

Message from the Speaker



It gives me great pleasure to present the annual report for the Queensland Parliamentary Service for 2017-18.

The year's defining event was the dissolution of the 55th Parliament in October 2017 and the opening of the 56th Parliament in February 2018. A new Parliament refreshes the membership of the Legislative Assembly to ensure that it reflects the community Parliament is tasked to serve.

Not only was there an influx of 24 new MPs to the Parliament, the 56th Parliament commenced the increase of the number of electorates in the current Parliament from 89 to 93. The net increase of four MPs was the most significant change to the Parliament itself in over 30 years and necessitated a major reshuffle of electorate office locations and an increase in electorate officers.

However, beyond the institutional changes, the Parliament is facing a changing world around it. Our public institutions, including governments and parliaments not just here but around the world, face new and rapidly changing demands and expectations. The Parliamentary Service, like Members of Parliament, must be ready to meet these new challenges.

In the short period of time I have had the honour of serving as Speaker I have gained a new perspective on the importance of technology in supporting the work of Members not just here in Parliament House, but more importantly across the breadth of our State.

One of the first major decisions in my role as Speaker was to approve a new ICT Strategy to guide the future direction of the Parliamentary Service in using technology to improve services to Members, engage with public in a modern way, and improve traditional processes with smarter ways of doing business.

The Parliament Video on Demand Service, upgraded in 2016-17, was further improved in 2017-18 with accessibility for mobile devices and expanding access to staff in ministerial and opposition offices. The Parliamentary Intranet was also upgraded in June 2018, to provide a more modern presentation, improved site navigation and search functionality.

These changes to the landscape of the Parliament coincided with the looming 150th anniversary of the first sitting of Parliament in Parliament House, known as PH150. During the 2017-18 Financial Year, the program for PH 150 was put into place and meticulously prepared by a Parliamentary Service which is devoted to the preservation and display of our mutual heritage.

The effort put into this planning was rewarded by a successful program of PH150 events in August 2018 which attracted attendance far beyond expectations.

The preservation of our history also reached another milestone during 2017-18 with the completion of the 12th stage of the Stonework Restoration Program for Old Parliament House.

This stage of works consisted of finishing the centre tower of Old Parliament House and lasted for three years. It is the final stage of works on the Old Parliament House. The 13th and final stage of the program will be the restoration of the perimeter stone boundary fence.

The Stonework Restoration Program commenced in 1993-94, and has currently spanned 24 years, over a generation. It is a significant endeavour to ensure that the heritage of Queenslanders is preserved for many generations to come.

Parliament's heritage has also been on display to the public through the use of the Stranger's Dining Room for selected dining events. Parliament High Teas are well known as an institution, the Stranger's Dining Room has been the venue for 'Sometimes Strangers' lunches and a Melbourne Cup function for the first time in 2017-18.

Other Catering events which have been offered for the first time in 2017-18 include, Parliamentary Chef's Cooking School and Chef's Table.

The Parliament again fulfilled its role in promoting democracy in Queensland with outreach that permeated all levels of society. From hosting the Prime Minister of Vanuatu to holding Youth Parliaments in Cairns and Mackay, the Parliament has continued to promote democracy and Queensland at the House and across the State.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the members of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the 55th and 56th Parliaments for their assistance in the governance of the Parliament and its precinct.

On behalf of the members of the 55th and 56th Parliaments, I thank the Clerk of the Parliament Neil Laurie and all Parliamentary Service staff for their hard work and dedication during the 2017-18 Financial Year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Pitt', written in a cursive style.

Hon. Curtis Pitt MP
Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly