

# Our year in review

## Regional Sitting of Parliament in FNQ

In May 2023, the Queensland Parliament held its sixth regional sitting in Cairns, encompassing three official sitting days and featuring additional activities that extended over a span of five days.

The following electorates were included in the North Queensland region for the purposes of the regional sitting:

- Cook
- Barron River
- Cairns
- Mulgrave
- Hill
- Traeger
- Hinchinbrook.

The project management and implementation of the regional sitting was a combined effort between the Parliamentary Service and the Executive Government. As in previous regional sittings of parliaments, project governance consisted of:

- the Executive Planning Committee (EPC) – comprised of the Speaker, representatives from the Parliamentary Service, the Speaker's Office, the Premier's Office, the Leader of the House's office, Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Queensland Police Service (QPS)
- the Parliamentary Service Internal Working Group (IWG) – comprising of Parliamentary Service officers involved in the planning of the regional sitting.

The venue for the regional sitting was the Cairns Convention Centre (CCC). The parliamentary precinct was established at the CCC, including the Legislative Assembly Chamber, offices and Members' areas, as well as space for education and community engagement activities.

The community engagement activities conducted during the sitting week included:

- a Youth Parliament conducted on Monday 8 May 2023
- a Welcome ceremony on Tuesday 9 May 2023
- a school education program, across the three days of sittings, with students from the Far North Queensland region attending the sitting and receiving a briefing on the Parliament and Queensland's democratic system and other education activities
- an evening Question Time from 6:00pm to 7:00pm on Wednesday 10 May 2023
- a State Reception to be held on the City Terrace at

The Cairns Convention Centre on Thursday 11 May 2023

- a Junior Indigenous Youth Parliament was held on Friday 12 May 2023.

There was also displays of parliamentary artefacts curated by the Parliamentary Service.

All Members of Parliament's travel and accommodation requirements were coordinated by the Parliamentary Service.

A functional parliamentary precinct, encompassing the Chamber and office accommodation, was delivered on time and the management of the operational and logistical aspects of the regional sitting was a success.

Members reported strong satisfaction with the Parliamentary Service's delivery of the regional sitting. In response to the survey question—how would you rate the performance of the Parliamentary Service in delivering the Regional Sitting—90 per cent of Members were satisfied or very satisfied.

The proceedings were recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on Parliament TV. Members and staff were provided with wireless internet access to the Parliamentary network.

More than 3,300 members of the general public, teachers and school children attended the sitting and events over five days.

## Committee Reporting

Assembly and Committee Services supported 48 committee inquiries and 555 committee meetings, hearings and briefings in 2022–23. A key focus area in the Committee Office was the implementation of a fresh approach to committee reports, aiming to enhance accessibility and make them easily comprehensible for readers with busy schedules. The reports have been condensed and refined, resulting in shorter and more concise documents. For bill inquiry reports, a cohesive approach has been implemented to structure the outcomes of committee deliberations on policy matters. This approach carefully considers the compatibility of these outcomes with the fundamental legislative principles concerning the rights and freedoms of individuals, the sovereignty of parliament, and the human rights outlined in the *Human Rights Act 2020*.

The next steps are to develop a consistent approach to graphic design and the graphical representation of information, with a view to further enhancing accessibility of committee reports.

The Committee Office has continued to implement the Good Practice Communication and Engagement Action Plan this year. A survey of subscribers to committee updates, witnesses at hearings, and people making submissions to committee inquiries will 'go live' from 1 July 2023. This collected data will be used to improve committee engagement with stakeholders, supporting greater public participation in the democratic parliamentary process.

In contributing to the requirements for a new Parliamentary Information Management System (PIMS), improving avenues for participation has been front-of-mind for the Committee Office. An e-submissions platform in 2023–24 will offer a simpler approach for people to make submissions to parliamentary inquiries. The benefits derived from improved information management will lead to a more efficient allocation of resources, supporting enabling public engagement.

## Graduate Program

In July 2022, the Speaker approved planning for Queensland Parliament's inaugural Graduate Program, which began in February 2023.

The Parliamentary Service has been interested in introducing a Graduate Program for the Service since 2016. Further consideration was given to the introduction of such a program in 2020 in the light of the Reconciliation Action Plan commitments to investigate and develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples recruitment, retention and professional development strategy and opportunities for Indigenous Parliamentary Cadetship and Internships.

The program includes:

- four graduates engaged via a full time two-year temporary employment contract at the A03 classification level, with two places reserved for First Peoples graduates
- each graduate to rotate through the four divisions of the Service for a 6-month period to learn about the parliament and develop valuable skills while at the same time contribute to the service in a meaningful way
- a bespoke program targeted at those graduates that would be interested in getting a variety of work experience that the Service can offer as a point of difference.

The Parliamentary Service partnered with Chandler MacLeod in developing a screening process (including psychometric testing) with emphasis on identifying a pool of applicants that are the right fit for the Service.

The primary focus of the program is to discover candidates who not only possess the necessary qualifications but also exhibit a genuine interest in and alignment with the Service's values, and are likely to stay on in roles after their rotation or apply for advertised roles as they become vacant.

The first three graduates commenced in February 2023. Following the success of this initiative a further intake is planned for February 2025. The advertising and screening process for the next intake will commence in October 2023.

## Review and restructure of Human Resource Services

In 2021–22, an external review commenced to examine the current organisational structure and service delivery model within Human Resource Services. The review identified necessary changes to resourcing to address the increasing volume and complexity of service demands, and investment in technology and process redesign to digitise a number of inefficient manual processes.

In August 2022, the Speaker approved significant changes to the structure and resourcing of the (then) single Human Resource unit. Under the approved changes, Human Resource Services was split into two specialised teams:

- **Payroll Services** was created to handle key tasks associated with the payroll cycle, including salary and allowance payments, leave processing and management, payroll system administration and reporting. .
- **People and Culture** was established to focus on the employee lifecycle, encompassing responsibilities such as recruitment, performance planning and management, industrial relations, training and development, and delivering the *Parliamentary Service Workforce Strategy* approved in 2022.

Another significant recommendation supported by the Speaker was the rationalisation of payroll services provision to external agencies under a fee-for-service model. This strategic move allows for the prioritisation and enhancement of service delivery to key clients within the Parliamentary Service.

During 2022–23, both the Payroll Services team and the People and Culture team inducted new staff and developed formal service catalogues to assist Members and staff to identify the suite of services to be provided by each team, and define areas of responsibility in the new structure.

Payroll Service has commenced a business process review and planning for the digitisation of manual time sheets, and the delivery of online self-service functionality in electorate offices to replace manual leave forms. These initiatives will be delivered in 2023–24.

The People and Culture team has developed a three-year plan to implement the Parliamentary Service Workforce Strategy 2022–25. The plan has been approved by the Clerk of the Parliament and identifies key priorities in 2023–24 including review and modernisation of employee attraction and retention policies and procedures, and delivery of an expanded flexible work options framework.

## Annexe Refurbishment

### Project Description

The Parliament and Parliamentary Annexe tower refurbishment project began in July 2022, marked by the commencement of site works encompassing intrusive investigations and mobilisation efforts. The Parliamentary Annexe façade repairs and refurbishment of Members' office and bedroom floors consists of the:

- rectification and make-safe of the external façade
- redesign and internal refurbishment of Members' accommodation and offices Levels 9 to 23.

### Program

The date for Practical Completion for the Annexe refurbishment is currently Tuesday 26 March 2024. To date 19 days have been added to the date for Practical Completion to address the following delays experienced by Hutchinson Builders:

- inclement weather during the period 21 October to 2 December 2022
- removal of friable asbestos containing materials from bedroom levels 14 to 23, public holidays/Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBA) and industry Rostered Days Off (RDO) not accounted for in the original program.

### Construction Status

**Internal Refurbishment** – Floors 14 to 23 have been completely demolished, reverting them to their core structure, with the demolition process for floors 9 to 13 nearing completion. Following demolition a range of activities take place by floor such as precise surveying, partition layout establishment, passive fire remediation, concrete infilling, and the fitting of windowsill and head wall frames. Essential preliminary services work at ceiling level is also underway, accompanied by the installation of new plumbing and drainage systems.

**External Refurbishment** – The external demolition of windows, soffits, and shrouds on levels 14 to 23 has been successfully completed. Concurrently, concrete patch repair work is in progress, involving the replacement of precast concrete panel joint sealant. These activities are being carried out in a top-to-bottom progression.

### Project Risks

Several latent conditions have been identified, or are currently being investigated, which may have an impact on the Practical Completion date and cost. These conditions include unexpected findings of asbestos, deflections in the floor slabs and a lack of structural documentation for reference.

## Digital Transformation Program

In late 2022, the Parliamentary Service commenced a major digital transformation program focused on replacing its legacy bespoke IT applications with commercial-off-the-shelf products, and modernising its existing IT and AV infrastructure.

The centre piece of this transformation is the new Parliament Information Management System (PIMS) which will be used to support the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and parliamentary committees, and the introduction of Automatic Speech Recognition functionality.

Over the next couple of years, a total of 14 IT modules will be introduced to support activities of the Parliament, replacing in-house-built bespoke applications. The new IT modules include Bills, Tabled Papers, Questions and Answers, Petitions, Committee hearings, Procedural Hearings, Hansard and Broadcast (Parliament TV).

To assist in the transition from bespoke IT applications to more reliable off-the-shelf solutions, the Parliamentary Service has engaged a managed service provider to temporarily support and maintain its legacy applications.

In 2022, five strategic project boards, chaired by members of the Executive Leadership Team, were established to oversee the implementation of major Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) initiatives. The boards cover the Legislative Assembly Digital Transformation, Enterprise Resource Planning, Property and Facilities, IT Modernisation and Audio Visual.

## Commemoration of former members who served in military conflicts

As part of the Armistice Day Centenary in 2018, the Queensland Parliament commissioned the War Service Honour Board to commemorate the service and sacrifice of former Queensland Parliament Members. The Honour Board is located outside of the Legislative Assembly Chamber and features the names of 110 former Members who saw active service in conflicts up until 1975. There are now 117 entries displayed on the board, with one former Member having served in three conflicts, and five former Members each having served in two conflicts.

In 2022, the Parliamentary Library undertook extensive research to determine those former Members who served in post-1945 military events. This research informed an update to the Honour Board in early 2023. A commemorative event was held in February 2023 to acknowledge the addition of the names of 14 former Members who served in the following conflicts:

- Vietnam War (1962–75)
- Indonesian Confrontation (1963–66)
- Malayan Emergency (1948–60).

## Financial and Administrative Service Improvement Program

### Financial Management Information System

Financial and Administrative Services has initiated the replacement of the current on-site Financial Management Information System, undertaking a significant project that will span over several years. During the 2022–23 period, the main focus was on conducting thorough market research, where three different solutions were demonstrated. The aim is to finalise the selection of a preferred supplier in early 2023–24 and proceed with the system's implementation.