurance and assistance to the Official Secretary on the Office's risk, control and compliance frameworks and external accountability. The Audit Committee comprises an independent external Chair, an independent external member and the Deputy Official Secretary.

The WCC, representing all staff of the OOSGG, provides a forum for management and employees to discuss matters affecting the workplace. Meetings of the WCC are chaired alternately by a representative of the Official Secretary and a representative of employees.

The membership of the WCC comprises:

- the Official Secretary or nominee;
- one other management representative;
- one representative elected from each Branch;
- one representative elected from each of the Household and Property & Services areas;
- one union workplace delegate; and
- one union official.

The Work Health and Safety Committee is chaired by the Director People and Services. Membership includes management representatives and health and safety representatives from across the Office. The Committee's responsibility is to facilitate discussion and cooperation on work health and safety issues in the workplace.



## RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

Risk oversight and management is an integral part of sound management practice and an essential element of good governance. The OOSGG actively manages risk in accordance with its Risk Management Plan. Its key strategic risks focus on:

- Support for the Governor-General:
  - Managing internal and external events;
  - Advising on a broad range of matters; and
  - Developing and executing an effective community engagement program.
- Effective administration of the Australian honours and awards system.
- Effective stewardship of the official properties.
- Maintaining and executing efficient and effective management systems.
- Building a strong workforce and acknowledging staff for their work.

In accordance with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy, the OOSGG regularly reviews its settings and plans to ensure risks are appropriately mitigated and embedded as part of daily management and administrative practice.

## PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR 2018-19

### Performance criteria for 2018-19 as reflected in the 2018-19 Portfolio Budget Statement

<b>Outcome 1 – The performance of the Governor-General's role is facilitated through the organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official household and property and administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system.</b>		
<b>Program 1.1</b> – The objective of this program is to support the Governor-General and Official Functions. It comprises two components: support for the Governor-General and administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system.		
<b>Delivery (component 1)</b>	The program component deliverables include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executive support—providing advice to the Governor-General, planning, implementing and managing Their Excellencies' forward program of engagements, and liaising with representatives of governments, related authorities, and community groups</li><li>• Personal support— providing support for Their Excellencies and hospitality services for official functions</li><li>• Administrative services— providing governance advice and administrative services to OOSGG and managing the Governor-General's official residences, including maintenance of property, equipment and grounds.</li></ul>	
<b>Performance information (component 1)</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Performance criteria</b>	<b>Targets</b>
2017-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Governor-General is satisfied with the level of advice and administrative support provided that enables him to successfully perform official duties</li><li>• The Governor-General is satisfied with the management of the households</li><li>• The properties are managed in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> and government policies relating to heritage properties, and with due consideration of advice provided by the National Capital Authority and other relevant authorities.</li></ul>	It is expected all performance criteria as outlined in the 2017-18 PBS will be met.
2018-19	As per 2017-18.	As per 2017-18.
2019-20 and beyond	As per 2017-18.	As per 2017-18.

*Continued on next page.*

## Performance criteria for Outcome 1 (continued)

<b>Delivery (component 2)</b>	The program component will be delivered by administering, on behalf of the Governor-General, the Australian honours and awards system, including all civilian honours and awards for member of the Australian Defence Force.	
<b>Performance information (component 2)</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Performance criteria</b>	<b>Targets</b>
2017-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research and prepare nominations for consideration by the Council for the Order of Australia, the Australian Bravery Decorations Council and the National Emergency Medal Committee</li><li>• Provide secretariat support to the Australian honours advisory bodies</li><li>• Undertake the administrative tasks associated with the approval of recipients in the Australian honours system and subsequent announcement where applicable</li><li>• Procure Australian honours insignia, warrants and investiture items.</li><li>• Facilitate the approval of, and changes to, governing instruments within the Australian honours system</li><li>• Provide insignia to State/Territory Government Houses, service organisations and individuals for issue, and arrange local investitures.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Governor-General and other key stakeholders express satisfaction with the administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system and support provided</li><li>• Activities comply with the governing instruments for honours and awards, including the Constitution for the Order of Australia</li><li>• The medals and insignia meet design specifications, adequate stock levels are maintained and control processes are adhered to</li><li>• Ensure the accurate and timely issue of insignia and other resources for investitures and honours list announcements.</li></ul>