



Estimates Committee A

2001

Report No. 1 To The Legislative Assembly

Introduction

1. The sessional orders adopted by the Legislative Assembly on 30 May 2001 referred the proposed expenditure contained in the *Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2001* for the Legislative Assembly to Estimates Committee A for examination and report.
2. In accordance with sessional order 31(2), the committee is required to report separately on the proposed expenditures for the Legislative Assembly.
3. The committee conducted a public hearing on 10 July 2001 to take oral evidence from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. A verbatim transcript of the committee's hearing can be accessed on the Internet at:
<<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/handsard/>>
4. Prior to the hearing, the committee put 20 questions on notice to the Speaker. Responses to all the questions were received and these, together with minutes of the committee's meetings, are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.
5. The committee has considered the estimates referred to it by using information contained in the Budget papers, answers to pre-hearing questions on notice and the oral evidence taken at the hearing.

Overview

6. The Legislative Assembly of Queensland consists of 89 Members who discharge a range of legislative and constituency responsibilities. The Parliamentary Service provides the administrative and support services.

7. The following table sets out details of the appropriation for 2001-02 compared to the previous financial year.

	2000-01 \$'000	2001-02 \$'000
Departmental Outputs	48,802	51,133
Equity Adjustment	1,150	(750)
Vote Total	49,952	50,383

8. The Parliament delivers a single output called *Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service*. The estimated expenditure for 2001-02 is \$51.820M (2001: \$49.758M)¹ and this will be predominantly funded by the output appropriation. An operating surplus of \$0.491M is projected, which will be used principally to help fund capital acquisitions of electorate office computer equipment in future years.

Budget Highlights

9. Key elements in the 2001-02 Budget include:
 - \$2.5M provided for an additional full time staff member for each Members electorate office
 - promotion of the role of Parliament through educational activities
 - consideration of the outcome of an external review into the operations and resourcing of the Parliamentary Library and the Committee Office
 - ongoing development of the Parliamentary Service Intranet and

¹ Estimated actual for 2000-01

Internet site and the delivery of these services to all electorate offices

- ongoing development of the Parliamentary data network
- continuation of the Parliament House Stonework Restoration Program (completion expected in 2008)

10. Issues canvassed at the hearing include:

- funding for the assistant electorate officer
The Speaker advised the committee that \$2.4 million previously allocated for the Parliament's refurbishment programs will be now used to provide Members with an assistant electorate officer. In addition, computer equipment will be purchased which will be compatible with existing electorate office equipment.

- the outcome of the external review into the operations and resourcing of the Parliamentary Library and the Committee Office

- security staff numbers

The Speaker advised the committee of the amalgamation of the attendant and security staff under a new sub-output known as 'Chamber and Security Services' and the introduction of swipe card technology for security purposes.

The committee was concerned about the lack of visible security in the precinct late at night and on weekends. The Speaker stated that security had been enhanced through the electronic surveillance.

- public awareness of the role of Parliament

The Speaker advised that strategies include the provision of educational services; opening the Parliamentary precinct to the public on Sundays and Queensland Day; creation of the Premiers, Speakers and Clerks galleries with portraits and biographical information; and maintenance of the Centenary of Federation Study Centre.

- use of agency staff for catering functions

The Speaker advised the committee that outside agencies provided temporary catering assistance for functions to supplement permanent staff resources when required.

- e-mail and Internet facilities in electorate offices
- maintenance costs on the parliamentary lifts
- improved access to the parliamentary video network
- status of the Parliamentary Service enterprise bargaining agreement
- Parliament's support for the Queensland wine industry

Recommendation

11. The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the *Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2001*, be agreed to without amendment.

Acknowledgments

12. The committee thanks the Speaker and officers of the Parliamentary Service for their cooperation during the estimates process.

Pat Purcell MP

Chairman

July 2001

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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