



2019-20 Budget Estimates – Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019

**Report No. 30, 56th Parliament
Economics and Governance Committee
August 2019**

Economics and Governance Committee

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The committee thanks the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for his assistance.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided by parliamentary service officers who contributed to the work of the committee during the estimates process.

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Abbreviations

committee	Economics and Governance Committee
IT	information technology
POQA	<i>Parliament of Queensland Act 2001</i> (Qld)
SDS	Service Delivery Statements
Speaker	Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2019-2020 financial year contained in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019.

Consideration of the budget estimates allows for the public examination of the administration of the Legislative Assembly's budget by the Speaker and officers of the Queensland Parliamentary Service. This was undertaken through questions on notice and a public hearing process.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Speaker and officers of the Parliamentary Service for their co-operation in providing information to the committee throughout this process.

I would also like to extend my thanks to my fellow committee members for their hard work and contribution to the estimates process, and to other members whose participation in the hearing provided additional scrutiny of the estimates.

Finally, I thank the committee's secretariat and other Parliamentary Service staff for their assistance throughout the estimates process.



Linus Power MP

Chair

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

The Economics and Governance Committee (committee) is a portfolio committee of the Legislative Assembly which commenced on 15 February 2018 under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* (POQA) and the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.¹

The committee's primary areas of responsibility include:

- Premier and Cabinet, and Trade
- Treasury
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, and
- Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs.

The committee also has oversight functions in relation to the Queensland Audit Office, the Integrity Commissioner, and the Family Responsibilities Commission.

On 11 June 2019, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019 and the estimates for the Legislative Assembly were referred to the committee for investigation and report.²

The committee conducted a public hearing on 23 July 2019 and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

A copy of the transcript of the committee's hearing is available on the committee's webpage.³

1.2 Aim of this report

This report summarises the estimates referred to the committee and highlights some of the issues the committee examined.

The committee considered the estimates referred to it by using information contained in:

- Budget Papers
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice
- evidence taken at the hearing, and
- additional information given in relation to answers.

Prior to the public hearing, the committee provided the Speaker with questions on notice in relation to the estimates. Responses to all the questions were received.

The answers to the committee's pre-hearing questions on notice are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.

1.3 Other Members' participation

The committee gave leave for other Members of the Legislative Assembly to participate in the hearing.

¹ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, s 88 and Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, Standing Order 194.

² Standing Order 177 provides for the automatic referral of the annual Appropriation Bills to portfolio committees once the Bills have been read a second time.

³ <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-committees/committees/EGC/inquiries/current-inquiries/Estimates2019>

The following Member participated:

- Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, Shadow Minister for Education, Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, Manager of Opposition Business, and Member for Kawana.

Correspondence containing the requests for leave for non-committee Members to attend the hearing and ask questions is included in the volume of additional information tabled with this report.

2 Recommendation

Pursuant to Standing Order 187(1), the committee must state whether the proposed expenditures referred to it are agreed to.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

3 Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service

The Legislative Assembly of Queensland consists of 93 Members who discharge a range of important legislative and constituency responsibilities.

The Parliamentary Service, established by the *Parliamentary Service Act 1988*, provides administrative and support services to the Legislative Assembly, to support, promote and strengthen the Legislative Assembly in its performance of its democratic functions.

The strategic objectives of the Parliamentary Service are to:

- support the Legislative Assembly (and its committees and Members) in fulfilling its functions within the institution of Parliament
- support Members of the Legislative Assembly in their communication with and representation of constituents
- provide information, corporate and facility management services that better enable Members and parliamentary service officers to achieve their objectives, and
- safeguard, promote and strengthen the institution of Parliament by improving awareness of the role of the Legislative Assembly, its committees, and Members in our democratic system of government, and providing accessible information about parliamentary proceedings and activities.⁴

The Legislative Assembly's activities are coordinated through two main service areas:

- Members' Salaries, Entitlements and Electorate Office Services, and
- Parliamentary Precinct Support Services.

The first of these two service areas administers the remuneration and entitlements of Members of the Legislative Assembly and provides resources and support services to assist in maintaining Members' electorate offices.⁵

Parliamentary Precinct Support Services provide advisory, information and support services to assist the Parliament, its committees and Members. This includes:

- the delivery of assistance through Chamber, Education and Communication Services, the Parliamentary Reporting Services, the Committee Office and the Parliamentary Library
- undertaking community engagement and raising awareness of the institution of Parliament and its functions
- the provision of Security and Attendant Services to ensure a safe and secure parliamentary precinct
- accommodation and hospitality services for Members, staff and guests of the Parliament, and
- various organisational services to support the activities of Members of their staff, including Information Technology (IT) Services, Human Resources Services, and Financial and Administrative Services.⁶

3.1 Budget overview

Budgeted expenditure for the Legislative Assembly in 2019-20 is \$103.5 million, an increase of \$4.4 million on the estimated actual budget for 2018-19. The Budget Papers advise that this increase is

⁴ State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements (SDS), Legislative Assembly, p 2.

⁵ State Budget 2019-20, SDS, Legislative Assembly, p 3.

⁶ State Budget 2019-20, SDS, Legislative Assembly, p 4.

primarily associated with the implementation of electorate office technology improvements and electorate office workload management measures, including a new relief staff allowance framework.⁷

It is proposed that the Legislative Assembly will receive \$101.3 million in appropriation funding in 2019, with remainder of the \$103.5 million in operating expenses to be funded by user charges and fees and other revenue.⁸ The Budget Papers advise that an equity adjustment has occurred to reflect a variation to estimated indexation of land asset values applied in 2017-18 which has been partially offset by the operating result for 2017-18.⁹

The following table compares the appropriations for the Legislative Assembly for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Appropriations	Budget 2018-19 \$'000	Est. Actual 2018-19 \$'000	Vote 2019-20 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	96,112	96,751	101,325
equity adjustment	1,066	1,066	(1,316)
<i>Administered Items</i>
Vote	97,178	97,817	100,009

Source: Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019, Schedule 1, p 6.

3.1.1 Budget highlights

In addition to the planned program of electorate office technology improvements and workload management measures, highlights for the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service for 2019-20 include:

- continuing the implementation of an electorate office relocation program to address the impacts of electoral boundary changes on Members' electorate accommodation
- continuing the implementation of a range of electorate office security enhancements
- continuing the implementation of a new information technology strategy, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of IT Services in response to changing client and business needs and emerging risks, including cyber security
- commencing the delivery of a three year program to upgrade critical building infrastructure and services in the Parliamentary Annexe to address safety risks and ensure the reliability of services that support the parliamentary workplace
- the launch of an upgraded internet site to provide the public with improved access to parliamentary activities and information viewable via a range of portable computing devices, and
- continuing to implement the regional education program to help engage with key regional centres during the 56th Parliament.¹⁰

⁷ State Budget 2019-20, SDS, Legislative Assembly, p 7.

⁸ State Budget 2019-20, SDS, Legislative Assembly, p 8.

⁹ State Budget 2019-20, SDS, Legislative Assembly, p 11.

¹⁰ State Budget 2019-20, SDS, Legislative Assembly, pp 3-4.

3.1.2 Capital program

The planned capital outlay for the Legislative Assembly in 2019-20 is \$6.8 million. This marks a 35 per cent decrease on the \$9.2 million allocated for capital expenditure in 2018-19.¹¹

While approximately \$1.0 million of the planned 2019-20 capital outlay is assigned for the electorate office accommodation program (including the relocation of offices as a result of the electoral boundary redistribution), most of the Legislative Assembly's capital expenditure for 2019-20 will be incurred for projects within the parliamentary precinct.¹² Major capital projects within the precinct include:

- the upgrade of critical building infrastructure and services supporting the Parliamentary Annexe (critical infrastructure and services upgrade program) (\$3.4 million)
- the restoration and upgrade of the Parliament House heritage fence (\$1.0 million), and
- the ongoing replacement of core IT network infrastructure (\$500,000) and audio-visual system infrastructure (\$120,000).¹³

3.2 Key issues raised during consideration of the budget estimates

Issues that were raised and considered by the committee in relation to the estimates for the Legislative Assembly for 2019-20 included:

- technology upgrades to electorate offices
- electorate office workload management initiative
- the electorate office relocation program
- budget and planning activities for the regional parliamentary sitting to be held in Townsville
- costs of overseas travel for the Speaker and parliamentary staff
- costs of committee travel, including increased expenditure in 2018-19
- critical infrastructure and service upgrade program
- the ongoing fire services upgrade project, including the timeline for delivery and impacts on access to Parliament House
- the lift upgrade project in the Parliamentary Annexe
- the completion of other outstanding capital projects
- security incidents, risk management activities and security upgrades in the parliamentary precinct and at electoral offices
- measures to improve the security of the Legislative Assembly's IT and other technology systems
- online engagement and youth engagement activities
- the regional education program, including activities undertaken to engage with key regional centres
- resourcing of the Parliamentary Library
- procedural matters relating to the estimates process
- procedural matters relating to the Register of Members' Interests

¹¹ State Budget 2019-20, Capital Statement, p 15.

¹² State Budget 2019-20, Capital Statement, p 61.

¹³ State Budget 2019-20, Capital Statement, p 61. A further \$800,000 has also been budgeted for capital expenditure on 'other property, plant and equipment'.

- the hosting of the 50th Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference and associated activities
- the relaunch of the committee rooms within the Queensland Parliament, and
- strategies to manage energy consumption and associated costs.

Committee comment

The committee notes the Speaker's statement during the public hearing with regard to the estimates process:

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill provides the funding for the salaries and allowances of members of the Legislative Assembly as well as funding for the Parliamentary Service, which provides administrative and support services to the Legislative Assembly.¹⁴

The committee acknowledges the importance of a comprehensive and open examination of the proposed expenditure for the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service.

¹⁴ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 23 July 2019, p 3.