



Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Parliament of Queensland

Media Statement

Friday 17 June 2011

New Budget review process to provide greater accountability

Reforms to the Queensland Parliament's annual Budget review process were adopted yesterday in a move designed to enable greater government accountability.

Speaker John Mickel said the bipartisan agreement to reform the estimates committee process would lead to better scrutiny of the government's Budget delivered by the Treasurer earlier this week.

"These reforms will allow a more open and rigorous examination of the government's proposed spending for 2011-12 through the annual estimates committee process which commences next month," Mr Mickel said.

"The changes agreed to by the Parliament yesterday are good news for all Queenslanders as they will increase the Parliament's ability to scrutinise government spending," Mr Mickel said.

"It is a very important point to understand that Parliament is not the Government. Rather Parliament is where the Government is able to be held to account."

Mr Mickel said the changes to the estimates committee process included allowing Chief Executive Officers to be directly questioned, increasing the time allowed for questioning, removing the previous rigid time format restrictions and creating permanent portfolio-based committees to examine government departments.

"Estimates Committees will now be able to directly question Chief Executive Officers of Government departments and Statutory Authorities," Mr Mickel said.

"Previously Ministers have been able to refer questions from the Estimates Committee to their departmental staff but Members have not been able to directly question these officers.

"In practice this has seen Ministers answering the majority of questions, but now Chief Executive Officers can be the focus of questioning.

"There will now also be more time allocated to each Estimates Committee to scrutinise portfolio spending with each day's hearings to now run from 9am to 9.30pm.

"Importantly, the reforms allow for this time to now be spent in a more focused and productive way. The previous strict time formats which provided one minute for a question to be asked and then three minutes for it to be answered have been abolished.

"This will allow for a more free flowing line of questioning to be pursued, which in turn will allow for a greater degree of accountability," Mr Mickel said.

Mr Mickel said another important reform to this year's estimates committee process would be that the Parliament's newly adopted system of portfolio-based committees would also serve as the Estimates Committees.

"Since 1994, temporary Estimates Committees have been formed each year by the Parliament with the sole purpose of examining the upcoming budget of government departments before being disbanded.

"We now have a new system of portfolio-based committees established on a permanent basis.

“Over time, I expect that this change will see Members of Parliament becoming more specialised in their understanding of particular government portfolio areas and therefore better able to question expenditure during the estimates committee process.

“So while these reforms will see positive changes for the people of Queensland through strengthening the Parliament’s scrutiny function starting at next month’s Estimates hearings, they will also result in longer term benefits in how the Queensland Parliament operates,” Mr Mickel said.

Media contact: 3406 7170

A table titled ‘Estimates Committees: Membership, Areas of Responsibility and Oversight and Scheduled 2011 Hearings’ is contained on the following page.

An overview of the Queensland parliamentary estimates committee process is contained in a new fact sheet published at www.parliament.qld.gov.au

ESTIMATES COMMITTEES: MEMBERSHIP, AREAS OF OVERSIGHT AND SCHEDULED 2011 HEARINGS

Portfolio Committee	Area of Responsibility	Ministers	Oversight Responsibility	Estimates Hearing
Finance and Administration Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Wayne Wendt (Chair) Ms Ros Bates Hon Desley Boyle Ms Peta-Kaye Croft Mr Tim Nicholls Mr Ray Stevens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Premier and Cabinet Reconstruction Treasury Finance Arts Public Works and Information Technology 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Premier and Minister for Reconstruction Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade Minister for Finance and The Arts Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Auditor-General Integrity Commissioner 	<p>Tuesday 12 July 2011</p>
Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Barbara Stone (Chair) Mr Jarrod Bleijie Mr Chris Foley Mrs Betty Kiernan Mr John-Paul Langbroek Hon Dean Wells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attorney-General and Justice (excluding Industrial Relations) Fair Trading Police Community Safety 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Electoral Commissioner Information Commissioner Ombudsman 	<p>Tuesday 19 July 2011</p>
Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Kerry Shine (Chair) Dr Bruce Flegg Mr Steve Kilburn Mrs Desley Scott Mr Jeff Seeney Mrs Jann Stuckey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Manufacturing Small Business State Development and Trade Coordinator-General Education Employment Skills and Training Workplace Health and Safety Industrial Relations Retail 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Treasurer and Minister for State Development and Trade (2nd committee) Minister for Education and Industrial Relations Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business 		<p>Friday 15 July 2011</p>
Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs Carryn Sullivan (Chair) Mr Andrew Cripps Mr Jack Dempsey Mr Steve Dickson Ms Di Farmer Mr Peter Lawlor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Agriculture Mines Energy Water Natural Resource Management Environment Fisheries 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Minister for Energy and Water Utilities Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure Minister for Agriculture, Food and Regional Economies Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining (2nd committee) Minister for Environment and Resource Management 		<p>Wednesday 20 July 2011</p>
Community Affairs Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr Paul Hoolihan (Chair) Mr Michael Choi Mr Peter Dowling Ms Mandy Johnstone Mr Aidan McLindon Ms Fiona Simpson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safety Youth Justice Community Services Multicultural Affairs Housing Women Sport Aboriginal Affairs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Family Responsibilities Commission Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian 	<p>Thursday 21 July 2011</p>
Health and Disabilities Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Lindy Nelson-Carr (Chair) Mrs Liz Cunningham Ms Vicky Darling Ms Tracy Davis Mr Mark McArdle Mrs Christine Smith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Mental Health Disabilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Minister for Health Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (2nd committee) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Health Quality and Complaints Commission 	<p>Wednesday 13 July 2011</p>
Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mrs Jo-Ann Miller (Chair) Mr Scott Emerson Mr David Gibson Ms Mary-Anne O'Neill Dr Mark Robinson Ms Lillian van Litsenburg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport Main Roads Marine Infrastructure Infrastructure Local Government Building Industry 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State (2nd committee) Minister for Main Roads, Fisheries and Marine Infrastructure (2nd committee) Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs (2nd committee) Minister for Government Services, Building Industry and Information and Communication Technology (2nd committee) 		<p>Thursday 14 July 2011</p>

