Experienced counsellors or adolescent claqueurs?

Exploring the professional backgrounds of Australian ministerial staff

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Australian federal ministers have large, politicised and powerful ministerial offices. Yet little is known about what skills and experiences the staffers who work in these offices bring to the job. Drawing on a dataset of ministerial staff working for the conservative Coalition government headed by Prime Minister Tony Abbott in March 2014, the paper explores the professional backgrounds and career paths of a cohort of contemporary Australian political staff. It considers whether it is true that many politicians, as Allan Behm recently lamented, 'surround themselves with adolescent claqueurs rather than experienced counsellors'. (A claqueur is someone a hired to applaud an act or performer, a sycophantic follower).

Empirical silences, public anxieties

Australian federal ministers have large, politicised and powerful ministerial offices, yet little is known about the cadre of over 400 staff who work in them. Despite more than a decade of research about Australian ministerial staff, there are a significant gaps in our empirical knowledge. Because of problems with access to information, researchers have not undertaken comprehensive demographic studies of staff, but tended to do smaller scale, qualitative work (Tiernan 2007, Maley 2002).

Yet the skills and experience that ministerial staff bring to their work is currently an issue of public concern, expressed in a narrative linking their supposed inexperience, youth and excessive media focus to government decline and dysfunction. PM Kevin Rudd's office (2007-2010) was referred to by critics as 'the kindergarten' and his staff as 'the teenagers in the office' (Banks 2014). Former head of Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet Peter Shergold (2015) claimed that

> Many [departmental] secretaries complain they now find themselves undermined by 'the boy scouts in the minister's office'. They don't like being second guessed by advisers who are still 'wet behind the ears'.

The trope of youth appears to be a proxy for a lack of policy expertise and a short term focus. Gary Banks, the former Chair of the Productivity Commission and Dean of Australia and New Zealand School of Government, described the problem as:

a shift in the balance of influence on policy decisions from public servants to private advisers, with the rising power of 'the office' coinciding with a decline in its capability … [and] the shift in the *composition* of ministers' offices: away from people with policy expertise towards those with political, communication or media management skills. This trend has typically occurred in parallel with a greater number of external appointees, with less experience of government and in some cases little experience at all. (2014) [italics in original]

According to Banks, the lack of policy expertise in ministers' offices has had a negative impact on the public service, affecting its ability to provide quality policy advice to government:

The lack of policy expertise in offices has reduced the scope for departmental policy advice to get purchase or support, particularly when it is longer term in nature or where political 'issues' are seen to arise. (Banks 2014).

The *displacement of policy grunt with tactical flair* has unfortunately coincided with this youthful cohort having a bigger say in what passes for policy development itself. … At the same time, the ability of the public service to hold its own by ensuring, in time-honoured fashion, that political decisions can be adequately informed by analysis and evidence, has been seriously eroded. (Banks 2017)[my italics]

Former Chief of Staff in the Labor period (2007-2013) Allan Behm (2015b) also lamented that many politicians today 'surround themselves with adolescent claqueurs rather than experienced counsellors', suggesting with the term 'adolescent claquers' not only immaturity but an unwillingness to speak truth to power. Banks (2017) argues that the key to the 'restoration of capabilities' within the executive is staffing offices with experienced advisers; he stresses 'it would … help if every ministerial office had at least one senior staffer with strong policy credentials and some experience of government'.

This narrative suggests the composition of ministerial offices has changed, that in the past (the Hawke, Keating and Howard years 1983-2007) ministers employed more 'experienced counsellors' and senior public servants, particularly as chiefs of staff heading up offices (Tingle 2015:21). Tingle argues this is not only important for the experience they bring but for the message it sends to the public service: 'having a public servant running your office also implies a degree of respect for the institution of the public service … it suggests that you understand government is something a lot larger than politicians alone.' (2015: 40)

In the light of these claims and anxieties this paper explores the professional and educational backgrounds of a cohort of ministerial staff. It is a snapshot in time (at 1 March 2014) and therefore cannot test claims of change over time. Nor can the data reveal much about age or maturity. However it does indicate what types of professional experience are brought to the job, how diverse or specialised that experience is and how common it is for prior work to be in the public service, the media, or political and party positions. It provides some empirical evidence to address the following claims:

Limited previous work experience

What types of experience were brought to minister's offices?

How common was it to have no previous work experience?

Dominance of political, communication and media skills

Was a background in media and public relations common amongst staff, not only for those with formal media roles?

Was previous experience in political roles common amongst staff?

Little previous experience in government

To what extent were offices headed by senior public servants?

To what extent were former/current public servants present in ministers' offices?

Lack of policy expertise

How common was it for staff to have previously worked in policy areas similar to those in the current portfolio?

As well as addressing empirically the above claims, the paper also considers broader analytical questions about the characteristics and skills of this cohort within Australia's political elite.

Role and resource: understanding the significance of the backgrounds of political staff

International and Australian studies suggest that the career backgrounds of political staff are important in determining both the role they play and the resources they bring to ministers.

Studies have shown that the educational and professional background of staff influences how they perform their *role*, with regard to the tasks they perform and the type of advice they give (OECD 2011). Earlier Australian empirical research found that an adviser's career background was one factor in influencing how active they were in policy making, alongside their motivation for taking the job, the nature of the portfolio and the needs and attitudes of the minister (Maley 2015). Several studies have organised political staff into different types partly based on their backgrounds. Connaughton (2010) identifies experts (who contribute specialist knowledge), partisans (who bring a political background and previously held party positions), coordinators and minders. These typologies are also based on their reported work activities (see Gouglas et al 2017; Craft 2016). British research identifies special advisers as wonks (focused on policy development), enforcers (focused on political control) and fixers (political workers) (LSE 2012).

In a study of Norwegian political appointees Askim et al (2017) found the role they played was powerfully influenced by their personal background and experience but also their formal position. They found three different types of roles amongst Norwegian political

appointees: 'stand in' (a role requiring policy expertise); 'media adviser' and 'political coordinator'. 'Stand ins' tended to have higher education and more government experience (defined as having previously worked as a political adviser). Younger appointees were more likely to play a media adviser role (2017:12).

Alternatively, we can focus on how a staffer's professional background and experience influences what *resources* they bring to ministers. Eichbaum and Shaw (2011) conceive of ministerial staff as a resource for the executive, possessing 'internal resources including specialist policy knowledge and technical expertise, skills as political operatives, pre-existing networks [and] relations with policy communities.' (2011:595) They recognise advisers are also able to harvest resources located elsewhere within and beyond the political executive. As a resource, political staff can be seen to possess and contribute *skills, experience, knowledge* and *contacts*. To this list might be added *qualities*; former chief of staff Allan Behm lists the qualities a staffer should have as : 'integrity, energy, enthusiasm, maturity, domain knowledge or at least an ability to learn quickly, endurance, tolerance and a sense of humour' (2015a).

In terms of *skills*, Shaw and Eichbaum's survey found that ministers valued highly skills in policy analysis and evaluation; the ability to work constructively alongside public servants; and political negotiation skills (2014:596). Skills can arise from one's education, career background but also natural abilities. Behm (2015a) reminds his readers that 'maturity is not the enemy of youth' and 'an agile, adroit and adept mind beats acquired domain knowledge every time'. In his study of the work of politically-oriented 'policy professionals' Svallfors (2016) lists their expertise as 'politically applicable skills'. These skills include problem formulation (using research and knowledge to frame social problems and solutions); process expertise ('knowing the game' and understanding political and policy-making processes); and information access (the skills to find very fast reliable and relevant information) (2016:58-59).

Experience is undoubtedly associated with career background, and political staff may demonstrate length, diversity or depth of experience. *Knowledge* can derive from education or career experience; it may be general or specialised, or process-based, which ministers in Shaw and Eichbaum's survey termed 'knowledge of the ins and outs of executive government' (2014: 594). *Contacts* are another resource which is highly related to professional background, either within or outside of government.

The dataset

The research is based on analysis of an original dataset of information about the professional and educational backgrounds of a single cohort of federal ministerial staff. Using online searches, data was compiled on the backgrounds of staff who were working for ministers in the first Abbott Coalition government at 1 March 2014 (approximately 5 months after the government had taken office after a period of 7 years out of power). This is a

useful time as the lengthy process of recruiting ministerial staff had been completed and a stable group of staffers existed in ministers' offices. Staff were categorised according to their formal positions; the four categories were Chief of staff, Adviser, Media and Administrator. The titles within each category are at Attachment 1.

Completeness of the dataset

The dataset consists of 352 names of staff employed in 1 March 2014. Using online searches, data on the professional backgrounds of 278 staff was obtained. This represented 79% of the dataset of 352 names. However higher percentages were achieved for some categories of staff; for example data was obtained for 90% of chiefs of staff but only 64% of administrators (see Table 1).

Table 1: Response rates by type of position

	Total	Chief of staff	Adviser	Media	Administrator
No of names	352	31	187	57	77
No with data about professional background [response rate]	278 [79%]	28 [90%]	151 [81%]	50 [88%]	49 [64%]

It is important to note that the data obtained from employment-oriented social networking services (such as LinkedIn) is self-reported information. Data obtained through online searches may not represent a complete record of the professional experiences of a staffer. These caveats must be borne in mind in interpreting the data.

Table 1 reveals that there are more media staff in ministers' offices than is generally acknowledged. There were 57 staff with titles relating to the media, representing 16% of all staff listed. This is significantly higher than the number of staff listed as 'media' in official reports to the Senate (31 or 8% at 1 February 2014).

Table 2 shows the range and extent of the prior professional experiences of the staff in the dataset, in total and disaggregated by the four types of staff. Because each staffer may have more than one type of previous career experience, the columns exceed 100%.

Table 2: Prior Professional Experience by Staffer Type

Prior Professional Experience	Number of staff	% of Total Group	Chief of Staff	Adviser	Media	Admin
Political Adviser	160	57.6%	60.7%	58.9%	58.0%	51.0%
Federal Govt.	77	27.7%	46.4%	32.5%	14.0%	16.3%
Private sector	69	24.8%	25.0%	25.8%	22.0%	24.5%
Political Party	60	21.6%	3.6%	28.5%	6.0%	26.5%
Media	46	16.6%	14.3%	8.6%	52.0%	6.1%
Lobby group	25	9.0%	17.9%	10.0%	8.0%	2.0%
State Govt.	24	8.6%	10.7%	11.9%	6.0%	0.0%
NGO	13	4.7%	0.0%	6.6%	0.0%	6.1%
University	11	4.0%	3.6%	6.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Think Tank	7	2.5%	0.0%	4.0%	2.0%	0.0%
Parliament	6	2.2%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	6.1%
Union	1	0.4%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	15	5.4%	3.6%	5.3%	6.0%	6.1%
None/Unknown	6	2.2%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	8.2%

n = 278 Raw numbers for this table and basis for coding are at Attachment 2 (Table 7, Table 8).

Limited previous work experience?

This cohort brought a diversity of career experiences into ministers' offices. The clearly dominant professional experience brought to the job was work as a political adviser, with 50-60% of each subgroup having this background (discussed further below). Around 25% of all staff types had previous experience working in the private sector. It is notable that very few staff brought no previous working experience to the job. These tended to be administrative staff working as receptionists and personal assistants. However it may be that those with an online employment account would be more likely to be those with previous work experience. This previous work experience data reveals little about age or length of time in a career: it was not uncommon for the work listed to have begun while at university and to include short periods served as interns.

Despite similarities, there were distinct career profiles for some of the staff types. Administrative staff had the least diversity of previous job types and tended to be either staff who had worked for politicians for many years, people who had worked in administrative jobs in the private sector, or people with little career experience as yet - they often brought one or more degrees to the job of executive assistant or receptionist.

Media advisers had relatively specialised career backgrounds, with 52% bringing professional experience in news media, journalism or public relations and communications companies. While it might be expected the level of this experience would be higher, many of those who had not previously worked in the media had backgrounds as political advisers. They had often worked for many years, and exclusively, as media advisers to state and

federal politicians. Only four of the 49 had not worked previously as either a political adviser or in the media industry; yet three of these four had worked in media and communications roles in state and federal departments. Many media advisers had university degrees in journalism, communications or media studies. Specialised skills and experience is clearly required to work in media roles in ministers' offices.

Dominance of political, communication and media skills?

A clear finding from the data is the high proportion of staff who had previous experience as political advisers. For advisers and chiefs of staff this group represented around 60% of the cohort. In addition, almost 30% of advisers had previously worked in political party positions, most as working as electorate officers for federal and state politicians. Five advisers had previously worked for party organisations. In some cases, staff had worked for years as an assistant or loyalist to an individual MP and followed them into the minister's office. A common path was to come directly from a position as an opposition adviser (52) and or a state minister's adviser (12) to a position as adviser; in total 42% of advisers came directly from political adviser jobs to ministers' offices. This was far less common for Chiefs of Staff. The high degree of prior experience as political advisers in this cohort is unsurprising, because the Abbott Coalition government in early 2014 represented a party grouping which had been out of power for seven years; it would seem natural that many of the staff who worked for shadow ministers in Opposition should move into positions in ministers' offices.

Advisory careers did not cross party lines; only two advisers had worked for another Australian political party.[1] Twenty of the staff had been previously been selected by their parties for overseas political exchanges, designed to train 'Australia's next generation of political leaders'.[2] In addition one had campaigned for the British Conservative Party (for 6 months) and one had interned at the Scottish National Party (for 4 months).

Chiefs of Staff were an extremely experienced group in terms of political work. Over 60% (17 of the 28) had previously worked as political advisers and 15 of those 17 had worked as advisers in Howard years, the last time the Coalition was in government (1996-2007). Of the remaining two, one was a long serving chief of staff to a senior minister throughout Opposition and the other had been a political adviser to the Victorian Premier and Treasurer. Not only had many worked for past Liberal and Coalition governments, but 20% had also worked for Shadow ministers through the Opposition years.

[1] One worked for the conservative minor party Family First and one for ACT Labor.

[2] The Australian Political Exchange Council selects a small number of MPs, party officials and political staffers between the age of 25 and 46 for overseas political exchanges.

It is perhaps unsurprising to find so many experienced political operatives amongst the ranks of Chiefs of Staff in early 2014. It was reported in the first days of the new government that this was a conscious recruitment strategy:

> in a deliberate reach back to the Howard era, a high number of senior staff who worked for the Coalition before it lost office in 2007 have been lured back to Canberra … The PM and his powerful chief of staff Peta Credlin are placing a premium on hiring "grey haired" advisers who have plenty of former experience in government (Lewis 2013).

Part of the recruitment process included obtaining approval from the Government Staffing Committee, known as the 'Star Chamber', which was said to prefer 'old hands' with expertise and experience (Campbell 2016). It was reported that conflict arose when some ministers had their preferred chief of staff rejected by the Government Staffing Committee for not being experienced enough.

Around 50% of staff had worked for the federal Coalition either in Opposition or in the previous Howard government (7 years earlier). Perhaps reflecting different age profiles, few advisers had worked for the Howard government. This was more common for Chiefs of staff, whose career paths tended to have diverged away from advising during the Opposition period; they returned when the Coalition formed government again, joining the ranks of advisers, media and administrative staff who had served through the long Opposition period (see Table 3).

Table 3: Category of Coalition Adviser Work by Staffer Type

Coalition Adviser Category	Total Group	Chief of Staff	Adviser	Media	Admin
Not Coalition Adviser	48.2%	42.9%	47.7%	50.0%	51.0%
Howard Government (1996-2007)	23.0%	53.6%	17.9%	20.0%	24.5%
Opposition (2007-2013)	40.3%	21.4%	44.4%	40.0%	40.8%

With the caveat that the data may be incomplete, there is a significant cadre of advisers in the cohort who appear to be political professionals with no other career experience. One quarter of the advisers (38), and one chief of staff, had career backgrounds ONLY as political party workers or political advisers. This suggests a significant group brought a very narrow, yet useful, range of skills and experiences to the job: political skills.

The idea that media skills and backgrounds dominate is not true of this cohort. Media experience is not widely found amongst staff who are not media advisers.

Little previous experience in government?

In terms of concerns about the level of public service experience in ministers' offices, it is significant that almost 50% of the Chiefs of Staff had previously worked in the federal government and over 10% had experience working in state governments. Ten (36%) came directly from senior positions in the federal government into the position of Chief of Staff and were ranked in the senior executive positions of Assistant Secretary or First Assistant

Secretary, with one having been an agency head. In other words, one third of ministers and assistant ministers were following the practice of having their offices headed by a senior public servant.

Six of the Chiefs of staff (21.4%) had only ever worked in the federal government; two combined federal government work with stints in a lobby group; and three had worked as both a federal public servant and a political adviser. For those without backgrounds in the public service, six had worked only as political advisers (21.4%); and only one had worked solely in the private sector (banking).

Around one third of advisers (32.5%) brought with them some experience of working in the federal government and 11.9% had worked in state government departments. A group of 27 (18%) had only ever worked in the federal government; an additional four came directly from positions in the federal government, though they combined this with experience in a university or state government department. In total 20% of advisers came directly into ministers' offices from federal departments.

There is no data from past governments to make comparisons and to test claims of a decline in the number of public servants in ministers' offices. In general, while the government certainly drew from the public service in staffing its offices, the number of advisers who had worked in the federal public service (one third) appears to be low.

Lack of policy expertise?

In terms of policy expertise, 43 of the advisers (29%) brought subject area knowledge with them which directly matched the minister's portfolio, defined as having worked in relevant federal or state departments or having undertaken research in the area. Ten of the chiefs of staff (36%) also brought subject matter expertise from previous work in related departments. While these levels seem low, much depends on the role of the adviser in the office and whether they were involved in advising on policy matters, which is not always clear from their title. In addition, five advisers and one chief of staff had previously worked for lobby groups in the portfolio area.

Other resources: skills, knowledge and contacts

While previous work is an indicator of *experience*, what does the data tell us about the *skills, knowledge* and *contacts* brought by staffers to ministers' offices?

Knowledge

While 4% of staffers had previously worked at universities, they largely did not represent subject matter experts. Apart from two long standing academics employed as advisers in the Minister for Education's office, other experience ranged from a 3 month research

assistant job, 10 months as a tutor or 12 months as a casual or visiting lecturer. Two staff had worked in marketing and public affairs for universities. The two academics did not have typical academic careers, but interspersed their work in universities with periods as higher education administrators and public service jobs.

Those with parliamentary experience tended to have procedural rather than subject matter expertise. For example they had worked as a parliamentary liaison officer, an assistant clerk to the Whips, in administrative roles preparing notice papers, or as a research officer for a senate committee. In only one case a staffer had been a researcher with relevant policy knowledge in the NSW Parliamentary Research Service.

Education is also an indicator of knowledge. Around 30% of staffers in the dataset did not list their education in their profiles. Of those who did, however, many had more than one degree and many advisers had postgraduate degrees (table 4 and 5).

Table 4: Number of Degrees held

Number of Degrees	**Total Group**	**Chief of Staff**	**Adviser**	**Media**	**Admin**
None	28	0	12	7	9
One	56	3	28	14	11
More than one	107	11	71	13	12
Unknown/Not Specified	87	14	40	16	17

Table 5: Highest Level of Education

Level of Education	**Total Group**	**Chief of Staff**	**Adviser**	**Media**	**Admin**
No Postgrad Degree	101	10	49	25	17
Postgrad Degree	62	4	50	2	6
Unknown/Not Specified	115	14	52	23	26

The adviser cohort was generally highly educated, with at least one third of advisers having postgraduate degrees. Eleven staff (ten advisers and one Chief of staff) reported having PhDs. The subjects of their PhDs were: pure maths, law, political science, international economics, public policy, forest genetics, international relations and post-colonial studies.

Contacts

More than 10% of advisers and chiefs of staff (15 advisers and 5 chiefs of staff) had previous experience working for *lobby groups* traditionally associated with the conservative side of politics in Australia. These were agricultural, business or industry associations (Table 6). The contacts and links to these organisations would have been valuable to ministers (see Maley 2000).

Table 6: Previous work in lobby groups

Type of lobby group	Examples
Agricultural	National Farmers Federation Southern Riverina Irrigators Pastoralists and Graziers Association of WA National Irrigators Council NSW Farmers Association
Business	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Australian Federation of Employers and Industries Financial Services Council NSW Business Chamber Insurance Council of Australia
Industry associations	Pharmacy Guild of Australia Energy Retailers Association of Australia NSW Minerals Council Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association Australian Mines and Metals Association Medicines Australia Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries Australian Automobile Association Motor Traders Association of NSW NSW Road Transport Association Australian Private Hospitals Association Registered Clubs Association

Eight staff had worked in *non government organisations*, in paid positions in health sector NGOs, cancer foundations, Save the Children Fund, UNICEF, and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. Another five had had short stints as volunteers or interns in NGOS for periods of around 3 months.

Six staffers had previously worked in conservative *thinktanks* such as the Centre for Independent Studies, the Menzies Research Centre, the Institute of Public Affairs and the Lowy Institute for International Policy. Three moved directly from a thinktank to the position of political adviser, indicating the strong link between right wing thinktanks and Coalition governments.[3]

Conclusion – experienced counsellors?

The backgrounds of this group of staffers support some but not all of the statements made by Banks and others.

[3] Three years after the 2014 dataset, at least three staffers have gone to work in these thinktanks after leaving ministers' offices.

The cohort in the 2014 dataset was not an inexperienced group – most brought previous work experience to the job of adviser – but the dominant type of professional experience they had was in political work. In the main, they were political counsellors. Political skills were only one of the types of the skills ministers in Shaw and Eichbaum's study (2014) valued; yet this data suggests it may have been a primary preference in 2014. While the advisers in the cohort were a highly educated group, a minority (one-third) brought specialised policy knowledge or expertise to the job. Only one third of advisers had previous experience working in the federal government and only 20% came directly into ministers' offices from departments. Chiefs of staff were far more experienced in government, but nevertheless only one third of ministers followed the practice of having their offices headed by a senior public servant. The experience and expertise sought by the Government Staffing Committee in recruiting ministerial staff for Coalition ministerial offices appears to have been predominantly political experience rather than policy knowledge.

The long years of experience as political staff that many brought to the job, including work for the Howard government seven years earlier, is a sign of the growth of a cohort of 'political professionals' around political parties in Australia, at the state and federal level. This may be a function of the number of paid positions in Australia's advisory systems, or, as Svallfors (2016) suggests, about supply rather than demand. It may be one element of the general professionalisation of politics which is also seen in the movement of staff from ministerial offices into legislative positions. One worrying element of this career movement is the fact – revealed in this dataset - that there is a cadre of advisers with career backgrounds ONLY as political party workers to political advisers (one quarter of the advisers in this study). The narrow range of skills and professional experiences of this subgroup is certainly not desirable in Members of Parliament.

On a final note, it is important to recognise the speed of movement of the phenomenon under examination here. In 2017, three years after this group was appointed, around 60% had left their positions. Some claim it was the older, more experienced staff who left (because of ferocious job conditions) to be replaced by young 'staffer brats' (Campbell 2016). One of these became famous for being detained in Malaysia, after stripping to his underwear at the Grand Prix and drinking beer from a shoe.

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ATTACHMENT 1

Position titles within each category:

Chief of staff

Chief of staff, Deputy Chief of staff to the PM

Adviser

Adviser; Assistant Adviser; Chief Economist; Director- Policy, Principal Adviser; Senior Adviser; Senior Adviser – Policy; Senior Adviser - Policy / Political; Senior Adviser – Political; Senior Adviser – Research.

Media

Media Adviser; Assistant Media Adviser; Director - Press Office; Media Adviser - Visual and Social; Media Assistant; Morning Media Manager; Press Office Manager; Senior Media Adviser; Senior Press Secretary.

Administrative

Backbench Liaison Assistant; Diary Manager; Director – Operations; Executive Assistant; Executive Assistant – Diary; Executive Assistant - Office Manager; Executive Assistant (Government); Executive Assistant to Senior Advisers (International and National Security); Executive Assistant to the Prime Minister; Executive Officer to the Chief of Staff; Head of the Prime Minister's Programme; Hospitality Officer to the Prime Minister; Office Manager; Office Manager – Diary; Office Manager / Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff; Personal Assistant / Diary Manager; Personal Assistant to the Chief of Staff; Personal Assistant to the Prime Minister; Prime Minister's Diary Assistant (Invitations); Programme and Diary Manager; Receptionist; Reception / Office Assistant; Reception / Admin; Receptionist - Backbench Liaison; Receptionist - Research Assistant; Receptionist / Office Manager; Research Assistant; Senate Assistant; Senior Advancer; Senior Receptionist; SPA Liaison.

ATTACHMENT 2

Table 7: Prior Professional Experience, raw numbers

Prior Professional Experience	Total Group	Chief of Staff	Adviser	Media	Admin
Political Adviser	160	17	89	29	25
Federal Govt.	77	13	49	7	8
Private sector	69	7	39	11	12
Political Party	60	1	43	3	13
Media	46	4	13	26	3
State Govt.	24	3	18	3	0
Lobby group	25	5	15	4	1
NGO	13	0	10	0	3
University	11	1	9	0	1
Think Tank	7	0	6	1	0
Parliament	6	0	3	0	3
Union	1	0	1	0	0
Other	15	1	8	3	3
None/Unknown	6	0	2	0	4

Table 8: Coding for each Prior Professional Experience category

Category	Definition
Political Adviser	Worked as ministerial adviser to a minister or shadow minister (federal or state)
Federal Govt.	Worked in a federal government department or as a DLO
Private sector	Worked for a private company
Political Party	Worked as an electorate officer, for an MP or Senator, or at party headquarters
Media	Worked in the news media as a journalist or for a PR or communications company
State Govt.	Worked in a state government department
Lobby group	Worked for a lobby group or industry association
NGO	Worked for the non-government sector
University	Worked as a lecturer, tutor, research fellow or research assistant
Think Tank	Worked for a thinktank
Parliament	Worked for a federal or state parliament department
Union	Worked for a union
Other	Work types outside the categories above eg nurse, physiotherapist
None/Unknown	Either stated they had no previous career background or none stated