

Message from the Speaker



It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report for the Queensland Parliamentary Service for 2018–19.

Queensland Parliament House is the People's House and it has been my goal since my election as Speaker to ensure that more Queenslanders than ever before can have the opportunity to visit and engage with their Parliament.

The parliamentary precinct has been purpose built for the operations of the Parliament, members and staff. However it does feature public spaces, conference and meeting rooms, and a variety of dining and function rooms.

During the 2018–19 financial year, there were over 40,000 guests who attended onsite functions across various venues in the precinct.

Until recently the focus of these events have been functions and events hosted by MPs or other sponsored organisations.

While the Parliament's venues – particularly the Strangers' Dining Room – are heavily utilised during parliamentary sitting periods by members and their guests, during many other times of the year a number of its facilities remain under-utilised.

During 2018–19 the Strangers' Dining Room has been opened to the public on Friday afternoons.

Members of the public can now visit Parliament House, dine in the historic Strangers' Dining Room and be treated to a fine dining experience featuring quality Queensland produce.

The 150th Anniversary of the first sitting of Parliament in our current building was celebrated on 4 August 2018. The occasion provided a number of opportunities for the Queensland Parliamentary to open its doors to the wider public.

The celebrations included a PH150 Open Day which featured tours, stalls and interpretive displays. Over 3,000 visitors took up this opportunity to visit Parliament House and see first-hand rooms that members of the public rarely see – such as those of the Premier, Ministers, and the Office of the Speaker.

Other initiatives to celebrate PH150 included a seminar co-hosted with the Royal Historical Society of Queensland (RHSQ) on the conceptualisation, funding decisions and architectural design; the social, political and economic climate at the time; construction materials, techniques and milestones; and the challenges of preserving and working in a heritage building. Papers from the seminar were published in a special edition of the RHSQ journal.

A photographic book titled 'The People's House' was also produced to mark the anniversary. As well as serving as a tribute to the beauty of Queensland's Parliament House, the book is an important historical snapshot of the building in 2018.

The maintenance and management of the parliamentary precinct's physical environment presents a number of challenges. Specifically, physical limitations inherent in a heritage listed operational building that was not designed for energy efficiency and cannot be easily 'retro-fitted'.

Despite these challenges the Parliamentary Service is committed to the importance of managing energy consumption, both from a financial and environmental perspective.

I am pleased to report that over the past 12 months, the Parliamentary Service has achieved a 16.7% reduction in electricity consumption compared to the 2017–18 financial year.

The greater use of technology offers undoubted benefits in a State the size of Queensland, and is important to support the work of MPs at Parliament House, as well as throughout the State in the

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constituencies they serve. I am pleased to report that much progress has been made in this regard over the past 12 months.

Unfortunately it does not come without risks in a modern digital world.

To address these risks, in 2018 I approved the Parliament's first Cyber Security Strategy and recently approved the creation of the dedicated role of Cyber Security Officer within the Parliamentary Service.

In 2019, the low rise lifts were updated to newer, smarter technology eliminating older type lift equipment forecasting an energy reduction of more than 20 percent.

Over the past year, the Parliament has again played an important role in promoting Queensland and our parliamentary democracy with internal and outreach activities – from hosting delegations from the European Union and the German Bundestag to holding Youth Parliaments in Townsville, Emerald and Gladstone. I was also proud as Speaker to lead a Parliamentary Trade Mission to Papua New Guinea – the first all-party delegation of this kind since 2007. This was followed by a delegation visiting our other twinned parliament Vanuatu shortly thereafter.

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I am also proud to continue the strong tradition of the Queensland Parliament in engaging with Indigenous Queenslanders and promoting connections with their Parliament. Recently, I renamed our three Parliamentary Committee Rooms, including two in honour of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as acknowledging our Parliamentary Partnership Agreements with Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge my fellow members of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly for their collaboration and advice to ensure the running of a modern and efficient Parliament.

On behalf of the members of the 56th Parliament, I thank the Clerk Neil Laurie, the Executive Management Group and all Parliamentary Service staff for their hard work and dedication during the 2018-19 Financial Year.

Honourable Curtis Pitt MP
Speaker of the Queensland Parliament