

2015-16 Major highlights

Report on portfolio committee activities

Queensland's parliamentary committee system was significantly reformed in August 2011 in order to improve openness and accountability and to increase the levels of public consultation within Queensland's legislative process. The results of these reforms over the past five years has been a dramatic increase in the volume of committee work undertaken and the public having a significantly greater input into the Bills that are debated by the Parliament. An overview of the committee work that was conducted during 2015-16 is detailed below.

The Parliament's portfolio committees undertook work on a total of 104 inquiries, which were comprised of:

- eighty-eight inquiries into Bills that were introduced in the Parliament and then referred to committees for examination
- fourteen inquiries on matters of community importance (12 referred from the House and two self-initiated), and
- two other inquiries held into matters where committees have oversight responsibilities.

Of these 104 inquiries, 70 were finalised, tabled and debated by the House by 30 June 2016.

During 2015-16, a total of 617 portfolio committee hearings,

briefings and meetings were held. These comprised:

- 307 public hearings and briefings, and
- 310 private meetings.

During the course of these 104 inquiries and 617 hearings, briefings and meetings, a high level of public consultation and scrutiny of public officials was undertaken. This included:

- committees receiving and considering 4,273 submissions, and
- committees hearing evidence from 1,967 persons.

These 1,967 persons were comprised of: 512 representatives of peak bodies; 300 representatives of other groups; 387 individual members of the public; and 768 public servants.

For the 70 portfolio committee inquiries completed in 2015-16, a total of 217 recommendations were contained in those committee reports (other than that a Bill be passed). The significant level of public consultation outlined in the statistics above greatly contributed to the formulation of these recommendations. In terms of the legislative outcomes of committee inquiries, the importance of the portfolio committees' work can be measured by examining the number of recommendations contained in inquiry reports that were agreed to

by the Parliament and adopted as amendments to Bills.

Analysis of the 2015-16 portfolio committee report recommendations shows:

- the 217 recommendations comprised 84 recommendations which proposed legislative amendments and 133 other recommendations.

For all inquiries finalised in 2015-16:

- of the 84 proposed legislative amendments, 75 were accepted by the House (89.3%)
- of the 133 other recommendations, 115 were accepted by the House (86.5%).

This significant volume of committee work completed and the outcomes achieved during 2015-16 continues the strong indication that the reforms adopted in 2011 have resulted in the establishment in Queensland of an open, consultative and modern parliamentary committee system.

Presentations to the Governor

The Clerk of the Parliament has responsibility for the process by which a Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly receives assent. The final stage of this process sees the Clerk deliver the Bill along with a certificate signed by the Attorney-General to the Governor. By signing the Bill, the Governor provides it with Royal Assent. Two Bills of significance to the Queensland Parliament that were presented to the Governor during 2015-16 were the *Constitution (Fixed Term Parliament) Amendment Bill 2015* and the *Electoral (Improving Representation) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016*.



His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland, signs a bill presented by the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie.

These Bills respectively provided for fixed four-year terms for the Legislative Assembly in Queensland and changed the number of electoral districts for the State by increasing the number of members of the Legislative Assembly from 89 to 93. These Bills were among six presented to the Governor by the Clerk on 5 May 2016.

A historic presentation occurred on 19 February 2016, when the Speaker, the Clerk and Members of Parliament attended Government House for the Presentation of the Address-in-Reply for the First Session of the 55th Parliament of Queensland.

This followed His Excellency's delivery of the Governor's Speech at the Opening of the Fifty-Fifth Parliament of Queensland on 25 March 2015 and the Parliament's Address-in-Reply motion then being agreed by the House on 3 December 2015.



The presentation of the Address-in-Reply at Government House on 19 February 2016. Pictured from left to right are: His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland; Mrs Kaye de Jersey; Hon Leeanne Enoch MP; Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Hon Peter Wellington MP; and the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie.

It is tradition for the mover of this motion to accompany the Speaker for the presentation at Government House and as the mover, Hon Leeanne Enoch MP became the first Aboriginal person to take part in the presentation of the Address-in-Reply motion in Queensland.

Both photos from the 'Government House Collection'.

Members of Parliament paused to mark Remembrance Day at Parliament House.

On 11 November 2015, Speaker Wellington led the Call to Commemoration with Mr Tim Nicholls MP, the Member for Clayfield, reading 'In Flanders Fields' and Mr Jim Pearce MP, the Member for Mirani, then reciting 'The Ode'.

Members and parliamentary staff joined in a minute's silence after the playing of the Last Post.



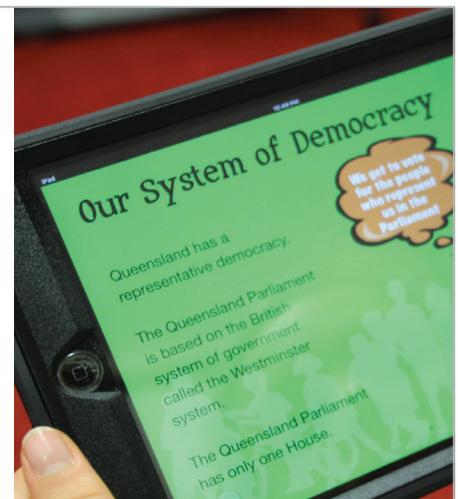
Queensland Parliament marks Remembrance Day.

Updated student learning resource

Each year around 10,000 school students visit the Queensland Parliament and participate in our free educational tour program. (An overview of this program is contained on page 25 of this report.) In order to better reinforce the students' learnings, tablet devices were incorporated into the students' visit during 2015-16.

At the end of their tour, each student is now able to use one of these tablets that has an

educational e-booklet contained on it, which was produced by the Parliamentray Service. Students answer interactive questions about what they have seen and learned during their visit to Parliament House. Previously, printed booklets were used for this purpose, but the tablets now provide a more enhanced educational experience for the students. The tablets also allow for content to be easily updated to reflect any changes that may occur in the Parliament.



A student uses one of the Parliament's new educational tablet devices.



The centre-tower section of Parliament House under restoration.

Preservation and conservation of Parliament House

The Parliament's Stonework Restoration Program commenced in 1993-94 in order to ensure the long-term structural integrity of Parliament House. Queensland's Parliament House is of cultural heritage significance and is entered on the Queensland Heritage Register as a State Heritage Place. The Parliamentary Service has an ongoing responsibility to actively manage and conserve the building and its contents.

For this long-term project, the Parliament House precinct was divided into 13 sections with each of these areas then worked on stage by stage. As at 30 June 2016, 11 of these stages have been completed. Stage 12 of the project is the Parliament's centre tower with work on this section having commenced in 2014-15 and expected to take approximately

two years to complete. The final stage of the project will be the restoration of the Parliament's stone boundary fence which is planned to be completed during 2017-18.

The Stonework Restoration Program has been jointly funded by the Parliament and the Department of Housing and Public Works with each agency working together in the planning and implementation of this long-term project. The Stonework Restoration Program has importantly provided training opportunities for apprentice stonemasons engaged via the Department of Housing and Public Works over the last two decades, with this project playing an important part in keeping the art of stonemasonry active and alive in Queensland.

Brisbane Open House

Parliament House again participated in the Brisbane Open House event over the weekend of 10 and 11 October 2015 with approximately 1,400 people visiting the building.

Brisbane Open House is a free annual event that provides visitors with the rare opportunity to discover a wealth of architecturally diverse, well-designed and historic buildings across Brisbane.



Visitors in the Parliament's O'Donovan Library.



Hon Peter Wellington MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, with the Youth Parliamentarians from Townview State School.

Mount Isa Youth Parliament

As part of the Queensland Parliament's regional education program, parliamentary staff conducted a youth parliament in Mount Isa on 1 June 2016. This event at the Mount Isa Civic Centre saw 70 students from seven Mount Isa schools and the Burketown State School participating as Youth Members. The Speaker of the Parliament, Hon Peter Wellington MP, opened and then chaired the event, along with the Member for Mount Isa, Mr Robbie Katter MP.

The Mount Isa Youth Parliamentarians debated two motions, the first on the introduction of healthy eating measures in schools and the second on education and employment opportunities for students. Students then had the opportunity to speak on matters of importance to them and their community.



Delegates of the 2016 Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar.

Hosting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar

The Queensland branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association hosted the 27th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar at Parliament House from 5 to 11 June 2016. In addition to the participating Members of the Queensland Parliament, the seminar was attended by 21 delegates from 12 countries. The jurisdictions attending included Fiji, Quebec, Singapore, Pakistan, Namibia, South Africa, Jersey, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Cameroon, Nigeria, the National Parliament of India and three Indian states, and three Australian states, New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia.