

Advantages of incumbency

Sitting politicians receive millions in public funding that support re-election

Every election cycle, each Member of Parliament is entitled to at least \$2.9 million, and each Senator to at least \$2.6 million worth of salary, office and travel allowances, and staff. These resources can be used towards re-election campaigns, creating barriers to entry for challengers that help explain why 90% of incumbents get re-elected.

Discussion paper

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Summary

Incumbent parliamentarians rarely lose their seats to challengers. Over the last three federal elections, an average of 90% of incumbent Members of Parliament (MPs) have retained their seats. Of the 398 of incumbents who contested their seats, 40 were unseated, of which just 11 lost to challengers who were independents or from minor parties.

One explanation might be that incumbency comes with significant financial advantages. Parliamentarians receive financial resources in the form of their salaries, as well as a number of other benefits and allowances. These include—but are not limited to—the parliamentarian’s office, printing and travel allowances, and electorate and personal staff. These resources help parliamentarians represent their electorate, from responding to constituent inquiries and attending local events to participating in parliamentary processes.

Incumbent parliamentarians also enjoy financial security and mobility, affording them the ability to plan for the future. While there are limits on the ways that parliamentarians can use the resources conferred by their office, they are explicitly permitted to use their resources to solicit their own re-election. This is an inbuilt advantage for incumbents during elections.

This report enumerates the financial entitlements of federal parliamentarians. It reveals that Members of Parliament receive at least \$996,381 and Senators at least \$885,840 worth of incumbency advantages annually. Over a three-year election cycle, this triples to \$2.98 million for Members of Parliament, and \$2.65 million for Senators. The advantage is increased by the fact that parties and parliamentarians can receive tax-deductible donations at any time during an election cycle, while new candidates can only receive tax-deductible donations towards their campaigns between the declaration of their nomination and election day (a matter of weeks), unless they register their own party. On top of these advantages, established parties and candidates will have received public election funding at previous elections, which can be spent on later campaigns.

Non-financial benefits such as access to the electoral roll, the Parliamentary Library and research from party-associated think tanks also advantage incumbents. The party in government also benefits from departmental advice and knowledge of (and control over) the timing of the election. These advantages create opportunities for incumbents to use their funding advantages more strategically, effectively furthering their head start.

Together these advantages create a significant barrier to entry for challengers. A high barrier to entry limits the competition required for a healthy democracy, reducing vibrancy, diversity and innovation into politics. Campaign finance reforms intended to reduce the

influence of money in politics should be carefully designed to avoid exacerbating existing incumbency advantages, and instead lower the barrier to entry.

Table 1: Annual entitlements for an incumbent parliamentarian, as of 1 July 2023

Entitlement Expenditure	Incumbency benefit	
	Member of Parliament	Senator
Office expenses	\$150,319 + \$1.121 per enrolled voter (smallest electorate is Solomon in NT with 71,843 enrolled voters, entitled to \$80,536; largest is O'Connor in WA with 117,954 enrolled voters, entitled to \$132,226) + office spaces (<i>undisclosed</i>)	\$120,314 + office spaces (<i>undisclosed</i>)
Electorate allowance	\$32,000–\$46,000 (depending on size of electorate)	\$32,000
Private-plated vehicle or self-drive car	Vehicle or \$19,500 additional electorate allowance + servicing, maintenance, insurance and fuel	Vehicle or \$19,500 additional electorate allowance + servicing, maintenance, insurance and fuel
Transport in large electorates	\$0–\$120,000 (depending on size of electorate)	\$0 (ACT) \$14,860–\$26,490 (states) \$65,760 (NT)
Travel allowance	\$299 standard travel allowance per night *72 nights of sitting weeks + ~10 additional nights (\$296– \$614 per night) (to a maximum of 120 nights total) = \$24,488–\$27,668 + Flights	\$299 standard travel allowance per night *72 nights of sitting weeks + ~10 additional nights (\$296– \$614 per night) (to a maximum of 120 nights total) = \$24,488–\$27,668 + Flights
Nominated traveller	\$289 standard travel allowance per night *72 nights of sitting weeks + ~10 additional nights (\$253– \$624 per night) (to a maximum of 120 nights total) = \$23,338–\$27,048 + Flights	\$289 standard travel allowance per night *72 nights of sitting weeks + ~10 additional nights (\$253– \$624 per night) (to a maximum of 120 nights total) = \$23,338–\$27,048 + Flights
Minimum subtotal	\$330,181	\$219,640
Maximum subtotal	\$519,581	\$289,110

Table 1 continued

Salaries and staff	Member of Parliament	Senator
Electorate staff	\$325,703–\$386,650 (five staff) + \$82,275–\$102,765 (electorate staff allowance) 15.4% superannuation <i>MPs for larger electorates are entitled to more staff and a higher electoral staff allowance</i>	\$325,703–\$386,650 (five staff) + \$82,275 (electorate staff allowance) 15.4% superannuation
Personal staff	Allocated on a discretionary basis by the Prime Minister, on salaries of \$76,000–\$304,000 (plus \$20,000–\$33,000 personal staff allowance) 15.4% superannuation	Allocated on a discretionary basis by the Prime Minister, on salaries of \$76,000–\$304,000 (plus \$20,000–\$33,000 personal staff allowance) 15.4% superannuation
Salary	\$217,060 15.4% superannuation <i>Members with additional responsibilities receive higher salaries</i>	\$217,060 15.4% superannuation <i>Senators with additional responsibilities receive higher salaries</i>
Electorate support budget	\$32,090–\$43,922 for 110 nights of electorate staff travel allowances + transport (flights or car) (or \$2,000–\$5,000 for electorates close to Canberra) \$39,162–\$65,269 for 150–250 days of relief staffing 15.4% superannuation	\$32,090–\$43,922 for 110 nights of electorate staff travel allowances + transport (flights or car) (or \$2,000–\$5,000 for electorates close to Canberra) \$39,162–\$65,269 for 150–250 days of relief staffing 15.4% superannuation
Minimum subtotal	\$666,200	\$666,200
Maximum subtotal	\$815,738	\$795,167
	Member of Parliament	Senator
Minimum total	\$996,381	\$885,840
Maximum total	\$1,335,319	\$1,084,277

Note: Minimum and maximum totals are calculated for parliamentarians with no additional responsibilities or discretionary allowances.

Source: Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (n.d.) *Offices, resources and budgets*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets>; Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (n.d.) *Pay and employment*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/pay-and-employment>; Budget Paper 2 (2023) *Parliamentary Workplace Reform*, p.114 <https://budget.gov.au/content/bp2/index.htm>

Introduction

Parliamentarians receive extensive resources to communicate with the public, assist constituents, respond to inquiries, attend public events, play ceremonial roles, and consult and receive feedback. These resources include, but are not limited to, the parliamentarian's salary; office, printing and travel allowances; and electorate and personal staff. The provision of these resources is necessary and appropriate to facilitate the parliamentarian's duty to represent their constituents.

However, these resources are also available to parliamentarians during election campaigns. The *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017*, which set out how resources may and may not be used, prohibit the solicitation of support for parties or other candidates, but explicitly permit parliamentarians to use their office and printing allowances "in support of [their] own re-election".¹ This provides incumbents with an advantage over challengers, who have no such resources available to them.

This advantage is increased by the financial security and mobility that incumbents' resources grant them. Together, these resources and advantages make it more difficult for challengers than incumbents to conduct a successful election campaign.

It follows that incumbents rarely lose.

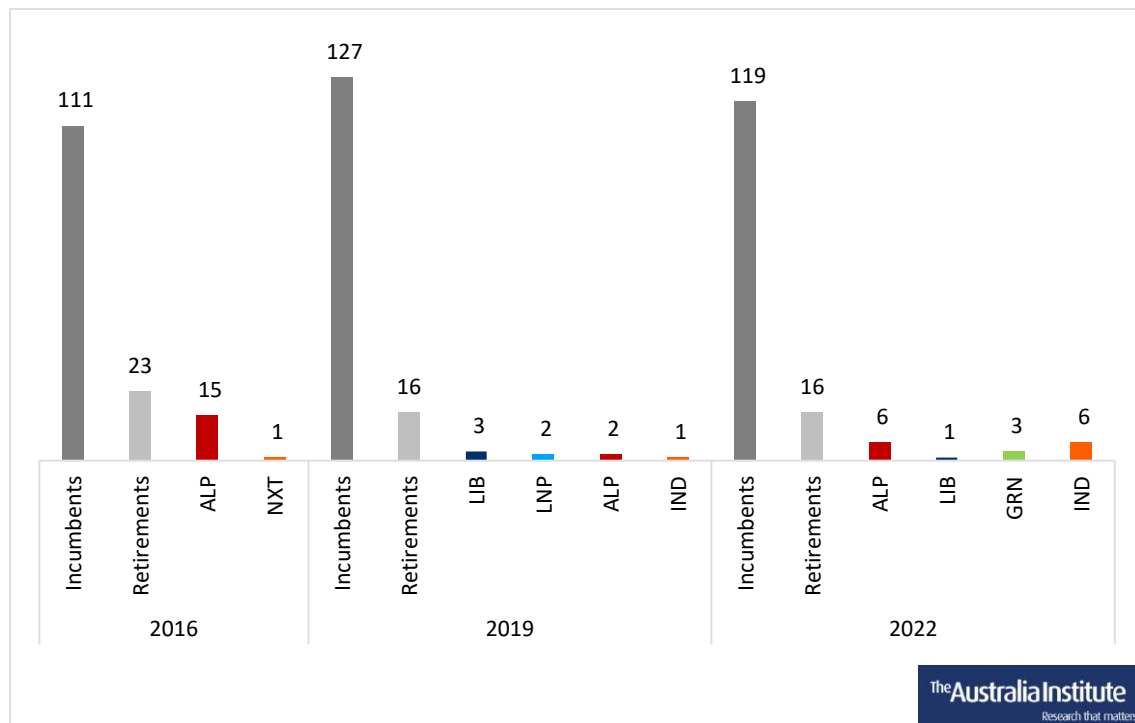
In the 2016 federal election, just 16 incumbent MPs (13%) lost their seats (excluding seats that changed hands after the retirement of a member)²—15 to Labor candidates and one to Rebekha Sharkie of Centre Alliance (Figure 1). In 2019, just eight incumbent MPs (6%) were defeated by challengers, one of whom was an independent (Zali Steggall). Although the 2022 election was a high watermark for new independent and Green MPs, just 16 incumbent MPs (12%) were defeated, six by independent candidates and three by Greens candidates (Figure 1).³

¹ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2021) *Conditions for claiming*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets/parliamentary-business-resources-obligations/conditions-claiming>

² For example, there was no incumbent in Fowler in 2022 when independent Dai Le defeated Labor candidate Kristina Keneally.

³ In 2022, one defeated incumbent MP was from a minor party (Craig Kelly, who defected to the United Australia Party from the Liberals).

Figure 1: Re-elected MPs vs new entrants in the 2016, 2019, and 2022 Australian federal elections



In the Senate, multi-member electorates mean Senators who lose office are not replaced one-to-one. However, comparing overall party numbers shows that the relative strength of parties in the Senate typically changes little from election to election.

Recent discussions of campaign finance regulation have contemplated imposing donation and expenditure caps for parties and candidates during elections. For example, consideration of electoral expenditure caps appears in the terms of reference of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters' review of the 2022 election.⁴ Although these well-intentioned reforms could limit the role of donations in politics, they could also have the unintended side-effect of entrenching incumbency advantages by raising a financial barrier to entry for challengers. Donation caps in Victoria and NSW and expenditure caps in NSW have already been identified as a hurdle to independent candidates in state elections.⁵

This paper examines the entitlements of federal parliamentarians, to illustrate the scale of the advantages of political incumbency that should be taken into account in the design and implementation of any campaign finance reforms.

⁴ Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (2022) *Inquiry into the 2022 federal election terms of reference*, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Electoral_Matters/2022federalelection/Terms_of_Reference

⁵ Hutchinson (2022) *Climate 200 faces donation hurdles in NSW, Victoria*, <https://www.afr.com/politics/climate-200-faces-donation-hurdles-in-nsw-victoria-20220626-p5awot>

Expenditure

OFFICE EXPENSES

Federal Members of Parliament (MPs) in the House of Representatives are entitled to \$150,319.41 in office expenses per year, plus a “distribution component” of \$1.121 for every enrolled voter (averaging at 110,000 individuals) in their electorate for distribution of materials. Senators are entitled to \$120,313.56 for office expenses.⁶

Parliamentarians can claim for the following expenses:

- Office stationery and supplies, minor office equipment, and information communication and technology (ICT) accessories;
- Additional telecommunications and ICT;
- Software and cloud-based services;
- Printing, production, distribution and communication;
- Postal vote applications;
- Publications;
- Courier and freight costs;
- Postage meter charges and Australia Post charge accounts;
- Flags, nationhood materials and wreaths;
- Mobile office signage, facilities and equipment;
- Data products and data validation services;
- Media monitoring services; and
- AUSLAN interpreting services and closed captioning services.⁷

The leader of the party is also entitled to free postage, excluding “bulk mail”. The meaning of the term “bulk mail” is not strictly defined.⁸

These expense categories include materials that may be useful in, or ahead of, an election campaign, such as printing and mailing postal vote applications; printed and electronic content development; and design, artwork, photography, video and sound services.⁹ The

⁶ Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Office expenses budget for 2022-23*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets/office-expenses-budget/annual-budget-office-expenses>

⁷ Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Office expenses budget for 2022-23*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets/office-expenses-budget/annual-budget-office-expenses>

⁸ Personal correspondence with former staffer (2022)

⁹ Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2021) *Printing and communication*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets/office-expenses-budget/printing-and-communication>

printing and communications allowance cannot be used for electoral materials, but may be used for materials with other primary purposes.

The distinction between types of materials and primary purpose is opaque enough that there is room for creativity in the design of communications materials. For example, events that include a strong promotional element for a parliamentarian—such as town hall meetings, community coffee corners, and forums on issues of interest—are arguably part of a parliamentarian’s role. However, the fact that advertising for such events is covered by the printing and communications allowance is a clear advantage to an incumbent. Challengers’ events would most likely require fundraising to achieve a similar level of advertising and associated name recognition.

Office expenses can be used to purchase datasets, including constituents’ contact and demographic details, and for data validation services. Obtaining these contact details means that incumbent politicians can use them for email distribution services, bulk and broadcast SMS, and placement of content (such as promotional material for events like those described above) in printed and electronic publications distributed by third parties, including news outlets—all of which can be covered by office expenses. Office expenses can also be used for online and phone survey tools that can guide campaign strategy;¹⁰ design services; website construction, hosting and maintenance; and social media content creation and distribution, advertising, and monitoring services.

Office expenses can also be used to hire contractors.¹¹ Interestingly, it appears that office expenses cannot be used for some important elements of a parliamentarian’s work, such as venue hire for community events or paying expert speakers for their time.

There are some limitations on the contents of communications materials: parliamentarians are not allowed to provide instructions on how to fill out a ballot, nor can they solicit support—votes, subscriptions, memberships, and/or financial support—for political parties or other candidates. Parliamentarians may, however, “use [their] work expenses in support of [their] own re-election, but not to produce, communicate or distribute material that seeks the election or re-election of any other person or to solicit a vote for a political party”. These materials must not say “Vote 1 [the incumbent]” or describe how to vote or fill in a ballot paper, but they can say “Vote for [the incumbent]”.¹²

¹⁰ Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2021) *Printing and communication*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets/office-expenses-budget/printing-and-communication>

¹¹ Personal correspondence with former staffer (2023)

¹² Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2021) *Conditions for claiming*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets/parliamentary-business-resources-obligations/conditions-claiming>

Parliamentarians also receive one office space in their electorate and one at Parliament House. Lease, furnishing, equipment, and maintenance costs for these offices are covered by Ministerial and Parliamentary Services,¹³ and the spaces are allocated at the discretion of the Special Minister of State.¹⁴ The value of funding available for electorate offices was unavailable in the course of this research, but is likely to depend on location. The value of office space in Parliament House is heightened by the access to Parliament, and proximity to other MPs, the press gallery, departments, and stakeholders.

Second and third offices, known as satellite offices, are reimbursed to a value of:¹⁵

- \$56,047.80 for electorates 3,500 km²–5,000 km² (if approved by the Minister);
- \$56,047.80 for electorates 5,000 km²–25,000 km²; or
- \$22,419.13 for electorates larger than 25,000 km².

These entitlements set incumbents up with fully operational offices that can be used as a foundation for a re-election campaign.

ELECTORATE ALLOWANCE

Parliamentarians receive an electorate allowance as part of their remuneration. Members of Parliament are entitled to between \$32,000 and \$46,000, depending on the size of their electorate, and Senators are entitled to \$32,000 per year.¹⁶

This electorate allowance is intended to be spent on electorate-specific items, such as marquees for community events, signage, etc. However, parliamentarians are also permitted to keep this allowance, in full or in part, as additional remuneration. If they choose to keep the electorate allowance as salary, they must pay tax on it.¹⁷

¹³ Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Office types and office resources*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets/office-management-property/office-types-and-office-resources>

¹⁴ Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017, s33

¹⁵ Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Office types and office resources*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets/office-management-property/office-types-and-office-resources>

¹⁶ Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2021) *Electorate allowance*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/pay-and-employment/parliamentarians/electorate-allowance>

¹⁷ Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2021) *Electorate allowance*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/pay-and-employment/parliamentarians/electorate-allowance>

TRAVEL

Private-plated vehicle

Federal MPs and Senators are eligible for a private-plated vehicle. If they choose not to take such a vehicle, they can opt for an additional \$19,500 per year in electorate allowance in its stead. If they do take the private-plated vehicle, the Australian Government covers the costs of servicing, maintenance, insurance and fuel. Parliamentarians are limited in the additional transport costs they can claim in circumstances where they could reasonably use the vehicle or allowance.¹⁸

Some parliamentarians may request an additional Canberra-based vehicle, but it must be “must be used for the dominant purpose of conducting parliamentary business”.¹⁹

Travel allowances

Parliamentarians travel in the course of their jobs and claim the cost of flights or other transportation through the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority, outside of any electorate budget.²⁰ They can also “claim an allowance for accommodation, meals and incidental expenses for each overnight stay in accommodation in Australia that is not their home base”, where the dominant purpose of the trip is party political duties in Canberra or electorate duties in their electorate. There are typically between 18 and 20 sitting weeks in a year, with four nights minimum expected in Canberra, totalling a minimum of 72 nights per year. Parliamentarians are also entitled to 10 nights of travel for party political duties outside of Canberra or electorate duties outside of their electorate.²¹ The travel allowance is available for a maximum of 120 nights per year, with additional travel allocated at the discretion of the Special Minister of State.²²

¹⁸ Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2021) *Private-plated vehicles: Parliamentarians*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets/other-work-expenses-and-resources/private-plated-vehicles-parliamentarians>

¹⁹ Department of Finance, Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2021) *Canberra-based vehicles: Parliamentarians*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/offices-resources-and-budgets/other-work-expenses-and-resources/canberra-based-vehicles-parliamentarians>

²⁰ Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (n.d.) *Travel within Australia*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel/parliamentarians-travel/travel-within-australia>

²¹ Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (n.d.) *Travel allowances*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel/parliamentarians-travel/travel-allowances>

²² Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020–23*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/MOPSEnterpriseAgreement2020-23.pdf>

Travel allowances make a distinction between commercial and non-commercial rates, and are allocated based on the location of travel.

When travelling somewhere other than Canberra, most MPs and Senators will receive standard travel allowances, ranging between \$296 and \$614 per night—the figure is adjusted depending on the actual cost of travel to the area in question, usually driven by remoteness and availability of accommodation. Capital city commercial rates range between \$299 and \$467 per night. Parliamentarians with extra responsibilities (the Leader/Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Speaker/Deputy Speaker, Chief Government Whip/Opposition Whip, leaders of minority parties, and Chairs/Deputy Chairs of parliamentary committees) receive a slightly higher allowance, ranging between \$299 and \$639 per night. If a parliamentarian stays in non-commercial accommodation, they receive one-third the commercial rate.²³

Because of the administrative burden of processing the huge volume of travel expenses to Canberra, the government instead allocates parliamentarians a standard travel allowance of \$299 per night.²⁴ In the course of this research, it did not appear that there was a limit on the number of nights in Canberra for which a parliamentarian could access this travel allowance, provided that the dominant purpose of the trip was party political duties. In Canberra, there is no distinction between commercial and non-commercial rates, and receipts are not required for processing. While the standard travel allowance is intended to be spent on accommodation, meals, and the incidental expenses of travel, the spending is unregulated. If a person can find cheaper accommodation and meals, they can keep the remainder of the allowance. They are not required to declare this as income or pay tax on this remainder.

With 72 nights expected in Canberra at a \$299 travel allowance per night, plus a minimum of 10 additional nights of electorate duties at a minimum of \$296 travel allowance per night, parliamentarians receive at least \$24,488 in travel allowance entitlements.

Nominated traveller

The 2023 Budget included provisions for all parliamentarians to nominate one electorate staff member as a nominated traveller, who can “travel for parliamentary business without debit from their Electorate Support Budget”, including the cost of flights or other

²³ Remuneration Tribunal (2022) *Remuneration Tribunal (Members of Parliament) Determination 2022*, pp 7, 12–15, <https://www.remtribunal.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-08/MP%202022%20-%20Compilation%20no.%20.pdf>; Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (2022) *Parliamentarians travelling allowance rates – current*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel/parliamentarians-travel/travel-allowances/parliamentarians-travelling-allowance-rates-current>

²⁴ Remuneration Tribunal (2022) *Remuneration Tribunal (Members of Parliament) Determination 2022*, <https://www.remtribunal.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-08/MP%202022%20-%20Compilation%20no.%20.pdf>

transportation, and employee travel allowances. This entitlement cannot be shared among multiple electorate staff members. Nominated traveller expenses will be absorbed by the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority, not included in any electorate budget.²⁵ This entitlement will commence on 1 July 2023.²⁶

Nominated travellers are entitled to a maximum of 120 nights of travel (unless permitted more by the Special Minister of State), and are required to adhere to employee travel allowance rates. Assuming the nominated traveller is required to travel on commercial rates with their MP or Senator, this would amount to 72 nights expected in Canberra with a standard travel allowance of \$289 per night, plus a minimum of 10 additional nights of electorate duties at a minimum travel allowance of \$253 per night, for a total of at least \$23,338 in nominated traveller entitlements.²⁷

Transport in large electorates

Parliamentarians in electorates with an area greater than 10,000 km² have access to a Transport in Large Electorates budget.²⁸ This is allocated as follows:

- Senators:
 - \$14,860 for NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania;
 - \$26,490 for Queensland and Western Australia; and
 - \$65,760 for the Northern Territory.
- Members of Parliament:
 - \$10,420 for electorates 10,000 km²–25,000 km²;
 - \$21,160 for electorates 25,000 km²–100,000 km²;
 - \$38,190 for electorates 100,000 km²–300,000 km²; and
 - \$120,000 for electorates larger than 300,00 km².

²⁵ Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (n.d.) *Employee travel*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel/employees>

²⁶ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2023) *Additional electorate staff resources and changes to the nominated traveller provision*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/news/2023/additional-electorate-staff-resources-and-changes-nominated-traveller-provision>

²⁷ Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (2022) *Employees travel allowance rates – current*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel-employee-travel/employees-travel-allowance-rates-current>

²⁸ Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (n.d.) *Travel within Australia*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel/parliamentarians-travel/travel-within-australia>

Staff and salaries

REMUNERATION

The base salary for sitting members is \$217,060, a figure that increases for members with additional responsibilities, such as Ministers, Speakers, Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs, and those who occupy other leadership positions.²⁹ In addition, any electorate allowance that is not spent can be kept as salary provided the parliamentarian pays tax on it (as discussed under “Electorate allowance”, above).

Parliamentarians and their staff also receive generous superannuation contributions, of 15.4% of their wage. Superannuation is calculated including private-plated vehicle allowance, and corporate responsibility allowance (for Work Health & Safety Officers, First Aid Officers, Emergency Officers and Staff Assistance Officers).³⁰

This is considerably higher than the super guarantee of 10.5% that applies to all workers.³¹

STAFF

Electorate staff

Parliamentarians are entitled to four full time equivalent electorate staff. Federal MPs can employ a fifth member of staff if their electorate has two offices, and a sixth if the electorate has a third office. As of 1 July 2023, every parliamentarian will be entitled to one additional full time equivalent electorate staff member – so each parliamentarian will have five staff, or six if they have two offices, or seven if they have three.³² Additional staff can be employed if approved by the Prime Minister.

Electorate Officers’ salaries are divided into classes:

- Electorate Officer A: \$56,067–\$69,646;

²⁹ Remuneration Tribunal (2022) *Remuneration Tribunal (Members of Parliament) Determination 2022*, <https://www.remtribunal.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-08/MP%202022%20-%20Compilation%20no.%20.pdf>

³⁰ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Superannuation: staff*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/pay-and-employment/mops-act-employment/during-employment/superannuation-staff>

³¹ Australian Government (2023) *Superannuation, Super for employers*, <https://business.gov.au/finance/superannuation>

³² Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2023) *Additional electorate staff resources and changes to the nominated traveller provision*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/news/2023/additional-electorate-staff-resources-and-changes-nominated-traveller-provision>

- Electorate Officer B: \$67,880–\$79,251; and
- Electorate Officer C: \$77,809–\$87,645.

Parliamentarians may decide to divide their officers as: one C, two Bs, and two As (salary total between \$325,703 and \$385,439) or four Bs and one A (salary total between \$327,587 and \$386,650).³³ Parliamentarians who have two or three offices must employ their sixth or seventh additional staff at the level of Electorate Officer B.³⁴ See the Appendix for more details on salary ranges.

Electorate staff usually have a clause in their contracts that allows them to receive additional remuneration on top of the stated salary, as a bonus (in place of time off in lieu) to compensate them for the additional hours they work. The amount of additional salary varies and is allocated at the discretion of the employing MP or Senator. This additional salary comes out of the electorate staff allowance (ESA). Every electorate is entitled to an ESA level of \$65,568. Electorates with two offices are entitled to an ESA level of \$77,862 and those with three offices to an ESA level of \$86,058.³⁵ As of 1 July 2023, all offices will be entitled to an additional \$16,707 in ESA to reflect the 2023 Budget provision for an extra staffer (Electorate Officer B).³⁶

Personal staff

In addition to electorate staff, parliamentarians may be allocated personal staff positions. Personal staff are allocated at the discretion of the Prime Minister to assist with duties beyond the scope of the electorate. The number of staff varies among parties at the discretion of the Prime Minister, and parliamentarians at the discretion of the party leader.

As of October 2022, the Government ministry had 472 personal employees, the Opposition shadow ministry 102 and the Greens 19.³⁷ The Morrison Government assigned 4 personal

³³ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020–23*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/MOPSEnterpriseAgreement2020-23.pdf>

³⁴ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2023) *Additional electorate staff resources and changes to the nominated traveller provision*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/news/2023/additional-electorate-staff-resources-and-changes-nominated-traveller-provision>

³⁵ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020–23*, pp 25–28, 62, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/MOPSEnterpriseAgreement2020-23.pdf>

³⁶ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2023) *Additional electorate staff resources and changes to the nominated traveller provision*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/news/2023/additional-electorate-staff-resources-and-changes-nominated-traveller-provision>; Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Electorate staff allowance*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-10/ESA%20Rates%20-%205.8.22.pdf>

³⁷ Wilkinson (2022) *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Act government staffing table as at 1 October 2022*, pp 1–7, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Senate_estimates/fpa/2022-23_Budget_estimates_October_November/finance

employees to each (non-Greens) crossbencher; the Albanese Government assigns crossbench Senators and regional MPs two and other crossbench MPs one for a total of 28.³⁸ This amounts to about 620 personal staff overall, or 2.7 per parliamentarian.

Salary ranges for personal staff are between \$76,000 and \$304,000 per year. Under previous governments some personal staff of Ministers negotiated higher pay,³⁹ but the Albanese Government indicates that this does not currently take place.⁴⁰ Personal staff are entitled to travel allowances. Some senior personal staff are also entitled to a private-plated vehicle allowance.⁴¹ Personal staff are entitled to personal staff allowance (PSA), the equivalent of ESA (discussed above). PSA can range from \$19,922 to \$32,977 depending on position.⁴² See the Appendix for more salary details.

Regulations for staff

Government determination says that electorate officers are “employed to assist the Senator or Member to carry out duties as a Member of Parliament, and not for party political purposes”, but does not define party political purposes.⁴³ Personal staff are not forbidden from undertaking party political activities.⁴⁴ The APS has guidelines on how staff can participate in politics in their capacity as private citizens, but this does not impose limits on what staff can do to support their parliamentarian during an election period.⁴⁵

Staff superannuation is calculated including their staff allowances (for both personal and electorate staff).

³⁸ Wilkinson (2022) *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Act government staffing table as at 1 October 2022*, p 7

³⁹ Creighton (2018) *Pay soars for Turnbull, Shorten staff*, <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/politics/pay-soars-for-turnbull-shorten-staff/news-story/f12000a2a43e70705297062feb5d352d>

⁴⁰ Wilkinson (2022) *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 Act government staffing table as at 1 October 2022*, p 12

⁴¹ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Private-plated vehicles: staff*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/pay-and-employment/mops-act-employment/during-employment/private-plated-vehicles-staff#rhs-forms>

⁴² Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020–23*, pp 24–25, 63, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/MOPSEnterpriseAgreement2020-23.pdf>

⁴³ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (n.d.) *Employment of electorate officers*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/circulars/employment-electorate-officers>

⁴⁴ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022) *Review of the Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984 (Cth)*, pp 103–105, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/review-members-parliament-staff-mops-act-1984-0>

⁴⁵ Australian Public Service Commission (n.d.) *Section 6: employees as citizens*, <https://www.apsc.gov.au/publication/aps-values-and-code-conduct-practice/section-6-employees-citizens>

Electorate support budget

The electorate support budget is for travel for electorate employees who are not the nominated traveller, and for the employment of relief staff. The amount is calculated based on the size of the electorate, the number of electorate offices, and the distance from Canberra.⁴⁶ Changes to electorate support budget are made at the discretion of the Special Minister of State. Electorate support budget does not roll over into subsequent financial years.⁴⁷

ELECTORATE STAFF TRAVEL

The electorate staff travel component of the electorate support budget is calculated for each office based on:⁴⁸

- 20 return economy airfares between the primary electorate office and Canberra, as well as travel to and from the relevant airports; or
 - For electorate offices within 150 km of Canberra, motor vehicle allowance for 20 return trips;
- 110 nights of travel allowance at the Canberra rate (\$289 per night);⁴⁹ and
- An additional allocation between \$300 and \$12,132 commensurate with electorate size.

For most electorates, this would mean a minimum of \$32,090 in travel allowance, excluding transport costs.

Some electorates have different provisions due to their proximity to Canberra.

The Member for Bean and ACT Senators receive an electorate staff travel component in their electorate support budget equal to the value of three return trips between Canberra

⁴⁶ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Electorate support budget*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/pay-and-employment/mops-act-employment/recruitment-and-establishing-positions/electorate-support-budget>

⁴⁷ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2020) *Determination 2020/15, Staff travel and relief staff arrangements*, https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-01/determination_2020_15_staff_travel_and_relief_staff_arrangements.pdf

⁴⁸ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2020) *Determination 2020/15, Staff travel and relief staff arrangements*, https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-01/determination_2020_15_staff_travel_and_relief_staff_arrangements.pdf

⁴⁹ Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (2022) *Employee travel allowance rates – current*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel-employee-travel/employees-travel-allowance-rates-current>

and Norfolk Island, with eight nights at the Norfolk Island travel rate (\$316 per night),⁵⁰ and \$2,000 for additional travel, to the value of \$4,528, excluding airfares.

The Member for Eden-Monaro and the Senator whose office is in Queanbeyan each receive a total of \$5,000 for their electorate staff travel component, and the Members for Canberra and Fenner each receive \$2,000.⁵¹

RELIEF STAFF

The pro rata rate for relief staff is calculated in line with base salary for Electorate Officer B, \$67,880, increasing for parliamentarians with multiple electorate offices as follows:⁵²

- For one electorate office, 150 days of relief staff salary, to the value of \$39,162
- For two electorate offices, 200 days of relief staff salary, to the value of \$52,214
- For three electorate offices, 250 days of relief staff salary, to the value of \$65,269

⁵⁰ Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (2022) *Employee travel allowance rates – current*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel-employee-travel/employees-travel-allowance-rates-current>

⁵¹ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2020) *Determination 2020/15, Staff travel and relief staff arrangements*, https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-01/determination_2020_15_staff_travel_and_relief_staff_arrangements.pdf

⁵² Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2020) *Determination 2020/15, Staff travel and relief staff arrangements*, https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-01/determination_2020_15_staff_travel_and_relief_staff_arrangements.pdf

Public election funding

After each federal election, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) distributes public funding to political parties and candidates based on the number of first preference votes they received. This funding is intended to reimburse parties and candidates for the electoral expenditure already incurred,⁵³ in order to support healthy elections and democratic purposes. It can, however, be spent for other purposes, including future election campaigns.

To qualify, a candidate or party must receive four per cent or more of the formal first preference vote. Following the 2022 election, all qualified candidates and parties received an automatic payment of \$10,656. They could then claim additional funding equal to their electoral expenditure, up to \$2.91 per formal first preference vote received (less the automatic payment).⁵⁴ In 2022, the available public election funding totalled nearly \$76 million.⁵⁵

Figure 3 below shows that the Labor Party received a total of \$27.1 million (36% of the available public election funding), and the Coalition received \$30.2 million (40%) of the public election funding pool. The Greens received about \$10.8 million (14%) and Pauline Hanson's One Nation received about \$3 million (4%). Minor parties received just over \$2.7 million (4%), an average of \$210,447 per party. The 42 qualifying independents received \$2.1 million (3%). This included \$176,023 for David Pocock, an average of \$102,457 for each community or 'teal' independent running for a House of Representatives seat and an average of \$36,499 each for other independent candidates.⁵⁶

⁵³ AEC (2023) *Election funding*, https://www.aec.gov.au/parties_and_representatives/public_funding/

⁵⁴ AEC (2022) *Transparency Register*,

https://www.aec.gov.au/Parties_and_Representatives/financial_disclosure/transparency-register/; AEC (2022) *Election funding rates*,

https://www.aec.gov.au/Parties_and_Representatives/public_funding/Current_Funding_Rate.htm

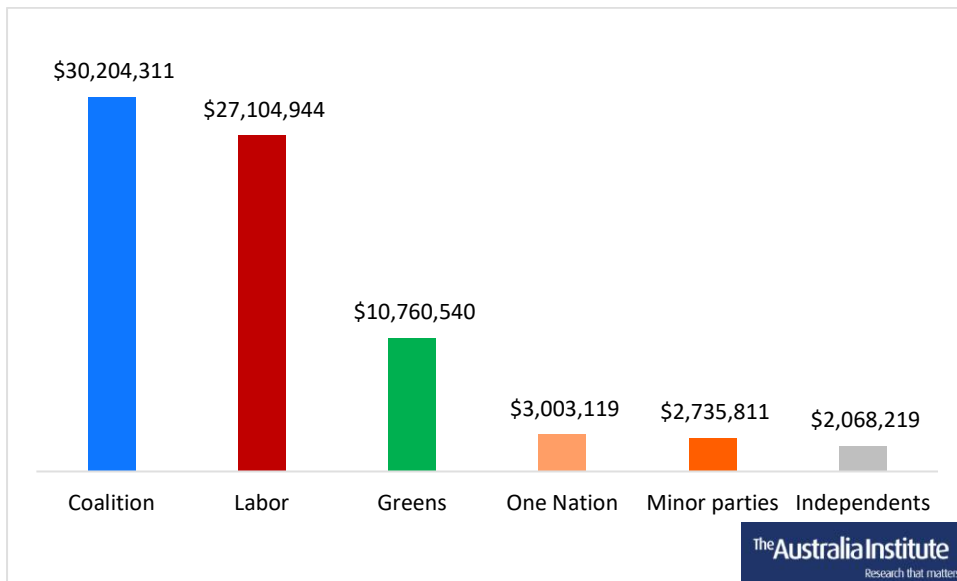
⁵⁵ AEC (2022) *2022 Federal Election: Election funding payments finalised*,

<https://www.aec.gov.au/media/2022/12-21.htm>

⁵⁶ AEC (2022) *2022 Federal Election: Election funding payments finalised*,

<https://www.aec.gov.au/media/2022/12-21.htm>

Figure 2: Public election funding for parties and candidates following 2022 federal election



Source: AEC (2022) *2022 Federal Election: Election funding payments finalised*, <https://www.aec.gov.au/media/2022/12-21.htm>

Public funding for elections is positive for democracy. However, the reimbursement funding model maintains the status quo of established parties and candidates. It establishes a feedback loop which maintains parties' and candidates' head-starts for subsequent elections by rolling over funding from election to election. Additionally, by distributing funding based on votes in the previous election, this funding model lags shifts in popular support, to the advantage of incumbent parliamentarians. New entrants are excluded from public election funding by design.

TARGETING SPENDING

The current public election funding model especially advantages major parties and other parties that run in most or all electorates, because parties can spend less in safe seats and more in target seats. Each independent candidate only runs in one electorate, so cannot strategically target their funds in this way. There is no mechanism for independents to share expenditure across seats, or to roll over funding from one independent candidate to a likeminded successor for a subsequent election.

Parties also benefit from economies of scale that are not available to independents. A single campaign office can support party candidates across several electorates, and advertisements in one electorate are seen by visiting or commuting voters from other electorates who will have a candidate from that party on their ballot as well.

Ultimately, major parties have the greatest chances of accumulating public election funding and spending it strategically in winnable seats, and receive the greatest advantages from

economies of scale. Established minor parties can also accumulate funding from one election to the next and spend it strategically on target seats. Incumbent independents can accumulate funding, but spend only in their electorates. New independent entrants are most disadvantaged by the current public funding model, because they have no public funding from the previous election available to them.

Other advantages

This paper focuses on the publicly funded entitlements of parliamentarians. There are other notable advantages of incumbency that are beyond the scope of this paper, including:

- The ability to plan for the future according to the guaranteed and predictable funding from the entitlements discussed in this report;
- The ability to receive tax-deductible political donations at any time in the political cycle. Challengers must become official candidates to achieve tax-deductibility status and accept campaign donations, which occurs only a matter of weeks before the election.⁵⁷ Independent challengers can register as a party, but it is a difficult process;
- Assets built over time in nominated entities, such as the Cormack Foundation Pty Ltd (Liberal Party), Labor Services & Holdings Pty Ltd (Labor Party) and Pilliwinks Pty Ltd (National Party);⁵⁸
- A public profile by virtue of holding office;
- Access to the electoral roll;
- Exemption from the *Privacy Act 1988*, the *Do Not Call Register Act 2006*, and the *Spam Act 2003* – which enforce junk mail, spam, and other communications preferences – for registered political parties, and for parliamentarians and councillors when they are conducting activities related to an election, referendum, or other political process;⁵⁹
- Use of the Parliamentary Budget Office and the Parliamentary Library;
- Funding for parties with party status to establish think tanks that produce research for use by parliamentarians from that party. These include: the Menzies Research Centre (Liberal Party of Australia), the Chifley Research Centre (Australian Labor Party), the Green Institute (the Greens), and Page Research Centre (the Nationals);
- Political contributions made to secure access to parliamentarians, for example at dinners, or through business forum memberships;
- The Stronger Communities Programme, which provided \$150,000 in grants per electorate. Applications were only eligible at the invitation of their local MP,⁶⁰ which could be expected to engender loyalty when grants were approved; and

⁵⁷ Australian Taxation Office (n.d.) *Claiming political contributions and gifts*, <https://www.ato.gov.au/non-profit/gifts-and-fundraising/in-detail/fundraising/claiming-political-contributions-and-gifts/>; AEC (2022) *When elections are held*, <https://www.aec.gov.au/learn/election-timetable.htm>

⁵⁸ Victorian Electoral Commission (2022) *Register of Nominated Entities*, <https://disclosures.vec.vic.gov.au/nominated-entities/>

⁵⁹ Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (n.d.) *Political parties and elections*, <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/your-privacy-rights/more-privacy-rights/political-parties-and-elections>

⁶⁰ Australian Government (2023) *Improving local community participation and vibrancy*, <https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/stronger-communities-programme>

- For incumbents who have held seats for multiple election cycles, familiarity with the systems through which the advantages of incumbency are administered, and the institutional knowledge to maximise them.

There are also advantages for incumbent governments that are not shared with the opposition or crossbench:

- The power to set the election date, allowing a head start on campaign planning, including booking advertising space;
- The potential for misuse of government advertising to promote a party or policy;⁶¹
- The chance to “pork barrel” strategic seats, by funding projects in those electorates;⁶²
- The opportunity to misuse grants announcements to promote their parliamentarians and candidates.
- The use of public money to employ private consultants, whose findings Ministers are able to selectively release or hold back; and
- The provision of advice and information to Ministers from the departments that they administer.

⁶¹ Browne (2022) *Bad impressions*, <https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/bad-impressions-scrutiny-of-government-advertising/>

⁶² See for example Melville-Rea, Seth-Purdie and Browne (2021) *Grants with Ministerial Discretion*, <https://australiainstitute.org.au/report/grants-with-ministerial-discretion/>

Addressing incumbency advantages

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM SHOULD NOT EXACERBATE INCUMBENCY ADVANTAGES

While public funding for elections is good for democracy, the current model grants incumbents advantages that challengers must overcome. If donation and expenditure caps are applied equally to both incumbents and challengers, it becomes more difficult or impossible for challengers to ever catch up to incumbents. Campaign finance reform should avoid exacerbating the substantial advantages that incumbents already receive.

TRANSPARENCY IN THE USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS

Parliamentarians' communications allowances give them the advantage of building their profile, consulting with their constituents, and making and distributing campaign materials. While there are restrictions on what content can be covered, and parliamentarians are required to submit their expense claims and copies of the communications materials to the Department of Finance, there is no central database of these political publications. Compiling these materials that the Department of Finance already receives into a public database would help ensure that allowances are used strictly within the rules for communications expenditure.

Transparency could also be improved with a badge identifying communications that were publicly funded. To ensure compliance, including this badge could be a condition for claiming back the expense.

Conclusion

MPs receive more than \$996,000 worth of entitlements each year, and Senators more than \$885,000. Over the course of an election cycle, these entitlements reach at least \$2.98 million per MP and \$2.65 million per Senator.

Most of these important publicly funded entitlements will be used in the course of a parliamentarian's work. However, these guaranteed funding advantages—elevated by the benefits of non-financial resources, like information, research capacity, and exemptions from communication preference laws—give parliamentarians an inherent advantage in re-election campaigns. Any challenger must mobilise within strict time constraints to overcome the office, staff and communications financial resources that will have been spent building the profile of the parliamentarian and their party (if any) over the past term of Parliament. Additionally, parliamentarians continue to draw salary in an election period, while challengers may have to take leave or go without work, increasing the financial burden of running against an incumbent. Together these advantages of incumbency create a multimillion-dollar barrier to entry for challengers.

It is reasonable to assume that this barrier to entry contributes at least in part to the narrow chances of success challengers face against incumbents in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Competition is required for a healthy democracy that welcomes new entrants and promotes diversity in the political arena. But the advantages of incumbency create barriers to entry for challengers that disincentivise competition. To make Australia's democracy stronger and more vibrant, it will be critical to address these advantages of incumbency in any election reforms.

Reforms should lower the barrier to entry for challengers, not entrench the advantages of incumbency. Parliaments around Australia have turned their attention to regulating campaign finance, most notably by imposing caps on donations to political parties and candidates and/or caps on how much parties and candidates can spend in an election campaign. While these caps might have a positive effect by limiting the effect of private donations on politics, they must be carefully considered in the context of the advantages of incumbency afforded by parliamentary entitlements.

Appendix

ELECTORATE STAFF SALARY

As of 1 July 2023, parliamentarians will be entitled to employ five electorate staff,⁶³ whose salary levels are outlined below, in one of the two following configurations: two As, two Bs, and one C; or one A, and four Bs.⁶⁴ Parliamentarians who have two or three offices must employ their sixth or seventh additional staff at the level of Electorate Officer B.⁶⁵

Electorate Officer	Salary range
A	\$56,067–\$69,646 + electorate staff allowance
B	\$67,880–\$79,251 + electorate staff allowance
C	\$77,809–\$87,645 + electorate staff allowance

⁶³ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2023) *Additional electorate staff resources and changes to the nominated traveller provision*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/news/2023/additional-electorate-staff-resources-and-changes-nominated-traveller-provision>

⁶⁴ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020–23*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/MOPSEnterpriseAgreement2020-23.pdf>

⁶⁵ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2021) *Employment of electorate officers*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/circulars/employment-electorate-officers>

PERSONAL STAFF SALARY

The MOPS Enterprise Agreement 2020–2023 shows the salary ranges and allocations for parliamentary staff, divided as senior staff, personal employees (government and opposition/minor party) and electorate employees.⁶⁶

Senior staff

Role	Salary range	Eligible Parties			
		Government	Opposition	Minor Party/ Presiding Officers	Independents
Principal Adviser	\$175,671–\$270,710 + private vehicle allowance ⁶⁷ + \$32,977 personal staff allowance + business class travel ⁶⁸ + \$99–\$469 per night travel allowances ⁶⁹	Y	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible
Senior Adviser	\$133,592–\$203,591 + private vehicle allowance + \$32,977 personal staff allowance + business class travel + \$99–\$469 per night travel allowances	Y	Y	Y	Not eligible
Chief of Staff	\$133,592–\$192,407 + private vehicle	Y	Y	Y	Not eligible

⁶⁶ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020–23*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/MOPSEnterpriseAgreement2020-23.pdf>

⁶⁷ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020–23*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/MOPSEnterpriseAgreement2020-23.pdf>

⁶⁸ Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (n.d.) *Employee travel*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel/employees>

⁶⁹ Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (2022) *Employees travelling allowance rates – current*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel-employee-travel/employees-travelling-allowance-rates-current>

	allowance + \$32,977 personal staff allowance + business class travel + \$99–\$469 per night travel allowance				
Senior Media Adviser	\$133,592–\$192,407 + \$32,977 personal staff allowance + business class travel + \$99–\$469 per night travel allowances	Y	Y	Y	<i>Not eligible</i>

Staffers

Role	Eligible Parties		
	<i>Government</i>	<i>Opposition/Minor Party</i>	<i>Independents</i>
Adviser	\$96,898–\$152,998 + \$30,205 in personal staff allowance ⁷⁰ + economy class travel ⁷¹ + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances ⁷²	\$96,898–\$136,607 + \$30,205 in personal staff allowance + economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances	\$96,898–\$136,607 + \$30,205 in personal staff allowance + economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances
Media Adviser	\$96,898–\$152,998 + \$30,205 in personal staff allowance + economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances	\$96,898–\$136,607 + \$30,205 personal staff allowance + economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances	\$96,898–\$136,607 + \$30,205 personal staff allowance + economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances
Assistant Adviser	\$80,784–\$96,898 + \$30,205 in personal	\$80,784–\$96,898 + \$30,205 in personal staff allowance	<i>Not eligible</i>

⁷⁰ Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (2022) *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020–23*, <https://maps.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/MOPSEnterpriseAgreement2020-23.pdf>

⁷¹ Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (n.d.) *Employee travel*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel/employees>

⁷² Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (2022) *Employees travelling allowance rates – current*, <https://www.ipea.gov.au/travel-employee-travel/employees-travelling-allowance-rates-current>

	staff allowance + economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances	+ economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances	
Executive Assistant/ Office Manager	\$65,784–\$81,224 + \$25,386 in personal staff allowance + economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances	\$65,784–\$77,809 + \$25,386 in personal staff allowance + economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances	<i>Not eligible</i>
Secretary/ Administrative Assistant	\$56,067–\$67,880 + \$19,922 in personal staff allowance + economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances	\$56,067–\$63,708 + \$19,922 in personal staff allowance + economy class travel + \$88–\$437 per night travel allowances	<i>Not eligible</i>