

2023-24 Budget Estimates – Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023



Report No. 49, 57th Parliament
Economics and Governance Committee
August 2023

Economics and Governance Committee

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Acknowledgements

The committee thanks the Acting Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for his assistance during the committee's consideration of the budget estimates for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service.

The committee also acknowledges officers of the Parliamentary Service who supported the work of the committee during the estimates process.

Contents

Chair's foreword	ii
1 Introduction	3
1.1 Role of the committee	3
1.2 Referral and committee process	3
1.3 Aim of this report	3
1.4 Participation by other Members	4
2 Recommendation	4
3 Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service	5
3.1 Budget overview	6
3.2 Service area highlights	7
3.3 Capital purchases	7
3.4 Key issues raised during consideration of budget estimates	8

Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's consideration of the budget estimates for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for 2023-24, as set out in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023.

The consideration of these estimates allows for the public examination of the proposed expenditure through questioning of the Speaker and other officials during a public hearing, and through a question on notice process.

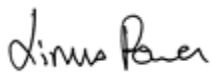
As set out in this report, the committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Acting Speaker and officers from the Parliamentary Service for their cooperation in providing information to the committee throughout this process.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their contributions to the estimates process, as well as 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.

I commend this report to the House.



Linus Power MP

Chair

August 2023

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 26 November 2020 under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.¹

The committee's primary areas of responsibility are:

- Premier and Cabinet and Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Treasury, Trade and Investment
- Tourism, Innovation and Sport.²

1.2 Referral and committee process

On 16 June 2023, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023 (Bill) and the proposed expenditure set out in the Bill (estimates) were referred to the committee for investigation and report.³

The terms of the referral were subject to a motion agreed to by the Legislative Assembly, setting out the dates on which portfolio committees would hold their estimates hearings, and specifying the timeframes during which the committees would question the Speaker and Ministers about their portfolio estimates.⁴

In accordance with this motion, the committee conducted its estimates public hearing on 1 August 2023 and took evidence about the proposed expenditure for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service from the Acting Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and other witnesses. The transcript and broadcast of the committee's hearing are available on the committee's webpage.⁵

Prior to the public hearing, the committee also provided the Acting Speaker with questions on notice in relation to estimates.⁶ Responses to all the questions were received.

The committee was required to table its report on the Bill (and listed estimates) by 18 August 2023.⁷

1.3 Aim of this report

The consideration of the budget estimates is one of the key mechanisms by which to examine expenditure on, and the performance and effectiveness of, publicly funded services. By examining and reporting on the proposed expenditure contained in the Bill (and the associated budget papers), the committee assists the Parliament in its scrutiny of the proposed expenditure.

¹ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, s 88 and Standing Order 194.

² The committee also has oversight functions in relation to the Auditor-General and the Queensland Integrity Commissioner. See Schedule 6, Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

³ Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023, p 2154. Note: SO 176(3) provides that the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill stands referred to the portfolio committee responsible for investigating the appropriations for the Premier's portfolio, unless the House otherwise orders.

⁴ Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023, pp 2062-66; 2072.

⁵ <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/EGC>

⁶ In accordance with Standing Order 182.

⁷ Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023, pp 2062-66; 2072.

The Bill provides for an appropriation for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service of \$142.189 million for 2023-24, approximately \$113.457 million of which is to be spent on services, with the remaining \$28.732 million to be used for equity adjustment.⁸

This report provides further detail on the proposed expenditure and highlights some of the issues the committee examined.

In considering the estimates, the committee drew on information contained in:

- budget papers
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice
- evidence taken at the hearing
- additional information given in relation to answers (including answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing).

Answers to the committee's pre-hearing questions on notice, documents tabled during the hearing, and additional information provided after the hearing, are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report. This information is also available on the committee's estimates webpage.⁹

1.4 Participation by other Members

The committee gave leave for other (non-committee) Members of the Legislative Assembly to participate in the hearing.¹⁰ Mr Andrew Powell MP, Member for Glass House, participated in the hearing session for the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly with the committee's leave.

2 Recommendation

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

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023 for the committee's area of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly.

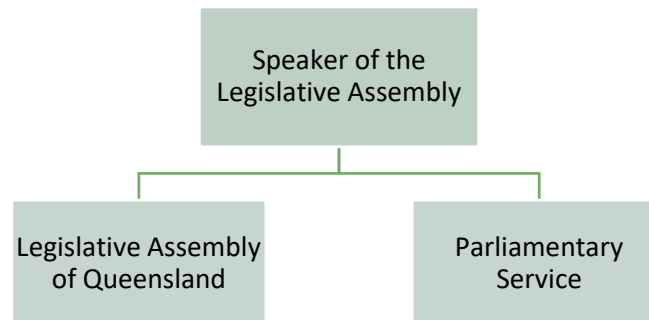
⁸ Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023, Schedule 1; Queensland Budget 2023-24, Service Delivery Statements (SDS), Legislative Assembly of Queensland, pp 4, 9.

⁹ <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-Committees/Committees/Committee-Details?cid=167&id=4262>

¹⁰ Pursuant to SO 181(e). Note: The full list of Members granted leave to participate in the hearing is included in the volume of additional information tabled with this report.

3 Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is responsible for the Legislative Assembly of Queensland and the Parliamentary Service.



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

The Parliamentary Service, established under the *Parliamentary Service Act 1988*, provides administrative and support services to the Legislative Assembly. The 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 to engage with and represent their electorates
- provide information, corporate and facility management services
- safeguard, promote and strengthen the important institution of Parliament.¹¹

The activities of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service are coordinated through 2 main service areas:

- Members' Salaries, Entitlements and Electorate Office Services
- Parliamentary Precinct Support Services.¹²

The Members' Salaries, Entitlements and Electorate Office Services area represents the direct cost of Members' salaries and entitlements and maintaining and supporting electorate offices across the State.¹³

Parliamentary Precinct Support Services is responsible for providing:

- advisory, information and support services to assist the Parliament, its committees and Members to fulfil their constitutional and parliamentary responsibilities (including Chamber, Education and Communication Services; the Committee Office, the Parliamentary Library and Parliamentary Reporting Services)
- services to promote the institution of Parliament and raise community awareness and understanding of its important role and functions
- services to provide a safe and secure parliamentary precinct, including Security and Attendant Services

¹¹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 1.

¹² Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, pp 2-3.

¹³ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 2.

- accommodation and hospitality services that provide Members, staff and guests of the Parliament with an appropriate working environment
- organisational services that support the activities of Members and their staff, and deliver and administer a range of entitlements afforded to members pursuant to the Members' Remuneration Handbook, including Information Technology Services, Human Resource Services, and Financial and Administrative Services.¹⁴

3.1 Budget overview

The operating budget for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for 2023-24 is \$115.7 million, an increase of \$721,000 from the 2022-23 estimated actual budget. The budget papers advise that this difference is primarily related to additional funding for 2023-24 associated with enterprise bargaining costs and maintenance, and electorate office leasing escalation.¹⁵

It is proposed that this \$115.7 million in operating expenditure will be funded through:

- the proposed appropriation of \$113.5 million for departmental services (up by \$1.8 million on the \$111.6 million estimated actual appropriation in 2022-23)
- approximately \$2.2 million in user charges and fees and other revenue (consistent with equivalent such revenue in 2021-22 and 2022-23).¹⁶

A further \$28.7 million in appropriation funding has been earmarked for equity adjustment, compared to an estimated actual \$20.1 million in appropriation funding for this purpose in 2022-23.¹⁷

The below table, taken from the Bill, illustrates the overall breakdown of the proposed appropriation funding for 2023-24, compared with the budgeted and estimated actual appropriations for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for 2022-23.

Appropriations	Budget 2022-23 \$'000	Est. Actual 2022-23 \$'000	Vote 2023-24 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	111,308	111,647	113,457
equity adjustment	35,413	20,110	28,732
<i>Administered Items</i>
Vote	146,721	131,757	142,189

Source: Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023, Schedule 1.

As highlighted in the table, the \$142.2 million overall appropriation amount being sought for vote for 2023-24 is approximately 7.9 per cent (\$10.4 million) higher than the estimated actual appropriation for 2022-23, with the majority of this difference associated with the \$8.6 million increase in the appropriation amount allocated for equity adjustment.

The proposed 2023-24 appropriation is also significantly higher than estimated actual appropriations in 2020-21 and 2021-22, though these pre-date the significant investment associated with the

¹⁴ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 3.

¹⁵ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 6.

¹⁶ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, pp 4, 7; Queensland Budget 2022-23, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, pp 4, 7.

¹⁷ Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023, Schedule 1.

Parliamentary Annexe refurbishment project, which is the major contributing factor in the higher appropriation amounts for 2022-23 and 2023-24 (see trends in the appropriation below).

Trends in the appropriation

	2020-21 Estimated Actual \$'000	2021-22 Estimated Actual \$'000	2022-23 Estimated Actual \$'000	2023-24 Estimates Sought \$'000
	103,618	105,510	131,757	142,189
% Change in overall appropriation	1.97	24.70	7.92	

Key service area initiatives and capital spending for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for 2023-24 are set out below.

3.2 Service area highlights

The 2023-24 service area highlights for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service include:¹⁸

- Continued implementation of the Parliament's digital transformation strategy, to help digitise a range of manual processes and provide reliable, secure and modern technology solutions to support the Parliament, its committees and Members

→ Including additional funding of \$3.1 million over 4 years and \$253,000 per annum for the Queensland Parliament to replace and modernise business-critical legacy IT systems. This includes the replacement of a portfolio of bespoke software applications with a commercial enterprise solution known as the Parliamentary Information Management System (PIMS), and replacement of ageing AV broadcast infrastructure

- Commencement of a 3-year plan to deliver a range of workforce modernisation improvements aligned with the *Queensland Parliamentary Service Workforce Strategy 2022-2025*
- Completion of a project to enhance electorate office security through the installation of a standardised CCTV monitoring system in each electorate office across Queensland
- Commencement of planning for the transition from the 57th Parliament to the 58th Parliament following the scheduled October 2024 General State Election

3.3 Capital purchases

The total planned capital expenditure for the Legislative Assembly for 2023-24 is \$36.9 million, up from estimated actual expenditure of \$31.4 million in 2022-23¹⁹ (and compared to estimated actual expenditure of \$15.3 million (2021-22) and \$13.3 million (2020-21) in the 2 years prior to the commencement of the critical infrastructure and services upgrade in the Parliamentary Annexe).²⁰

¹⁸ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 1.

¹⁹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 58; Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 5.

²⁰ Queensland Budget 2022-23, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 5; Queensland Budget 2021-22, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 5.

Most of this expenditure (\$32 million) is associated with the Annexe works, which will support necessary repairs and upgrades to the external façade of the Parliamentary Annexe, and the refurbishment of soft furnishings in Members' office and overnight accommodation floors (levels 9 to 23).²¹

Other capital expenses for 2023-24 include those associated with the ongoing Electorate Office accommodation improvement program (\$2.1 million), the digital transformation program (\$865,000), information technology network infrastructure (\$406,000), and other property, plant and equipment (1.5 million).²²

3.4 Key issues raised during consideration of budget estimates

Key issues that were raised and considered by the committee in its examination of the estimates for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service are set out below.

Matters considered by the committee in relation to the estimates for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service	Reference – Question on Notice (QoN) or Transcript page number
Procedures for Estimates hearings and questioning	Transcript, pp 3-4
The Parliamentary Service's involvement in the regional sitting of Parliament in Cairns in May 2023	QoN no. 8
Expenses incurred by the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service on the Regional Parliament in Cairns in May 2023, and the remittance of those expenses to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet	Transcript, pp 4-5
The compliance of answers to sitting day Questions on Notice provided by Ministers, including the number and proportion of compliant answers received after the due date, the number and proportion of answers returned to Ministers for reanswering, and the number of complaints received from Members	Transcript, pp 5-6; QoN no. 19
Discussion of possible reform of the committee system and estimates process	Transcript, p 6
The timeframes for the delivery of the 3-year Parliamentary Annexe critical infrastructure and services upgrade program	QoN no. 4
The forecast completion date for the Parliamentary Annexe refurbishment	Transcript, p 6
The impacts of the Annexe refurbishment on workplace health and safety, including precautions taken to prevent incidents	Transcript, p 6
The impacts of the Annexe refurbishment project on the Parliamentary Service catering division, particularly in terms of construction works and associated access restrictions	QoN no. 5
The continued refurbishment of the old House, including the replacement of stone and carpets, repainting, and other activities	Transcript, p 7

²¹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 58; Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 5.

²² Queensland Budget 2023-24, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 58.

Initiatives to safeguard and promote the various heritage collections of the Parliament	QoN no. 7
The Parliamentary Service's digital transformation strategy and its impact on the operation of Parliament and its committees, including through the roll out of PIMS	Transcript pp 7-8; QoN no. 1
Enhancements to Hansard and the budgeted modernisation of AV broadcast infrastructure for 2023-24, including the planned introduction of live playback features, speech-to-text technology and closed captioning	Transcript, p 7; QoN no. 20
The increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing in Parliamentary Precinct Support Services during 2022-23	QoN no. 6
Funding and FTE staffing for parliamentary committees for 2023-24	QoN no. 14
The expected benefits of the 3-year modernisation program for the Parliamentary Service, aligned with the Parliamentary Service Workforce Strategy	QoN no. 2
The status of the Parliamentary Service Graduate Program, including plans for the program in the future	Transcript, p 8
Plans and strategies adopted by the Parliamentary Service to improve engagement with First Nations people	Transcript, p 9
Activities conducted as part of the Parliamentary Service education program and plans for the year ahead	Transcript, pp 9-10
The remuneration of the Acting Speaker when performing the role of the Speaker	Transcript, p 6
The installation of CCTV monitoring systems to enhance electorate office security, and associated safety benefits for Members, electorate staff and the community	Transcript p 8; QoN no. 3
The Electorate Office Accommodation Program, including the cost and timeframe of works to be delivered	QoN no. 10; QoN no. 11
The maintenance costs of electorate offices	QoN no. 12
Progress with telecommunication upgrades for the Parliamentary Service and electorate offices	QoN no. 13
User charges and fees received by the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service in 2022-23	QoN no. 16
Legal costs paid by the Queensland Parliament in matters of litigation relating to the release of Crime and Corruption Commission reports	QoN no. 18; Transcript p 4
The use of Queensland produce in the dining choices offered in the parliamentary precinct	QoN no. 9
Items confiscated by Parliamentary Security in 2022-23	QoN no. 15
Projects associated with a \$36 million increase in property, plant and equipment for the Parliamentary Service in 2023-24	QoN no. 17