



2018-19 Budget Estimates – Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2018

**Report No. 10, 56th Parliament
Economics and Governance Committee
August 2018**

Economics and Governance Committee

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Acknowledgements

The committee thanks the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

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
Legislative Assembly	Legislative Assembly of Queensland
Speaker	Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the Economics and Governance Committee's examination of the Budget Estimates for the 2018-19 financial budget contained in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2018.

Consideration of the budget estimates allows for the public examination of the responsible Ministers and the chief executive officers of agencies within the committee's portfolio areas. 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 2018 be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

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

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

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

I commend this report to the House.



Linus Power MP

Chair

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

The Economics and Governance Committee (the committee) is a portfolio committee of the Legislative Assembly.¹ The committee's areas of portfolio responsibility are:

- Premier and Cabinet, and Trade
- Treasury, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, and
- Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs.²

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

On 12 June 2018, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2018 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility were referred to the committee for investigation and report.³ The committee conducted a public hearing on 24 July 2018 and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

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

1.2 Aim of the 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 of the Legislative Assembly with questions on notice in relation to the estimates. Responses to all questions were received.

The minutes of estimates meetings, correspondence about requests for leave to attend and ask questions, pre-hearing questions on notice and answers, documents tabled at the hearing, questions taken on notice at the hearing and answers, and additional information provided by the Clerk of the Parliament after the hearing are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.

1.3 Other Members' participation

The committee gave leave for other Members to participate in the hearing pursuant to Standing Order 181(e).

The following Members participated in the committee's Estimates hearing for the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2018:

- Jarrod Bleijie, Member for Kawana, Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations and Shadow Minister for Education
- Michael Berkman, Member for Maiwar.

¹ The committee was established on 15 February 2018 under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* (POQA) section 88 and the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly (Standing Orders), SO 194.

² POQA, s 88; Standing Orders, SO 194, sch 6.

³ 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.

2 Recommendation

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2018, 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 to fulfil its role in the institution of Parliament.

The Parliamentary Service's strategic objectives are to:

- support the Legislative Assembly (and its committees and Members) in fulfilling its functions within the institution of Parliament to: make law (and supervise delegated law making), approve and scrutinise the State's finances, scrutinise the actions of executive government (and oversight independent bodies), and provide a forum for debate and grievance
- 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
- 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 the accessibility of 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 Members' salaries, entitlements and electorate office services area represents the direct cost of Members' salaries and entitlements and maintaining and supporting electorate offices.

The parliamentary precinct support services area provides advisory, information and support services to assist the Parliament, its committees and Members to fulfil their constitutional and parliamentary responsibilities, services to promote the institution of Parliament and raise community awareness and understanding of its important role and functions, and 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. The service area also provides services to deliver a safe and secure parliamentary precinct and accommodation and hospitality services that provide Members, staff and guests of the Parliament with an appropriate working environment.⁵

3.1 Budget overview

The Legislative Assembly's operating budget for 2018-19 is \$98.2million, an increase of \$778,000 from the 2017-18 estimated actual. The Service Delivery Statements state that the increase in expenses is mainly associated with employee related costs for enterprise bargaining.⁶

It is proposed that the Legislative Assembly will receive appropriation revenue of \$96.1million in 2018-19, with the remainder of its operating expenses funded from user charges and fees, and interest.⁷

⁴ Queensland Budget 2018-19, *Service Delivery Statements (SDS): Legislative Assembly of Queensland*, p 2.

⁵ Queensland Budget 2018-19, *SDS: Legislative Assembly of Queensland*, p 4.

⁶ Queensland Budget 2018-19, *SDS: Legislative Assembly of Queensland*, p 10.

⁷ Queensland Budget 2018-19, *SDS: Legislative Assembly of Queensland*, p 11.

The following table compares the appropriations for the Legislative Assembly for 2017-18 and 2018-19.

Appropriations	Budget 2017-18 \$'000	Estimated actual 2017-18 \$'000	Vote 2018-19 \$'000
<i>Controlled items</i>			
departmental services	89,296	95,134	96,112
equity adjustment	2,394	1,696	1,066
<i>Administered items</i>
Vote	91,690	96,830	97,178

Source: Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2018, schedule 1.

3.2 Parliamentary Service capital program

In 2018-19 the Legislative Assembly has a planned capital outlay of \$9.2million. The 2018-19 capital program will focus on:

- completion of a major program to install a fire protection system in Parliament House
- improvements to security surveillance infrastructure within the precinct
- relocation of a number of existing electorate offices arising from the 2017 Electorate Boundary Redistribution and identified risks and deficiencies in some current offices.⁸

3.3 Issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised at the hearing in relation to the Legislative Assembly include:

- Members' participation in the estimates process
- travel expenditure for the Speaker
- the provision of additional staff for non-government or crossbench Members
- procedural matters relating to the estimates process
- planned events and activities to promote the 150th anniversary of the Queensland Parliament
- the information technology strategy for the Parliamentary Service
- processes relating to publishing Member information on the website of the Queensland Parliament.

3.4 Committee comment

The committee thanks the Speaker for his judicious stewardship of the Office of the Speaker and the Parliament.

⁸ Queensland Budget 2018-19, *SDS: Legislative Assembly of Queensland*, p 8.

