NEW SOUTH WALES AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT

Members' additional entitlements 2025

SPECIAL REPORT | 20 NOVEMBER 2025

auditoffice
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

THE ROLE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL

The roles and responsibilities of the Auditor-General and the Audit Office, are set out in the *Government Sector Audit Act 1983* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

We conduct financial or 'attest' audits of state public sector and local government entities' financial statements. We also audit the Consolidated State Financial Statements, a consolidation of all state public sector agencies' financial statements.

Financial audits are designed to give reasonable assurance that financial statements are true and fair, enhancing their value to end users. Also, the existence of such audits provides a constant stimulus to entities to ensure sound financial management.

Following a financial audit the Audit Office issues a variety of reports to entities and reports periodically to Parliament. In combination, these reports give opinions on the truth and fairness of financial statements, and comment on entity internal controls and governance, and compliance with certain laws, regulations and government directives. They may comment on financial prudence, probity and waste, and recommend operational improvements.

We also conduct performance audits. These assess whether the activities of government entities are being carried out effectively, economically, efficiently and in compliance with relevant laws. Audits may cover all or parts of an entity's operations, or consider particular issues across a number of entities. Our performance audits may also extend to activities of non-government entities that receive money or resources, whether directly or indirectly, from or on behalf of government entities for a particular purpose.

As well as financial and performance audits, the Auditor-General carries out special reviews, compliance engagements and audits requested under section 27B(3) of the *Government Sector Audit Act 1983*, and section 421E of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Cover image: Max Dupain. Used with permission of the Parliament of NSW.

GPO Box 12
Sydney NSW 2001

The Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Sydney NSW 2000

The Legislative Council
Parliament House
Sydney NSW 2000

In accordance with section 52B of the *Government Sector Audit Act 1983*, I present a report titled **'Members' additional entitlements 2025'**.

Bola Oyetunji
Auditor-General for New South Wales
20 November 2025

RECONCILIATION STATEMENT

We pay our respect and recognise Aboriginal peoples as the traditional custodians of the land in NSW who have cared for and protected the environment, waterways, and sacred sites over many millennia. We honour and thank the traditional custodians of the land on which our office is located, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, and the traditional custodians of all the lands on which our employees live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and to the next generation of leaders.

As we mark our 200th anniversary, and our contribution to fostering accountability and transparency in the government and Parliament, we also acknowledge that our long history is shared with the histories of colonisation in New South Wales. We acknowledge the impacts of colonisation, and the resulting marginalisation and disadvantage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in this state.

We embrace our role in holding government agencies to account for the delivery of effective services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We are committed to ensuring that our audits are culturally responsive, respectful and inclusive, and that we engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities in a meaningful and collaborative way.

We recognise the ancestral tie of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this land, and we acknowledge that we have much to learn from their wisdom, rich and diverse culture, languages, knowledge and practices.

Image: 'Yarning Circle' by Caitlin Liddle, Audit Office Indigenous Internship Program participant. Used with permission.

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Members' additional entitlements 2025

1. Report snapshot

Members' entitlements refer to the payments that Members of Parliament (members) are eligible to claim under the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal's Annual Determination (the Determination) and the administrative guidelines of the Department of Parliamentary Services (the guidelines). These entitlements are designed to support members in performing their parliamentary duties and can include travel, communication and skills development.

This report reviews compliance in the 2024–25 financial year.

Key findings

There were 35,151 payments made to members for entitlements – totalling $26.4 million.

Of these, 33,450 claims for payment – totalling $13.8 million – were in the scope of this compliance review. The remaining payments of $12.6 million (annual basic salaries, and electoral and committee allowances) were not within scope of this review.

From a sample of 59 claims for the 2024–25 period, there were 29 departures from the requirements of the Determination and the administrative guidelines.

Loyalty and incentive scheme declarations (such as frequent flyer points) must be submitted at the end of financial year (ie 30 June) or within 30 days of ceasing to be a member. This review looked at 141 loyalty and incentive scheme declarations and found that 3 were submitted late.

Recommendations

The Department of Parliamentary Services should:

- evaluate the effectiveness of its training for members and consider other measures to improve the timelines of claim submissions
- consider conducting its annual internal audit process earlier in the year to identify audit findings sooner to better support members in meeting the requirements of the Determination and the guidelines.

Fast facts

$13.8m	33,450	32
payments within the scope of this review	claims made by members	departures from Determination requirements and administrative guidelines

2. Introduction

The Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal makes an Annual Determination outlining the annual salaries and additional entitlements allowed to Members of the Parliament of New South Wales under the *Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989*.

The Determination requires members' claims for additional entitlements comply with the Department of Parliamentary Services' administrative guidelines. The Department administers payments of additional entitlements.

This report reviews the compliance of members' claims for additional entitlements payable under the Determination.

During the 2024–25 financial year 35,151 payments were made to Members of Parliament for entitlements under the Determination totalling $26.4 million. Of these, 33,450 claims for payment of additional entitlements totalling $13.8 million were within the scope of the compliance review by the Audit Office of New South Wales. The remaining payments of $12.6 million made during the 2024–25 financial year were not reviewed as there are certain salaries and allowances within the Determination that are excluded from compliance review requirements. These payments include:

- annual basic salaries, additional salaries and additional expense allowances
- additional entitlements comprising electoral allowances and committee allowances.

Payments within the scope of this compliance review are set out below.

Payments within the scope of the compliance review	Payments excluded from the scope of the compliance review
Communications allowance	Annual basic salaries
Sydney allowance	Additional salaries
General travel allowance	Additional expense allowances
Electorate/zone to Sydney travel entitlement	Electoral allowance
Skills development allowance	Committee allowance
Training allowance for recognised office holders	
$13.8 million	**$12.6 million***

* This total comprises payments for additional entitlements of electoral and committee allowances only. Payments for annual basic salaries, additional salaries and additional expense allowances are audited as part of the general purpose financial statements of The Legislature.

3. Review results

There were more departures from the requirements of the Annual Determination (the Determination) and the administrative guidelines of the Department of Parliamentary Services (the Department) in 2024–25 than in previous years. These departures were similar in nature to those consistently identified in the Audit Office's previous compliance reviews, indicating a need for improved training and education for members.

From a sample of 59 claims and 141 annual loyalty and incentive scheme declarations submitted by members, the Audit Office identified 32 departures from Determination requirements and the administrative guidelines of the Department. These included:

- 26 claims for payment that were not submitted within 60 days of receipt of invoice or incurring the expense (2023–24: 21 claims)
- 3 claims under the communications allowance relating to publications that did not include the required authorisations and attributions (2023–24: one claim)
- 3 members who submitted their annual loyalty/incentive scheme declarations after the date specified in the Department's administrative requirements (2023–24: five members).

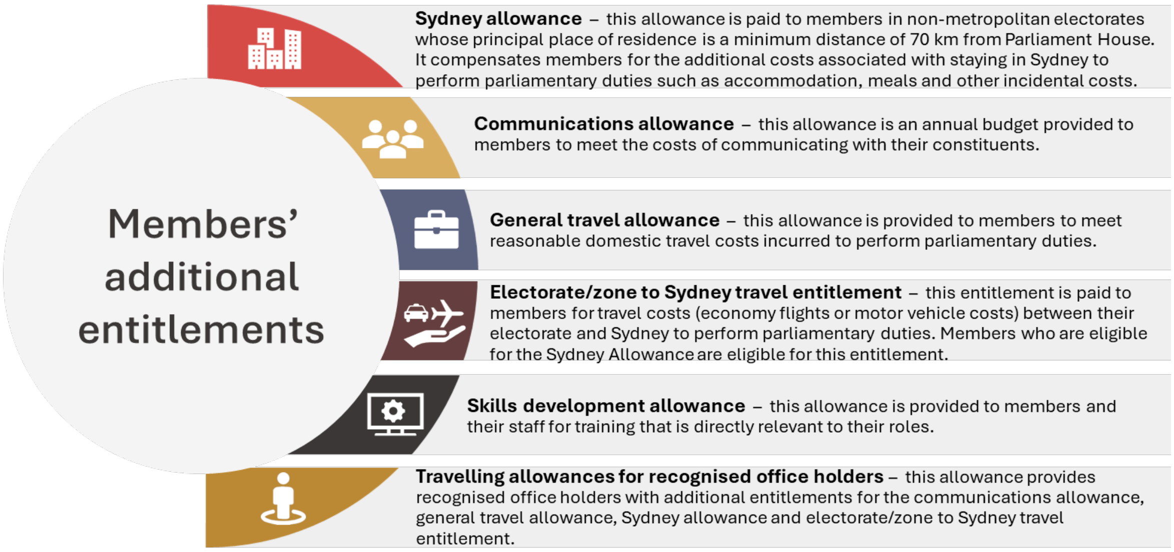
The following table summarises the instances of non-compliance with the Determination and Department guidelines identified through Audit Office compliance reviews over the past three years.

	2024–25	**2022–23**	**2021–22**
Late submission of claims for payment	26	21	22
Late submission of Sydney allowance reconciliations	–	–	4
Ineligible claims for communications allowance	3	1	2
Communications allowance claims made during blackout period#	–	–	1
Annual loyalty and incentive scheme declarations not submitted	–	–	4
Late submission of annual loyalty and incentive scheme declarations	3	5	7
Total number of departures from the Determination	**32**	**27**	**40**

Blackout periods are applicable only to election years.

4. Overview of claims for additional entitlements for the past two years

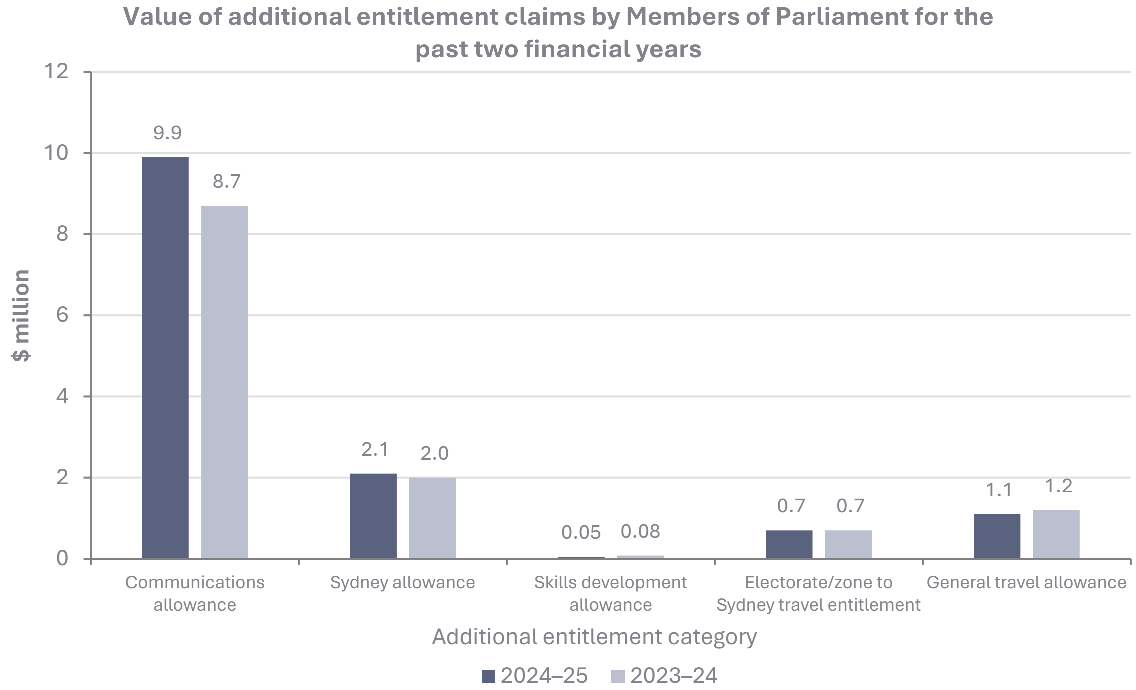
This compliance review considers 33,450 claims totalling $13.8 million made by Members of Parliament in 2024–25. The following summary outlines the additional entitlements within the scope of this review.



4.1. Analysis of additional entitlements paid to Members of Parliament

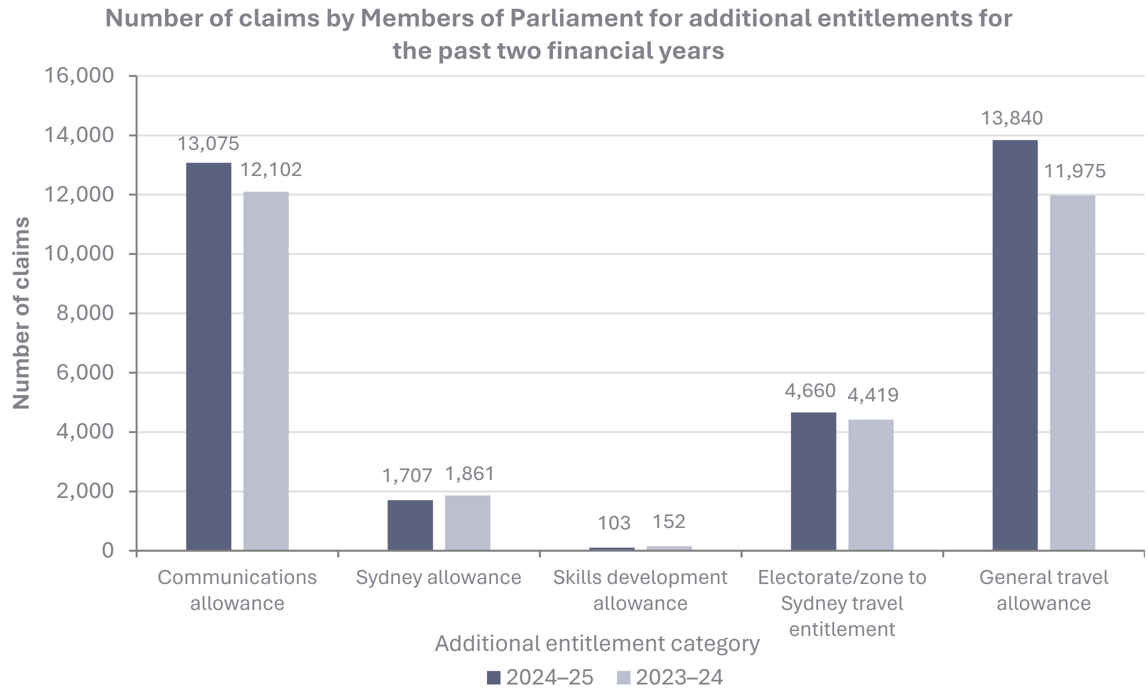
Similar to previous years, Audit Office processes for this compliance review did not extend to examining every claim made by members. Instead, we used data analytics to guide the selection of claims for further review. This resulted in testing of a sample of 59 claims relating to 23 of 141 Members of Parliament.

The graph[1] below shows how the value of additional entitlement claims by Members of Parliament in 2024–25 compares to 2023–24.



Communications allowances continue to be the largest entitlement claim by value made by Members of Parliament each year. This is further discussed below.

The graph[2] below shows how the number of claims made by Members of Parliament for additional entitlements in 2024–25 compares to 2023–24.



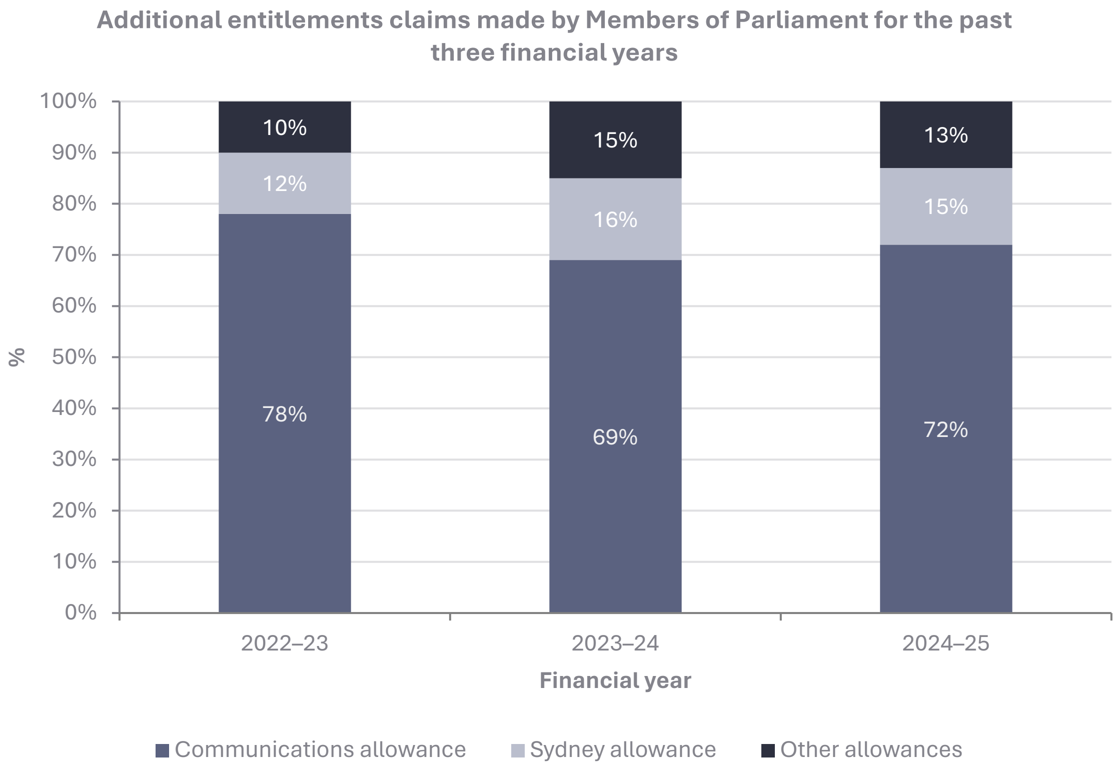
[1] This graph does not include travelling allowances for recognised office holders claimed by Members of Parliament (2024–25: $1,472; 2023–24: $3,917).

[2] This graph does not include travelling allowances for recognised office holders claimed by Members of Parliament (2024–25: 65 claims; 2023–24: 57 claims).

While the number of general travel allowance claims exceeds communication claims in 2024–25, the average claim value by members for general travel costs is much lower.

The communications allowance continues to be the largest category of additional entitlements claimed by Members of Parliament

The graph below shows the percentage of total additional entitlements claims made by Members of Parliament for the communications allowance, Sydney allowance and other allowances, for the past three financial years.



The Determination provides a base communications allowance allocation of:

- $5,505 to members of the Legislative Council
- $21,600 to members of the Legislative Assembly and an additional allocation between $84,374 and $101,526 (depending on the number of enrolled voters in the member's electorate).

In addition to the above, recognised office holders also receive an additional allowance ranging from $825 to $30,240.

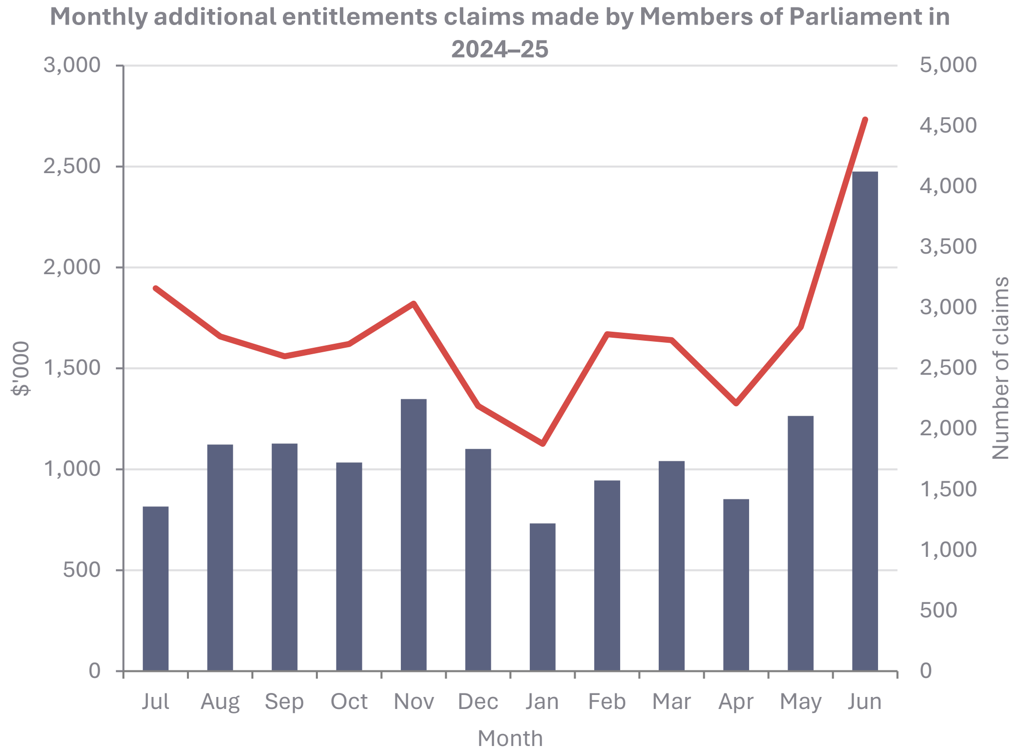
Members of Parliament can carry forward unused communications allowances up to the base allocation, but these are forfeited when a member's parliamentary term ends.

In 2024–25, Members of Parliament submitted 13,075 claims for communications allowances totalling $9.9 million. The average value of individual communications allowance claims also increased from the previous year.

The compliance review procedures continue to identify departures from the requirements of the Determination and the administrative guidelines for communications allowance claims. These departures are reported in section 4.2.

Eighteen per cent of all claims for additional entitlements in 2024–25 were submitted in June 2025

The graph below shows the claims for additional entitlements made by Members of Parliament each month for 2024–25.



Of the $13.8 million claimed by Members of Parliament for additional entitlements in 2024–25, claims for $2.5 million (18.1%) were submitted in June.

As outlined in section 4.2 below, the compliance reviews have consistently identified late submission of claims for payments over the years. This suggests an ongoing need for the Department to provide Members of Parliament with greater clarity, training and education about the timeliness of claim submissions.

The Department's administrative guidelines also state that claims may be denied if they are not submitted in a timely manner. In both 2024–25 and 2023–24, no claims were denied for payment due to late submission.

Recommendation

As late submissions of member claims have continued to occur, the Department should evaluate the effectiveness of its current training for members and consider other measures to improve the timeliness of claim submissions.

4.2. Detailed findings

The number of late expense claims by Members of Parliament continues to grow

The Determination requires members to submit expense claims to the Department within 60 days of receipt of invoice or incurring the expense. The compliance review identified 26 instances where members submitted claims after the 60-day timeframe (21 in 2024). Each claim was on average 62 days late, with the latest claim being submitted 221 days late (127 days in 2024). Nineteen claims (73.1%) were over a month late (18 in 2024).

Three Members of Parliament were late in submitting their annual loyalty and incentive scheme declarations

Members of Parliament are required to complete declarations to confirm that loyalty or reward benefits accrued using their additional entitlements have not been used for non-parliamentary purposes. The Determination requires these declarations be completed by Members of Parliament at the end of the financial year (i.e. 30 June), or within 30 days of ceasing to be a member.

In previous years, the Department had determined a due date of 31 July for declarations. In 2024–25, this was revised to 8 August to coincide with the first sitting day of Parliament in the 2025–26 financial year.

The Audit Office reviewed 141 declarations completed by Members of Parliament for 2024–25 and identified three members who submitted declarations after 8 August 2025. Each declaration was two days late on average, with the latest declaration submitted five days late.

In 2023–24, the Audit Office identified that five members submitted declarations after 31 July 2024. Each declaration was seven days late on average, with the latest declaration submitted 15 days late.

Three communications allowance claims did not include the required authorisation and attribution

Publications by Members of Parliament are required to include that the communication is ‘authorised by’ the member and an attribution that it is ‘funded using parliamentary entitlements’.

The compliance review procedures identified three instances where a member had claimed the communications allowance for publications for which the required authorisations and attributions had not been made. These three instances related to the same member.

Last year the compliance review identified one instance where a claim under the communications allowance did not include the required authorisation and attribution.

The Department could improve the timeliness of its internal audit relating to claims from Members of Parliament to improve efficiency and reduce non-compliances

The Departments’ internal audit of members’ additional entitlements for the 2024–25 financial year was in progress at the same time as the Audit Office’s compliance review and is yet to be concluded at the date of this report.

The Determination requires the Department conduct an annual internal audit of members’ additional entitlements but does not specify when this audit must take place. The Department has discretion to determine the timing of the audit.

Undertaking an internal audit earlier in the year may support the Department in earlier identification of common non-compliance themes, allowing it to tailor its training and education and support members’ timely compliance with the Determination and guidelines.

Recommendation

The Department's annual internal audit process may be more effective if conducted earlier in the year. Doing so would allow the Department to consider audit findings sooner and better support members of parliament in meeting the requirements of the Determination and administrative guidelines.

5. Status of recommendations from prior years

The 2024 Report to Parliament on members' additional entitlements made five recommendations.

The table below describes the status of these recommendations.

Recommendation	Current status
The Department should improve its quality review process when reporting the number and total dollar value of members' additional entitlement claims to ensure it is accurately reporting the number and value of claims.	The Department applied satisfactory quality review processes over members' entitlements data prior to submission to the Audit Office.
The Department should ensure internal audits of members' additional entitlements are adequately scoped, quality reviewed and endorsed prior to their commencement. The scoping should ensure requirements of the Determination are considered and achieved.	Last year the compliance review identified that the Department's 2023–24 internal audit of members' additional entitlements did not meet the requirements outlined in the Determination. This was because the scope was limited to communications allowance claims, and excluded the Sydney allowance and all other fixed allocation allowances. This year: • a further internal audit for 2023–24 was performed for the Sydney allowance and all other fixed allocation allowances, and was finalised on 8 January 2025 • the scope of the 2024–25 internal audit incorporates all additional entitlements required by the Determination, but the internal audit is yet to be concluded.
Prior to the Audit Office's compliance review commencing each year, the Department should ensure: • its annual internal audit on members' additional entitlements is completed • the final report of the internal audit is ready to provide to the Audit Office.	This has not progressed. Similar to last year, the internal audit of members' additional entitlements for 2024–25 was in progress at the same time as the Audit Office's compliance review and is yet to be concluded at the date of this report. Section 4.2 recommends the Department should conduct its internal audit earlier to allow for earlier identification of member claim non-compliance.

Recommendation	Current status	
Prior to payments being made, the Department should enhance its assessment as to whether members' expenditure claims comply with the requirements of the Determination and the administrative guidelines of the Department and advise members promptly about whether their claims are ineligible.	The Department has determined that it will not review compliance of members' claims at the time of payment as it: • considers the self-assessment regime sufficient as the key principle underpinning the administration of claims for additional entitlements • views its internal audit review process as providing sufficient assurance to help identify risk of non-compliance.	Risk accepted by the Department
The Tribunal should provide greater clarity on current processes and the implications of departures from the guidelines to members The Department should work with members to provide them with additional training or education and better help them to comply with the Determination and the administrative guidelines of the Department.	This has not progressed. Additional recommendations relating to the Department are outlined in section 4.1. This includes assessing the effectiveness of its existing training and education to members and considering other measures to enhance timeliness of claim submissions.	Not addressed

Key: Fully addressed | Partially addressed | Not addressed | Risk accepted by the Department

Appendix 1 – Response from the Department of Parliamentary Services

Parliament of New South Wales

Department of Parliamentary Services
Office of the Chief Executive

6 Macquarie Street, Sydney
NSW 2000 Australia
www.parliament.nsw.gov.au

14 November 2025

Our Ref: D25/084184

Mr Bola Oyetunji
Auditor General
Audit Office of NSW
GPO Box 12
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Mr ~~Oyetunji~~ Bola

Re: Auditor General's Report to Parliament - Members' Additional Entitlements 2025

I refer to the report to Parliament on Members' additional entitlements and specifically to the following observations:

Three communications allowance claims did not include the required authorisation and attribution

The Department will continue to work with and encourage all Members to seek appraisals of their communications and publications prior to distribution to ensure compliance with the PRT Determination and Parliament's administrative guidelines.

Three members were late in submitting their annual loyalty and incentive scheme declarations

The Department will continue to work with Members to ensure their annual loyalty/incentive scheme declarations are submitted in a timely manner in accordance with our internal timelines.

The number of late member expense claims continues to grow

The Department will continue to work with Members to ensure their compliance with the PRT Determination, and to ensure claims are submitted in a timely manner.

Prior Year Recommendation

Prior to our compliance review commencing each year, the Department should ensure:

- **its annual internal audit on members' additional entitlements is completed**
- **the final report of the internal audit is ready to provide to the Audit Office.**

Although we initiated the internal audit earlier this year than in previous years, the process remains dependent on several key factors: the completion of year-end financial timelines, the provision of Members' expenditure data following the year end close and accruals process, the sampling and review of the expenditure, and the finalisation of the audit report prior to Management's review.

These dependencies have affected our ability to complete the audit in time for the Audit Office to commence its assurance review. We continue to explore alternative approaches to accelerate the internal audit timeline.

To support this objective, the 2025–26 internal audit of Members' Entitlements will be conducted in two stages to enable earlier completion. A preliminary audit covering the July to December period will be undertaken in early 2026. The remaining period, January to June, will be audited as soon as practicable following the completion of year-end financial accounting processes.

Prior Year Recommendation

Prior to payments being made, the Department should enhance its assessment as to whether members' expenditure claims comply with requirements of the Determination and the administrative guidelines of the Department and advise members promptly about whether their claims are ineligible.

In our response to the 2023–24 Members' Entitlements assurance review, we reaffirmed the Department's commitment to continually reviewing its administrative processes to ensure ongoing compliance with the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal (PRT) Determination and Parliament's administrative guidelines.

We also reiterated that the current entitlements framework - endorsed by both the PRT and the Audit Office upon its establishment in 2009 - is based on a self-assessment regime by Members. While the Department remains committed to reviewing and assessing Members' claims as they are submitted, the responsibility for demonstrating the parliamentary purpose of any claim lies with the Member. Given the absence of an objective definition and the contextual nature of interpreting parliamentary purpose, it is not feasible for the Department to form a definitive judgment in this regard.

Prior Year Recommendation

The Tribunal should provide greater clarity on current processes and implications of departures from the guidelines to members. The Department should work with members to provide them additional training or education and better help them comply with the Determination and the administrative guidelines of the Department.

The Department notes the above recommendation for the Tribunal's consideration.

We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss any of the matters raised in the letter.

Yours sincerely

Mark Webb
Chief Executive

OUR VISION

Our insights inform and challenge government to improve outcomes for citizens.

OUR PURPOSE

To help Parliament hold government accountable for its use of public resources.

OUR VALUES

Pride in purpose

Curious and open-minded

Valuing people

Contagious integrity

Courage (even when it's uncomfortable)

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