



OFFICE OF PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL
STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS – 2024

Ms Meredith Leigh
First Parliamentary Counsel
Office of Parliamentary Counsel
Locked Bag 30
Kingston ACT 2604

By email: Meredith.Leigh@opc.gov.au

Dear Ms Leigh

We are pleased to provide you with a Ministerial Statement of Expectations (MSoE) for the Office of Parliamentary Counsel (OPC). The MSoE outlines the Government's priorities and objectives with respect to OPC's functions.

Ministerial Statements of Expectations provide greater clarity about government policies and objectives relevant to an agency in line with its statutory objectives, and the priorities the Minister expects it to observe in conducting its operations.

While the last MSoE issued to OPC was in 2012, our intention is to issue at least one MSoE to OPC in each parliamentary term.

As the responsible Commonwealth Ministers for the OPC under the *Parliamentary Counsel Act 1970* (the Act), this statement sets out our expectations of OPC.

We would appreciate your response to this letter in the form of a Statement of Intent by 2 weeks from the date of this letter. The Statement of Intent should outline how OPC proposes to meet the expectations set out in the attached MSoE.

To ensure transparency and accountability, the MSoE and your responding Statement of Intent should be published and made available on OPC's website. The Statement should also be integrated into your performance reporting process as required under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*, your 2024-25 corporate planning process and your annual report prepared for the 2024-25 reporting period.

Thank you for your timely assistance with this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Dreyfus'.

THE HON MARK DREYFUS KC MP
ATTORNEY-GENERAL

4 / 10 / 2024

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Gorman'.

THE HON PATRICK GORMAN MP
ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE
ATTORNEY-GENERAL

9 / 10 / 2024

Delivering the Government's policy priorities and objectives

The Government has a significant legislative reform agenda, which includes a number of very large and complex reform projects with short timelines for delivery. The Government recognises that, as the principal provider of legislative drafting services, OPC has a critical role in delivering its legislative agenda.

We expect OPC to support the Government in delivering its legislative priorities, including by continuing to:

- provide high-quality, timely legislative drafting services that are responsive to Government priorities, and
- support and work closely with the Parliamentary Business Committee as it manages the legislative program and prioritisation process.

Supporting Ministers

We expect OPC to support all Ministers in delivering their legislative priorities, including by continuing to:

- support instructing agencies and their Ministers to deliver legislative projects, including those that are large, complex, or time-sensitive.

Supporting the Australian Public Service

We expect OPC to support the Australian Public Service to assist Ministers, including by continuing to:

- contribute to broader efforts to enhance the management and delivery of legislative projects across the Commonwealth, and
- contribute to training and capacity-building efforts, to enhance capability across Commonwealth agencies to engage in the legislative process.

Maximising drafting capacity

We understand OPC requires experienced drafters for it to be able to implement the Government's legislative agenda. Noting that OPC has received additional resources from the Government to support expanded drafting capacity, we expect OPC to:

- allocate resources efficiently, ensuring resources are fully utilised to provide maximum drafting capacity
- continue efforts to increase drafting output, including through recruitment and training, and
- provide timely updates to us of any barriers to operating at maximum drafting capacity.

Maintaining Public Service best practice

With respect to further organisational matters, we expect OPC to:

- uphold and promote the Australian Public Service Values and Code of Conduct
- comply with the requirements under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and associated instrument and policies
- support its government lawyers to act consistently with the Australian Government Legal Service's Statement of Expectations of Australian Government Lawyers and General Counsel Charter (as applicable)
- demonstrate best practice in privacy, security and information management, and comply with the relevant legislative requirements, and
- publish its Statement of Intent outlining how OPC intends to implement this Statement of Expectations on its website, and subsequently reference the Statements in its Annual Report and Corporate Plan.

Relationship with Minister and portfolio

In support of these priorities, we expect that OPC will continue to operate in a way that promotes collaboration and demonstrates accountability and transparency. In particular, we expect OPC to:

- continue to work cooperatively with the Attorney-General's Department, and key stakeholders outside the portfolio including instructing agencies, their Ministers, and the Parliamentary Business Committee, to deliver the Government's legislative agenda
- be responsive to any requests for information from our offices and the department, and alert us to any significant events related to OPC's activities through clear, concise and timely advice, and

keep us informed in a timely and comprehensive way about OPC's performance, the management of its resources, and any other issues affecting its capacity to achieve its functions and the Government's priorities.