



OFFICE OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

CORPORATE PLAN

2020-21

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Official Secretary's Statement

The Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General (the 'Office') supports the Governor-General to encourage, comfort, inspire and uplift Australians from all walks of life and to celebrate their achievements.

On 1 July 2019, His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) was sworn-in as Australia's 27th Governor-General. In his swearing-in speech at Parliament House, the Governor-General spoke of a 'richness of spirit' that exists in Australian society. In so doing, he outlined his approach for his term and set the direction for the Office. The Office has assisted the Governor-General to highlight to Australians their inherent strengths, their concern for the common good, their humanity and decency, and their desire for a 'fair go'.

The impacts of two unprecedented events in 2020 – the devastating bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic – will influence the Governor-General's term over the next four years. In an environment where the nation's social fabric will be stretched as a result of these events, the Governor-General's priority will be to help bring Australians together, uplift the discouraged and give hope. This will be delivered through a broad program of meaningful outreach and engagement and incorporating the Australian honours and awards system.

As an Office we are motivated by supporting the Governor-General to reinforce the nation's shared values, promote community cohesion, and represent our broad national interests here and overseas. We see our role as imagining new and powerful ways to enhance the impact of the Governor-General's work. We do this by thinking innovatively and strategically; engaging and empowering our staff; and using the resources available to us effectively, efficiently, economically and ethically to achieve planned outcomes.

As the accountable authority of the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General, I am pleased to present the Office's 2020-21 Corporate Plan for the period 2020-21 to 2023-24, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

Paul Singer MVO

Official Secretary to the Governor-General

31 August 2020



Purpose

The Office was established in 1984, by amendment to the *Governor-General Act 1974*, to support the Governor-General in the fulfilment of his or her responsibilities.

The planned Outcome for the Office is the facilitation of the performance of the Governor-General's role through the organisation and management of official duties (which are constitutional, statutory, ceremonial and community-focussed in nature), management and maintenance of the official households and properties, and administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

The Office achieves this through a single program which comprises two components:

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

Key activities to support our Outcome

During the period of this Corporate Plan, the Office will focus on the following key activities to assist the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley to perform their roles:

- supporting the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley to uplift, encourage, inspire and celebrate Australians
- delivering effective governance and management arrangements in support of the official duties of the Governor-General
- ensuring efficient and effective stewardship of the properties (Government House in Canberra and Admiralty House in Sydney) in accordance with heritage requirements and approved capital works and maintenance programs
- understanding, preserving and sharing the rich stories of the properties
- informing Australians about the role of the Governor-General in contemporary society
- carrying out the efficient and effective administration of the Australian honours and awards system, including to ensure that the Order of Australia is, and is perceived to be by the Australian public, the highest form of recognition of the efforts and achievements of Australians.

In fulfilling our purpose, the Office's key activities will recognise, encourage and reward community achievement; complement the work of Parliament and government agencies; represent our broad national interests here and overseas; and highlight the inherent goodness of Australians and our ability to overcome adversity.



Operating Context

Component 1 - Support for the Governor-General

The Governor-General and Mrs Hurley comfort bushfire affected residents in Malua Bay, New South Wales, 9 January 2020.

Operating Context - Support for the Governor-General

Environment

The Office operates in a dynamic, challenging and rapidly evolving environment. It is a small Commonwealth budget-funded statutory agency with 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 that performs functions that are both typical and atypical (e.g. hospitality and horticulture) of other Commonwealth agencies.

The Office has a modest Departmental budget. While it has operated within this to date, and will continue to do so, the Office faces several ongoing cost pressures. These include significant costs arising from the maintenance of the official properties and ICT and supporting infrastructure to ensure systems remain robust, responsive and secure.

As Australia responds to the 2019-20 bushfires and generational challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the community aspects of the Governor-General's role – uplifting, encouraging, inspiring and celebrating Australians – are a key priority. The Office will support the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley to reach and engage with as many Australians as possible through face-to-face events (as conditions permit), digital engagement, and traditional and social media.

In providing support to the Governor-General, the Office is subject to varying degrees of influence by external factors. These include:

- maintaining the Governor-General's program of national community engagement when travel and gatherings are restricted as a result of measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic
- management of the properties, including treatment of latent conditions associated with project works
- administration of the Office and operation of the internal budget in a manner which is responsive to Government policy and community expectations
- the overall security environment including physical and cyber security and the need to increase awareness and improve security processes to mitigate risks and align with external requirements.

Looking further ahead in the reporting period, a fundamental influence on the Office's operating environment will be the expected changeover of the Governor-General in 2024. Whilst there is no set term for a Governor-General, it is notionally for a period of five years.

Capability

Workforce capability

The Office has a highly skilled, diverse and flexible workforce. Investment in the development and welfare of staff is a priority. We seek to support and empower our people to be innovative, embrace change and work collaboratively to deliver outcomes that we are proud of.

- Leadership and development the Office's leadership and development framework aims at improving staff skills and job knowledge and provide for personal growth. The Office has also implemented an online e-learning system.
- Diversity and inclusion the Office has established a Diversity and Inclusion working group to promote and reflect the diversity of our staff, our stakeholders and the community we serve.
- Geographic diversity The majority of Office staff are located in Canberra and there is a small team based in Sydney. The Governor-General's program is planned to achieve a geographic balance across Australia. Effective internal communication within and between sites and with travelling staff is a critical enabler of our performance objectives. The impacts of COVID-19 have accelerated the Office's uptake of videoconferencing platforms to ensure continuity of purpose and collaboration of staff across both locations, support staff while travelling with the Governor-General, and provide an alternative platform for the Governor-General to meaningfully engage by virtual means with the Australian community.

A key focus is providing an adaptive and flexible workplace, particularly in light of the current and anticipated ongoing challenges created by COVID-19.

In response to those challenges and the changing operating environment, the Office has established a creative team (drawing on existing staff across the Office) to explore and identify new and innovative ways to ensure our performance objectives can be met.

In 2021, a new Enterprise Agreement is to be negotiated for the period 2022-25.

Infrastructure capability

The Administered Capital Budget funding provided to the Office supports a program to sustain the condition and capability of the Commonwealth Heritage Listed properties 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 and this project is due for completion in the 2020-21 financial year.

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

Information and communications technology capability

The Office is responsible for its own Information and Communication Technology (ICT) environment and provides a system that meets the needs of the Governor-General and staff while ensuring reliability, security, timeliness, control and management of associated risks. While some components are outsourced or managed by third-parties, the Office maintains control over them. The Office's ICT framework and resources are managed under the direction of the Management Committee through the Information Technology Sub-Committee (ITSC).

The Office's approach to ICT innovation seeks to identify opportunities that can maximise benefit within available resources. Generally, this means the Office will procure or implement technology that has become affordable due to time in the market and economies of scale, rather than implementing or experimenting with the latest technology.

Benchmarking indicates the Office spends less than half the expenditure on ICT than comparable agencies, with 'per head' ICT costs around 50 per cent less than most agencies. This low cost base is the product of a cautious approach with ICT hosted largely in-house using perpetual licences. However, current ICT practices (which include a transition to cloud computing and annual software licencing) and the shift towards consistent, whole-of-Government ICT frameworks are likely to exceed Office budget allowances, and make the current in-house approach unsustainable.

In response, the Office has conducted an end-to-end review of ICT and developed a modernisation program. This work will enable the Office to strengthen its ICT capabilities. It will address several critical risks whilst supporting and empowering our people with technology to be innovative and work collaboratively to deliver our performance objectives.

Cooperation with others

The Office works closely 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 with the Department of Defence and the Department of Veterans' Affairs in relation to the Governor-General's role as Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Defence Force; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with regard to international engagement and protocol; the Department of Home Affairs and Australian Federal Police on security matters, and numerous other government and non-government bodies.



Operating Context - Administration of the Australian honours and awards system

Environment

The Australian Honours and Awards branch supports the Governor-General to carry out his responsibilities relating to the independent administration of the Australian honours and awards system.

In addition, the branch provides secretariat support to the independent Councils and Committee responsible for making recommendations on awards to the Governor-General.

The branch works with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on matters including policy, administration and promotion of Australian honours and awards.

The Office will need to manage resourcing pressures arising from activities to ensure Australia's honours and awards system continues to meet the expectations of the community.

In administering the Australian honours system, the Office is subject to challenges resulting from external factors. These include:

- Budget while the Office received additional Departmental funding in 2019 in response to increased volumes of nominations for awards in the Order of Australia, continued increase in nominations and the varying cost of metals (used in medals) can create budget pressures.
- 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.
- 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.
- Community expectations driven by commentary around the Order of Australia and the need to ensure the system is, and is perceived to be, the pre-eminent means for recognition in Australia.

The recent declaration of three national emergencies (Tropical Cyclone Debbie, the North Queensland floods and the 2019-20 bushfires) for the purposes of the National Emergency Medal will have a significant resourcing impact in relation to the procurement and supply of insignia, and the staff resources required to administer the award.

Capability

Workforce capability

In addition to the workforce capability factors listed for component 1 (page 6), the Office has a successful Trainee Case Officer Program in the Honours branch which provides structured training and development over a two-year period to prepare trainees for careers in the Office and the wider public sector.

Information and communications technology capability

In addition to the ICT capability factors listed for component 1 (page 7), the Office anticipates greater demand by the public to access the Australian honours and awards system online. The Office has commenced a process to streamline and simplify the nomination process for honours and awards by making user-friendly smart forms available on the Governor-General's website. The Office will continue to automate processes within the system to assist with reducing the time between the nomination and the announcement of an outcome.

A priority for the reporting period will be to make better use of available data within the honours and awards system to help promote greater diversity of recipients to better reflect Australian society.

Cooperation with others

The Office works with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on matters including policy, administration and promotion of Australian honours and awards; and with the Department of Defence in relation to Defence honours.

The Office also works with emergency service agencies around Australia to administer some of the awards; and with state and territory Government Houses to provide insignia and warrants ahead of local investiture ceremonies.



Risk oversight and management systems

Risk oversight and management is an integral part of sound management practice and an essential element of good governance. It is a primary focus and is taking on an even greater importance in 2020-2021 as the Office proactively plans and manages risk to ensure business continuity, workplace health and safety, and delivery against outcomes during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Office continues to actively manage risks associated with a changing physical security and cyber security environment to ensure that our systems remain robust, responsive and secure.

The Office actively manages risk in accordance with its Risk Management Plan, placing a focus on:

- Support for the Governor-General, including:
 - o Managing internal and external events
 - o Advising on a broad range of matters
 - o Developing and executing an effective community engagement program
- The effective stewardship of the official properties
- The effective administration of the Australian honours and awards system
- Maintaining and executing efficient and effective management systems
- Building and maintaining a strong, engaged and capable workforce.

The Deputy Official Secretary performs the role of the Chief Risk Officer for the Office. In accordance with the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy, the Office regularly reviews its risk management framework, risk register, settings and supporting plans to ensure risks are appropriately identified and risk controls are effectively implemented. Management and mitigation of these risks is further reinforced through the Office's daily operations and administrative practices.

The Office's risk assessment found that the types and levels of risk faced by the Office are consistent with those of other organisations of a similar size and complexity. Generally risks are being managed, however, a number of improvements to current controls have been identified that will further mitigate the potential for risks to impinge on the achievement of business objectives.

Six strategic risks were identified through the risk assessment process. The risk controls for those strategic risks are listed in the following table.

Strategic risk	Selected controls ¹
Failure to provide sound advice on constitutional,	Written professional advice sought where required Broad internal consultation with senior management
policy and contextual matters	 Reference to precedent Management framework and processes
matters	Increased individual accountability/responsibility through internal control framework
Failure to manage the internal and external events	Management framework and processesInternal communications strategy
program	Reference to precedent and experience
	 Engagement of specialist, high quality staff to manage the program
	 Standard Operating Procedures in place Liaison with relevant third parties
Failure to manage and	Regular meeting of the Property Sub-Committee
maintain the property portfolio	Capital projects identified in the Property Works PlanHeritage Plans
·	Landscape Management Plans
	Annual Condition Audits and SurveysWorks and Maintenance programs
	Compliance programsBuilding Management Systems
	Management oversight, close engagement and scrutiny
Physical and/or cyber security environment and/or incident/event affecting the	 Specialised armed security services operating 24 hours at both properties, and accompany the Governor-General for external commitments
performance of official duties	Security services have powers to detain and search potential offenders
duties	Technical security surveillance operating at both properties
	 Appropriate staff are subject to a security clearance prior (within the first 3 months) to commencing employment
	Strict visitor control policy and proceduresBusiness continuity planning and exercising
	Threat Assessments
	Secure gateway by external providerInternal firewall in place
Failure to provide adequate research and secretariat	Policies, processes and procedures Torgeted training (such as the Traines Case Officer Program)
support services to the	Targeted training (such as the Trainee Case Officer Program)Quality Assurance methodology
Honours advisory councils and committee	Liaison with PM&C and promotion strategiesTargeted recruitment and retention strategies
Failure to maintain a robust	Management, governance and compliance framework
governance system and culture and appropriate	 Mandatory training and leadership and development programs Establishment of the Creative Team and relevant project teams
management systems and	to meet performance objectives
practices	Performance support framework

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 $^{^{1}}$ This list represents the high-level strategic risks for the Office. A full list of risks and their treatments is maintained in the Office's Risk Management Plan and Risk Register.

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 performance. The Office recognises the need for a high level of accountability and places a strong emphasis on meeting its governance obligations and responsibilities.

The Deputy Official Secretary, assisted by the branch Directors and the Chief Financial Officer, supports 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 Office. The People and Services Branch also manages the official properties and coordinates physical security services. Some of these physical security services are provided by the Attorney-General's Department, Department of Home Affairs and Australian Federal Police.

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

- Management Committee (including the Property Sub-Committee, Information Technology Sub-Committee and the Security 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; branch Directors of People and Services, Honours and Awards, and Strategic Engagement; the Director of Communications and Creativity; and the Chief Financial Officer. The group meets monthly to monitor performance outcomes and consider strategic issues including emerging or ongoing risks. The committee assists the Official Secretary to meet his statutory responsibilities under the *Governor-General Act 1974* and the PGPA Act.

A three-person Audit Committee (with majority external members²) is responsible for providing independent advice 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.

² From 1 July 2021, all Audit Committee members will be external members as required by the PGPA Act and Rules.

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 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.



Performance

The Office has identified three organisational objectives to help achieve its purpose.

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

1.

Support the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley to uplift, encourage, inspire and celebrate Australians. 2.

Understand, preserve and share the rich stories of Government House and Admiralty House.

3.

Support and empower our people to be innovative, embrace change and work collaboratively to deliver impressive outcomes.

HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE IT

Consistent with the Governor-General and Mrs Hurley's priorities, design and deliver a program of meaningful outreach and engagement.

Celebrate endeavour and achievement, including through an honours and awards system that represents the diversity of Australia.

Use established networks, such as patronages and media channels, to engage, reach a broad range of audiences and amplify activity.

Optimise the guest experience at Government House and Admiralty House so that it is welcoming, warm and special.

Present the Houses and grounds to a high standard consistent with community expectations.

Preserve the condition of the Houses and grounds.

Make Government House and Admiralty House accessible for the benefit of all Australians.

Understand and document the history of the properties and provenance of our collection.

Become a leader in implementing sustainable environmental practices.

Be proud of where we work.

Promote a culture of accountability and innovation.

Apply project management and design thinking methodology to encourage new ideas, enhance collaboration across work areas and deliver impressive outcomes.

Empower and grow our people by building capability and capacity.

Maintain a robust governance framework.

Provide our staff the direction, resources, information and autonomy they require to deliver performance objectives.

Performance measures

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 households and properties 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.

Component 1	Support for the Governor-General							
Objective/s	Performance criteria	Key activities	Primary stakeholder/s	Qualitative and quantitative targets	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
1, 2 and 3	The Governor-General is satisfied with the level of advice and administrative support provided that enables him to successfully perform official duties.	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.	Governor- General, the Australian public, government agencies, community organisations with the support he receives to perform his official duties; and with the management of the official households and properties.	expresses satisfaction with the support he receives to perform his official duties; and with the management of the official households and	Governor- General's level of satisfaction to be assessed. Feedback to be sought from relevant stakeholders.	As for 2020-21.	As for 2021-22.	As for 2022-23.
2 and 3	The Governor-General is satisfied with the management of the households.	Personal support - providing support for Their Excellencies and hospitality services for official functions.	Governor- General	condition to be established in consultation with independent property services provider.	Governor- General's level of satisfaction to be assessed.	As for 2020-21.	As for 2021-22.	As for 2022-23.
2 and 3	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.	Administrative services - providing governance advice and administrative services to the Office and managing the Governor-General's official residences, including maintenance of property, equipment and grounds.	Responsible department, National Capital Authority, local government		Targets to be established after analysis of baseline of property condition. Property Works Program to be planned and implemented to meet established targets for property condition.	Targets to be established after analysis of 2020-21 baseline. Property Works Program to be planned and implemented to meet established targets for property condition.	Targets to be established after analysis of 2020-21 baseline. Property Works Program to be planned and implemented to meet established targets for property condition.	Targets to be established after analysis of 2020-21 baseline. Property Works Program to be planned and implemented to meet established targets for property condition.

Component 2		Administration of the Australian honours and awards system Primary Qualitative and						
Objective/s	Performance criteria	Key activities	stakeholder/s	quantitative targets	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
1 and 3	The Governor-General and other key stakeholders are satisfied with the administration of the Australian Honours and Awards system and support provided.	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.	Governor-General, Council for the Order of Australia, Australian Bravery Decorations Council, National Emergency Medal Committee, the Australian public, government agencies	General, The Governor-General and the Councils and Committee supported by the Office, express satisfaction with the support provided and activities conducted. The Office will, over the course of 2020-21, review performance criteria to enhance and further develop data sources and measures. The review will also consider the alignment between the performance measures, results, methodology and analysis.	Governor- General's, the Councils' and Committee's level of satisfaction to be assessed. Feedback to be sought from relevant stakeholders.	Target to be established after analysis of 2020-21 baseline.	Target to be established after analysis of 2020-21 baseline.	Target to be established after analysis o 2020-21 baseline.
1 and 3	Activities comply with the governing instruments for honours and awards, including the Constitution for the Order of Australia.	Undertaking the administrative tasks associated with the approval of recipients in the Australian honours system and subsequent announcement	Governor-General as Chancellor of the Order of Australia, Council for the Order of Australia		Governor- General's and the Council's level of satisfaction to be assessed.	As for 2020-21.	As for 2021-22.	As for 2022-23
1	The medals and insignia meet design specifications, adequate stock levels are maintained and control processes are adhered to.	where applicable. Procuring Australian honours insignia, warrants and investiture items. Facilitating the approval of, and changes to, governing instruments within the	Governor-General as Chancellor of the Order of Australia		Governor- General's level of satisfaction to be assessed.	As for 2020-21.	As for 2021-22.	As for 2022-23
		Australian honours system. Providing insignia to State/Territory Government Houses, service organisations and individuals for issue, and arrange local investitures.						

Component 2	Administration of the A	Australian honours and av	vards system (contin	ued)				
Objective/s	Performance criteria	Activities	Primary stakeholder/s					
1 and 3	Insignia and other resources for investitures and honours list announcements are accurate and issued in a timely manner.		Governor-General, Council for the Order of Australia, Australian Bravery Decorations Council, National Emergency Medal Committee, the Australian public, state and territory Government Houses		Governor- General's, the Councils', Committee's, and state and territory Government Houses level of satisfaction to be assessed.	As for 2020-21.	As for 2021-22.	As for 2022-23.

List of requirements

This corporate plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of:

- Subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act; and
- The PGPA Rule 2014.

The table details the requirements met by the Office's Corporate Plan and page number for each requirement.

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