



OFFICE OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

CORPORATE PLAN

2019-2020

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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 2019-20 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 statements** – 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 2019-20 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

Official Secretary to the Governor-General
27 August 2019

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 his/her 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 (which are constitutional, statutory, ceremonial or community in nature); management and maintenance of the official properties, Government House in Canberra and Admiralty House in Sydney; and administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

See page 14 for the performance criteria and targets for the OOSGG.

Priorities from 2019-20 to 2022-23

Governor-General Hurley was sworn-in on 1 July 2019. The Office is committed to supporting the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley through the provision of high-quality advice and service to help meet Their Excellencies' objectives for the term.

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 Mrs Hurley;
- 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; and
- the efficient and effective administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

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 households 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 for 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 support 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. It 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 (e.g. hospitality and horticulture) of other Commonwealth agencies.

The OOSGG has a modest Departmental budget. It received additional Departmental funding at Additional Estimates in 2019 in response to increased volumes of nominations for awards in the Order of Australia and in respect of ICT and maintenance of the official properties. The practical impact of Commonwealth ICT reforms and private sector ICT business models along with the continued cyber-security threat mean that ICT will continue to be a pressure point.

The OOSGG works closely with other agencies, in particular with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, its portfolio department, on matters including the Governor-General's constitutional and statutory duties. The Office 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 to highlight community achievement and endeavour. In the four years ahead, the OOSGG will continue to strengthen community engagement and outreach, and maintain the heritage assets to the best of the Office's ability using available 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. These include:

- Managing the Governor-General's program, while needing to be responsive to community needs and expectations including Government requests;
- Management of the official properties including latent conditions arising (site conditions that could not have reasonably been predicted before works commenced);
- Administration of the OOSGG, and operation of the internal budget in line with Government policy;
- The overall security environment, including physical and cyber security, and working with partners to actively mitigate against potential risks; and
- Increasing awareness and improving security processes to align with evolving external requirements.

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

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 and Mrs Hurley in the performance of their official duties; and
- To effectively and efficiently manage and maintain the Governor-General's official residences and all property assets in Canberra and Sydney, including preserving capability and condition, building and grounds maintenance, and caretaker responsibilities.

1.3.2 Performance criteria

The OOSGG will deliver on its performance criteria through:

- Executive support—includes 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—includes providing support for Their Excellencies and hospitality services for official functions; and
- Administrative services—includes providing governance advice and administrative services to OOSGG and managing the Governor-General's official residences, including maintenance of property, equipment and grounds.

In order to sustain the capability of the official residences and all property assets to the desired condition, property and grounds maintenance will be an area of greater focus in 2019-20. A formal property condition assessment will be undertaken this financial year and compared to the baseline undertaken in 2014.

1.3.3 Measurement and assessment of performance criteria

Performance will be measured and assessed by the extent to which:

- The Governor-General is satisfied with the level of advice and administrative support provided to enable the successful performance of official duties;
- The Governor-General is satisfied 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. Investment in our staff welfare and development is a high priority. We maintain a strong focus on the wellbeing of our people and there is an increased focus on identifying and promoting appropriate learning and development opportunities, to ensure that we develop and maintain the right capabilities for the future.

We recognise that this is a period of change for our people. In response we are leveraging the skills of partners who are experienced in change of this nature to ensure we maintain a contemporary, inclusive, supportive and innovative working environment.

1.4.2 Capital investment strategy

The Administered Capital Budget funding provided to the Office 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 Work Health and Safety, accessibility and compliance requirements. The Office received additional Administered Capital funding at Additional Estimates in 2019 for a project to protect and preserve the historic Kirribilli Point Battery precinct at Admiralty House.

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 usual approach to ICT innovation is to look for opportunities that can maximise benefit within available resources. This usually means that the Office looks for technology that has matured and become affordable due to time in the market and

economies of scale, rather than implementing or experimenting with the latest technology.

Benchmarking indicates that in the past the Office spent less than half the expenditure on ICT than comparable agencies. As a result, the Office's 'per head' ICT costs have been around 50% less than most agencies.

This low cost base is a product of a cautious, largely in-house hosted and perpetual licence based approach. This however is unsustainable into the future. Contemporary ICT practices like cloud computing and annual software licencing make sense from a whole of Government perspective, but they challenge the Office's approach and their costs exceed the Office's established low cost base.

The Office received some additional Departmental funding (both operating and capital) at Additional Estimates in 2019 for several projects that are the 'building blocks' of the required ICT modernisation for the Office.

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 within 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 on matters including policy, administration and 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 – the Office received additional Departmental funding at Additional Estimates in 2019 in response to increased volumes of nominations for awards in the Order of Australia. Additionally, the Office is working to manage the cost of medals which varies according to 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 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 current resources and requires the Office to introduce initiatives to assist in meeting 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, and arrange local investitures.

2.3.3 Measurement and assessment of the performance criteria

Performance will be measured and assessed by the extent to which:

- The Governor-General and other key stakeholders are satisfied 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;
- The medals and insignia meet design specifications, adequate stock levels are maintained and control processes are adhered to; and
- Insignia and other resources for investitures and honours list announcements are accurate and are issued in a timely manner.

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); and
- 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 Office, including any emerging or ongoing risks, and monitors the delivery of performance outcomes for the OOSGG.

The three-person Audit Committee (with majority external members) is responsible for providing independent assurance and assistance to the Official Secretary on the Office's risk oversight, control and compliance frameworks and performance and financial 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 WHS 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 Office regularly reviews its risk management framework, risk register and risk settings and plans to ensure risks are appropriately mitigated, with their management embedded as part of daily management and administrative practice.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR 2019-2020

Performance criteria for 2019-20 as reflected in the 2019-20 Portfolio Budget Statements.

Outcome 1 – The performance of the Governor-General’s role is facilitated through organisation and management of official duties, management and maintenance of the official household and property and administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system.		
Program 1.1 – 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.		
Delivery (component 1)	The program component deliverables include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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• Personal support— providing support for Their Excellencies and hospitality services for official functions• 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.	
Performance information (component 1)		
Year	Performance criteria	Targets
2019-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Governor-General is satisfied with the level of advice and administrative support provided that enables him to successfully perform official duties• The Governor-General is satisfied with the management of the households• 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.	It is expected all performance criteria as outlined in the 2019-20 PBS will be met.
2020-21	As per 2019-20.	As per 2019-20.
2021-22 and beyond	As per 2019-20.	As per 2019-20.

Continued on next page.

Performance criteria for Outcome 1 (continued)

Delivery (component 2)	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. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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• Providing insignia to State/Territory Government Houses, service organisations and individuals for issue, and arrange local investitures.	
Performance information (component 2)		
Year	Performance criteria	Targets
2019-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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• The medals and insignia meet design specifications, adequate stock levels are maintained and control processes are adhered to• Ensure the accurate and timely issue of insignia and other resources for investitures and honours list announcements.	It is expected all performance criteria as outlined in the 2019-20 PBS will be met.
2020-21	As per 2019-20.	As per 2019-20.
2021-22 and beyond	As per 2019-20.	As per 2019-20.