



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority



Corporate Plan 2021–22



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CEO's Introduction



As the CEO of the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA), I am pleased to present the IPEA Corporate Plan for 2021–22.

IPEA is committed to, and continues to deliver, quality in all aspects of our work, including advice, administration, reporting, audit and assurance activities. IPEA operates under the guidance of the Members of the Authority who lend extensive expertise to the organisation and make a valuable contribution.

Providing parliamentarians and their staff with the necessary services and support to undertake their roles remains a focus for IPEA. This focus is balanced with the expectation of the Australian public that taxpayers' funds are spent in accordance with the legislative framework.

The principles based framework for parliamentarians' work and travel expenses is set out in the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (PBR Act) which commenced in 2018. The review of the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* (IPEA Act), the legislation that enables IPEA's role and functions, has not yet commenced. Responsibility for the review rests with the Department of Finance and it is expected to be completed during the term of this Corporate Plan.

In applying the framework, IPEA continues to provide advice and administration for travel related expenses and oversight for all work expenses of parliamentarians. IPEA also provides advice and administers travel related expenses, including oversight, for the staff of parliamentarians.

Our priorities continue to be:

- educating and raising awareness of the framework that underpins parliamentarians' work expenses
- researching and applying best practice to the administration of travel and travel related work expenses
- ensuring the role of a transparent integrity agency is at the forefront of our decision making.

This Corporate Plan is presented under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act). Consistent with the requirements under subsection 35(1) of the PGPA Act, the plan covers the periods 2021–22 through to 2024–25. The plan sets out the objectives, the environment, the resources we use and how we track our progress as an independent statutory authority.

Annwyn Godwin

Chief Executive Officer
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority

1 July 2021



Our Purpose

IPEA continues to deliver on our stated objectives, underpinned by our values while collaboratively seeking to reinforce a culture of accountability and transparency in the use of parliamentary work expenses under the PBR Act.

Our approach tailors our engagement—education, raising awareness, compliance and enforcement—as appropriate.

Important functions include:

- providing advice to parliamentarians and *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S)) on travel expenses and travel allowances
- administering claims for travel expenses and travel allowances of parliamentarians and their staff
- monitoring the travel expenses and travel allowances of parliamentarians and MOP(S) Act staff
- conducting audit and assurance activities relating to:
 - all work expenses, travel expenses and travel allowances claimed by parliamentarians
 - travel expenses and travel allowances claimed by MOP(S) Act staff.
- preparing regular reports relating to:
 - all work expenses, including travel expenses and travel allowances claimed by parliamentarians and travel expenses and travel allowances claimed by MOP(S) Act staff.

Through our tailored engagement, we:

- provide advice, educate and raise awareness about the parliamentary business resources framework and the principles to consider when making decisions about the use of taxpayer money
- provide transparency to the Australian public through reporting the use of taxpayer money by parliamentarians and their staff on work expenses.



Operating Environment

The legislative framework (IPEA Act and the PBR Act) and associated subordinate legislation, are due for independent review into their operation as soon as practicable after 30 June 2020. Responsibility for conducting these reviews rests with the Department of Finance. When completed, these reviews will add to the advice from the Australian National Audit Office to strengthen IPEA's role as an integrity agency.

IPEA has refined its risk-based approach to its statutory audit function, through the development of a documented risk based strategy and plan for conducting its assurance activities. Implementation of the strategy and plan this financial year further strengthens IPEA's commitment to provide greater accountability and transparency in relation to the use of travel and work expenses.




IPEA continues to work with the Department of Finance to develop the Parliamentary Expenses Management System (PEMS). This Department of Finance project, when completed, streamlines processes for administering travel expenses, enables timely reporting of expenditure and improves audit and assurance capability. Final implementation of PEMS is expected in 2022.

The uncertainty of operating during the pandemic continues to be a challenge. Through the pandemic, IPEA staff have demonstrated high levels of commitment to maintaining the integrity and transparency of the parliamentary business expenses framework.



Capability

While delivering our objectives in this complex environment, we focus on:

-  An evidence based approach, and innovative application of our data and analytical capability to strengthen IPEA's administration, advisory, reporting and audit functions
-  Maintaining and fostering effective relationships with parliamentarians and other stakeholders while reinforcing our independence and expertise
-  Supporting a culture of collaboration, consultation and flexibility through values-based leadership that encourages resilience, inclusiveness and diversity in our workforce

IPEA has a framework for workforce planning, with some elements well established and others requiring review with the implementation of PEMS. This significant technological change in 2022 requires the redesign of some roles to reflect higher work value post implementation.

During 2021–22 IPEA is linking the Learning and Development Strategy with the Performance and Capability Policy and other relevant policies. This includes an overarching strategy setting out the goals for the development of employees in the agency and information on the relevant administrative processes.



Risk Oversight and Management

As a statutory authority, the foundations of our governance are the IPEA Act, the PGPA Act and the *Public Service Act 1999*.

IPEA engages with risk to deliver services efficiently and effectively. Our risk framework is regularly reviewed to ensure our Risk Management Policy and Framework is fit for purpose. The policy and framework provides guidance to our employees on managing risk and applies to all activities, employees and contractors. It is designed to assist decision making and foster a positive risk culture throughout the organisation. The policy and framework assists with understanding and managing risks shared with other entities. Wherever possible, a proactive approach to risk management is preferred.

IPEA's risk management policy and framework addresses the 8 important areas of: people capability; information management; business processes; legal and compliance; culture and leadership; stakeholders; assurance and service delivery; and governance.

Within our operating environment we aim to innovatively pursue opportunities, adopt new technology, achieve objectives and meet our responsibilities. The integrity of our people and the security and accuracy of the information we hold are critical to our success. IPEA has a low risk tolerance for:

- dishonest, deceptive or fraudulent conduct
- the unauthorised disclosure of official information
- dangers to the health, safety and wellbeing of IPEA's Members, staff, contractors and visitors.

The Audit and Risk Committee plays an important role in ensuring we have effective risk management practices, providing advice to the Chief Executive Officer and senior executives on the appropriateness of the system of risk oversight and strategies to manage key risks. IPEA is committed to improving our risk culture and capability. During 2021–22, a range of training options will be developed to promote positive risk behaviours and ensure risk management is part of our core skills.



Performance

Consistent with the Portfolio Budget Statements 2021–22, IPEA's performance targets over the next four years are set out in the table below.

Year	Performance criteria	Targets
2021–22 2022–23 2023–24 2024–25	Travel — Advice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear and timely advice to parliamentarians and MOP(S) staff on travel and related expenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice is provided in accordance with IPEA's published service level standards, which include measurements for quality and timeliness.
	Travel — Claims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate and timely processing of claims for travel expenses and allowances relating to parliamentarians and MOP(S) staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Claims for travel expenses and allowances are processed in accordance with IPEA's published service level standards, which include measurements for accuracy and timeliness.
	Data and Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing transparency through the compilation of reports detailing the work resources of current and former parliamentarians and the travel resources of MOP(S) staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports relating to work expenses for parliamentarians and their staff are prepared and provided as per IPEA's published service level standards.
	Audit and Assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting assurance activities on the work resources of parliamentarians and the travel resources of MOP(S) staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All parliamentarians' offices are subject to one or more form of assurance activities during the financial year in accordance with IPEA's published service level standards and procedures (protocols and factsheets).

