



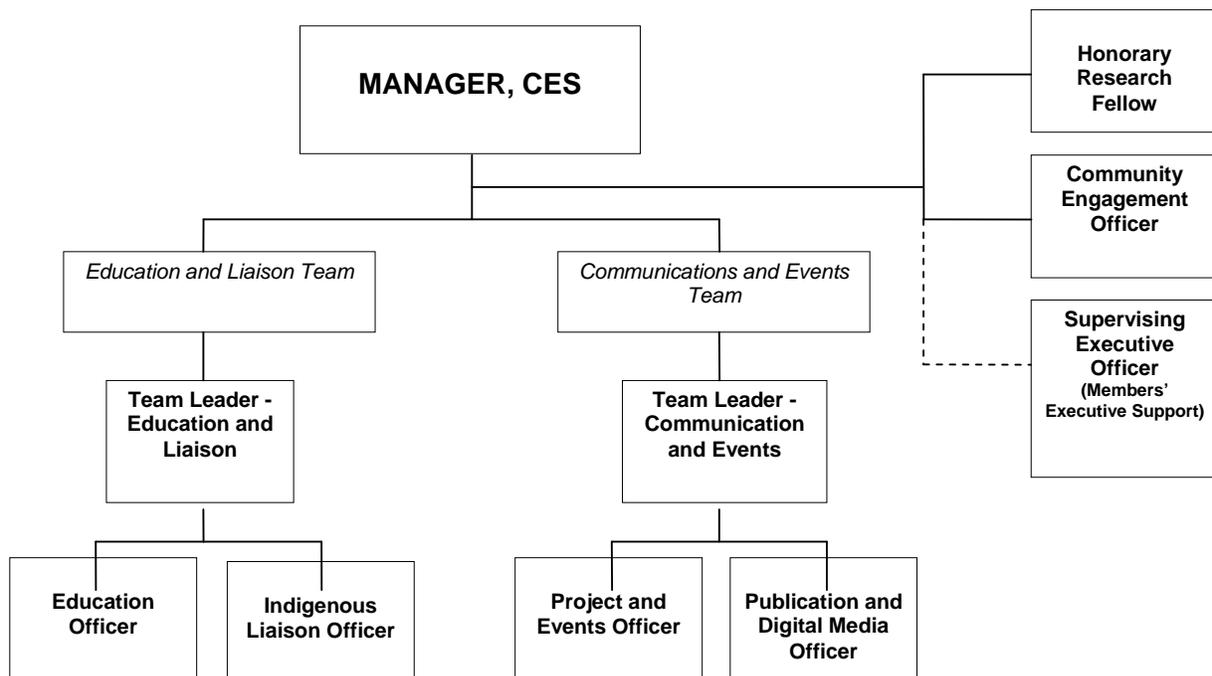
QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SERVICES
JURISDICTIONAL REPORT

1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SERVICES: BACKGROUND

At the time of writing of Queensland's last jurisdiction report to an Australasian Parliamentary Educators' Conference, (2007 for the Wellington Conference), Community Engagement Services (CES) had just been created, incorporating the parliamentary education function. Since then, the unit has undergone a three-year review of its operations. The review indicated that the unit is well regarded and has the support of Members. The recommendations of the review reinforce some strategic directions and also take the unit into new directions. The role of parliamentary education program has been reinforced through increasing engagement with parliamentary committees, and a broadening of events and project work. Some previously offered services (historical research and protocol services) are now provided by other sections of the Parliament.

Following review earlier this year, the structure of Community Engagement Services is set out below:

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SERVICES ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



2. PARLIAMENTARY EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Queensland continues its parliamentary education activities, including a free seminar program for senior secondary, TAFE and university students; fee-paying seminar programs for public servants, interest groups and community organisations; youth parliaments; teacher professional development; a parliamentary internship program; contributes to zone constitutional conventions in partnership with Education Queensland; and provides briefings for international delegations.

Non fee paying Seminar Program for senior secondary, TAFE and university students

The content of the seminar program varies according to the level of education of the participating group and the program is developed according to the group's specific learning requirements. The seminars for senior secondary (usually Year 10-12 Legal Studies, Economics and Study of Society), TAFE (including students in the Adult Migrant English Program), Tertiary and Business College students each include some of the following elements:

- A tour of Parliament House;
- An introduction to Parliament and Government, including an explanation of the division of power and the separation of powers ;
- An address by a Member of Parliament (subject to availability);
- Viewing Parliament in Action (on Parliamentary sitting days);
- DVD clips to bring the legislative process to life;
- A role play of the passage of a Bill through the Legislative Assembly;
- A mock election using the optional preferential voting method; and/or
- A role play of a parliamentary committee of inquiry.

In Queensland, school tours for primary and junior secondary continue to be conducted by the Parliamentary Attendants. In collaboration with the attendants, CES has created a student workbook for use by the teacher to prepare for the visit and for students to complete following the tour.

Fee-paying Seminar Program

Our longstanding fee-paying seminar program for public servants has grown over 800% between 2007 and 2011. Annually, approximately 700 public servants participate in the program. Significantly, evaluation of the seminar shows it is well regarded, averaging more than 95% approval over the last four years.

Two seminar programs are currently offered: Seminar 1, *Introduction to How Parliament Works* is a half day program is aimed at public servants employed at levels AO2 - AO5 (State) or equivalent classifications; graduates, public sector trainees. The full day Seminar 2, *Relationship between the Parliament and the Executive* is aimed at AO6 – SO1 (State) level employees or equivalent classifications.

An additional half-day fee-paying seminar program will begin in early 2012 explaining the new amended role of parliamentary committees in Queensland. *Committees at Work* is directed to public servants and will explain the reforms to Queensland's parliamentary committee system and the responsibilities of public sector officers. In

addition, a non-fee paying *Committees and You* seminar has been designed for interest groups and community groups.

Youth Parliaments

CES conducts several Youth Parliaments annually, as well as supporting Youth Parliaments from external organisations.

- Senior Secondary Youth Parliament(s)
 - One or two conducted annually to coincide, where possible with Law Week
 - Students drawn from Year 11 and 12 Legal Studies students within reasonable driving distance from Parliament House
 - Half day activity, with two briefings held in preceding months
 - Assistance provided by an Education Queensland teacher who serves on a voluntary basis as Youth Parliament Teacher Liaison Officer.
- Indigenous Youth Parliament
 - Age group: 18 – 25 year olds
 - Conducted in partnership with the Department of Communities and Office for Youth as part of their four-day Indigenous Youth Leadership Program.
 - Two-day event (one day briefing and speech preparation, one day in the Chamber)
 - Participants drawn from across the State, with transport and accommodation paid for by Department of Communities. Selection of participants by Department of Communities. This program receives substantial corporate funding.
- Mini Youth Parliaments
 - Conducted upon request.
 - Minimum two per year.
 - Variety of age groups. One was conducted for Year 10 students (15 years old), another for Yrs 9 – 12, and Year 7 students (12 years old)
 - Conducted as part of wider group of activities in a region, including Teacher Professional Development and Public Service Training
 - Two briefings held in advance, with final briefing usually held afternoon before following Teacher Professional Development
 - Conducted in regional areas.
- YMCA Youth Parliament
 - Conducted annually
 - Age group: 16 – 25 year olds
 - Support provided to the YMCA by Community Engagement Services, Table Office and Hansard
 - Four day program
 - Participants drawn from across the State, organised and financed by YMCA through grant funding from the Department of Communities
- Peace Parliament
 - Conducted by International Day of Peace Alliance (IDPA) to coincide with the International Day of Peace
 - Three-day event
 - Supported as and when approved by the Speaker.

Since 2007, CES have moved away from the traditional model of “mock” youth parliaments on topics of potential interest to students. Introducing community engagement principles, youth parliaments are now mostly run on topics currently before parliamentary committee inquiries or government task forces. Resulting debates and other supporting materials are then provided to the inquiries to assist in their decision-making. This small change has been extremely well-received by youth parliament participants and decision-makers. Participants can see their efforts contributing to a real decision and decision-makers appreciate the opportunity to obtain additional information and engage with youth.

Teacher Professional Development (TPD)

Due to Queensland’s decentralised geography, teacher professional development workshops are conducted regionally in conjunction with other off-site parliamentary education activities. The TPD program usually consists of:

- Presentations on the role of Parliament linked to classroom resources on the Parliament’s website;
- A Question and Answer session with the Speaker; and
- A demonstration of how to conduct an optional preferential voting activity.

Queensland Parliamentary Internship Program (QPIP)

This year, 20 university students were enrolled in the internship program. The second-semester QPIP activity is administered by CES. Students, usually in their final year, are linked with a participating Member of Parliament or parliamentary official. They are assessed on a paper on functions of the parliament, marked by Queensland’s Honorary Research Fellow, Dr Paul Reynolds, and on a major research paper produced for the Member of Parliament on a mutually agreed topic.

Zone Constitutional Conventions

In partnership with Education Queensland, CES supports Zone Constitutional Conventions for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Brisbane, Mackay, Rockhampton and Townsville. The Parliamentary Education Officer and the Indigenous Liaison Officer act as Master of Ceremonies, as well as conducting parliamentary education activities throughout the day.

International Delegations

CES regularly provides a half hour briefing for visiting international delegations. Due to the number of delegations received from China, CES have developed a powerpoint presentation and an information brochure in simplified Chinese. These resources also support the Queensland Parliament’s other multicultural activities.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Queensland Parliament engages with the community through a variety of activities and initiatives.

Indigenous Engagement

To strengthen engagement between the Parliament and the Indigenous community, CES uses a two-pronged approach:

- (a) capacity building through parliamentary education; and
- (b) relationship building through partnerships.

The Indigenous Liaison Officer has been building Indigenous relationships and partnerships since his commencement in January 2008. Partnerships have been established with Government at State and Federal levels and also with Indigenous non-Government organisations across the state. This enables the Indigenous Liaison Officer to work along side other Indigenous organisation and their stakeholders in building capacity through parliamentary education tools and techniques.

- Work with Parliamentary Committees

CES has been working with parliamentary committees to strengthen engagement between the Queensland Parliament and the Indigenous community.

Internally, cultural awareness programs are provided to parliamentary committee members **before** they engage with an Indigenous community. CES provides fact sheets on relevant Indigenous communities to assist committee members when they are travelling to communities. Fact sheets contain information on Indigenous protocols, history, significant local issues and important community contacts.

A partnership has been formed with the Department of Communities to utilise their Indigenous Liaison Officers network throughout the State. This enables parliamentary committee members to access an Indigenous Liaison Officer to liaise on their behalf in each community as required.

Another partnership has been formed with an umbrella organisation for over 100 Indigenous service providers across the state. This enables information to be distributed about upcoming committee inquiries and for these organisations to attend inquiries and make submissions, thus contributing to decision-making.

Significant partnerships have developed with the state and federal electoral authority. The Australian Electoral Commission and Electoral Commission of Queensland often travel with parliamentary officers, providing information and awareness on electoral matters.

Other partnerships have been built with community justice groups and Aboriginal and Islander Health groups.

- Education programs

As outlined previously above, CES in partnership with Education Queensland, contributes to the planning and conduct of four zone constitutional conventions for Indigenous students. In partnership with the Department of Communities, CES conducts an Indigenous Youth Parliament run over two days as part of the Department's Indigenous Youth Leadership Program.

- NAIDOC Week

CES has hosted a stall at NAIDOC Week celebrations annually since 2007, either in Brisbane or in a regional area. Parliamentary resources are distributed and visitors to the stall are encouraged to engage with information panels and complete a competition form stating something they learned from visiting the stall.

- Indigenous and Multicultural protocols

CES provides training on Indigenous and multicultural protocols to all parliamentary employees. This training is compulsory for Queensland parliamentary employees.

In addition, CES offers advice on Indigenous and multicultural protocols to Members of Parliament.

Multicultural Engagement

In 2009, CES added multicultural groups to its target audience in the section's goals. As a result, the Queensland Parliament undertakes a number of engagement programs for the multicultural community.

- Multifaith service

Annually, CES coordinates the Parliament's Multifaith service. Now in its second year, the service is held before the first sitting day of the year and hosted by the Speaker. This year, the service was led by seven religious leaders who offered prayers of remembrance for those whose lives were lost during the natural disasters that had impacted across Queensland. The theme for this service was 'United in Recovery'.

- Multicultural festival

Recently, CES held an information stall at the Queensland Multicultural Festival at Brisbane's Roma Street Parklands on Sunday 16 October. Officers distributed resources about the Parliament and conducted a competition encouraging festival goers to read the information stall panels and state one thing they learned. The best answer per hour received a prize. The competition provided valuable feedback on the stall and encouraged engagement with it.

- Citizenship education

Significantly, CES organises an annual citizenship ceremony, which is conducted at Parliament House and hosted by the Speaker. Over 240 people have become Australian citizens as a result of this activity. This event is followed later in the year by a Citizens' Information Evening. This activity usually consists of the following:

- Welcome by the Speaker (refreshments)
- Presentations on Queensland's system of government (Deputy Clerk and Electoral Commissioner)
- Tour of Parliament
- Question and Answer in Legislative Assembly by the Speaker.

Programs for People with Disability

- Deaf and hearing impaired initiatives

To mark the National Week of Deaf People each year, the Parliament partners with Deaf Services Queensland to welcome members of the deaf community to view their Parliament in action. AUSLAN sign language interpreters operate in the public gallery to interpret Question Time. Approximately 50 members of the deaf community attend and are then welcomed at a morning tea hosted by the Speaker

and attended by many other Members. 2011 was the fifth year since this annual event commenced at Parliament House.

The Cochlear Implant Club & Advisory Association Queensland (CICADA) - a support group for hearing impaired people with cochlear implants - held their annual awards function at Parliament House on 15 August 2011. As part of this event, CES offered the attendees a tour of Parliament House using FM neck loop devices that had been recently purchased. These devices allow for a tour guide to speak into a lapel microphone with a small transmitter then sending that sound to receivers worn by each person on the tour. The sound is then picked up by either the cochlear implant or hearing aid that they are wearing. These devices are available to be used for anyone with a hearing impairment who wishes to participate in the free guided tours that are provided at Parliament House.

Other Engagement Programs and Activities

Support for Charities

The Queensland Parliamentary Service is committed to actively promoting and educating others about the Parliament whilst also striving to be a responsible corporate citizen. As a result, CES has held a number of charity events since 2007 that have raised tens of thousands of dollars for charities including the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Pyjama Foundation, ACT for Kids, Diabetes Australia and many others.

Christmas choirs

In recent years, CES has organised school choirs to perform at Parliament House as guests of the Speaker during the last sitting week of the year. Each of the three sitting days, a choir performs in the Parliamentary Annexe and alongside the Christmas Tree outside Parliament House.

Staff training

As mentioned earlier, CES conducts cultural awareness training (including Indigenous cultural awareness training) for all staff.

In addition, CES provides parliamentary education and training in the roles and functions of the Parliament, including the separation of powers and the Parliament's history, as part of electoral officer training and new staff inductions.

Events and Projects

CES is largely responsible for running many of the Queensland Parliament's events and projects. This includes the many events and activities associated Parliament's 150th in 2010 – P150 – as well as open days, opening of parliament, swearing in of the governor and many other events and projects.

4. REGIONAL PARLIAMENT

Every three years Queensland Parliament sits regionally. This is a significant project for CES and it has a significant impact on the workload of the section. Basically CES manages the community engagement program for the entire event. This year, Parliament sat in Mackay from 24- 26 May. To generate interest in the sittings, CES

conducted in Mackay a Youth Parliament, a teacher professional development workshop and a training conference for public sector officers three weeks prior to the arrival of the Parliament. Media activities are also co-ordinated including creating a glossy newspaper supplement and 50 parliamentary facts used to count-down to the event.

A total of 2,537 students and their teachers visited the Mackay Regional Sitting of Parliament, with over 5,000 locals attending the three-day sitting. The school groups who travelled from across the Mackay region were given a half-hour briefing on the Queensland Parliament by parliamentary education officers and by an officer from the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ). This was followed by a visit to the public gallery where they observed Parliament in action. Students then entered an educational display area where they completed workbooks based on the display panels. The display area consisted of information panels produced by CES and by ECQ, a diorama of the key people of the Parliament, and two new large free-standing display panels about the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. Some schools also attended a session of the play "Citizen Jane", which discusses parliament and decision-making.

5. PUBLICATIONS

The "Everyone's Parliament" suite of factsheets and longstanding information brochures continue.

However, in June 2011, the most significant change to the Queensland Parliament occurred since the abolition of the Upper House in 1922. Changes were made to the legislative process and the parliamentary committee system, resulting in amendment to almost all of parliamentary education publications produced by CES. A significant amount of effort has been required to update these resources.

In addition, CES has recently produced the following publications:

- Parliament of Queensland brochure in simplified Chinese;
- *Order in the House* – coffee-table book produced for sesquicentenary celebrations;
- Three posters for use in classrooms: The Legislative Assembly Chamber in Queensland; Parliament and Government in Queensland; and How you can be involved?;
- An information sheet for Senior Executive Service officers for the Public Service Commission training program;
- A student workbook to enhance and reinforce learnings from school tours;
- Two large portable stand-alone display panels - one explaining the role of Legislative Assembly; and the other the history of the Legislative Council;
- What sort of political animal are you – quiz to accompany seminar program;
- What sort of political animal are you quiz.

6. EVALUATION

All programs and activities conducted by CES are evaluated for the purposes of obtaining feedback and implementing continuous improvement. Each quarter, CES reports on the percentage of its participants who through involvement in our programs have reported an increased awareness and/or understanding of parliamentary processes.

In summary, over four years Community Engagement Services had an average approval rating with clients of over 95% and a consistent 100% approval amongst members of parliament.

7. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The future of CES in Queensland is bright!

Community Engagement Services was reviewed late last year as part of the regular review processes occurring within the Queensland Parliamentary Service with the report concluding in January 2011.

Fortunately, the review found that our engagement experiment of 2007 was in fact successful and such would continue as an embedded part of the Queensland Parliamentary Service continuing with many of its programs along with a few new directions!

So for the future, the review recommended continuing current programs as well as :

- Increasing training including implementing a parliamentary committee seminar program to explain the new committee structure and operations and cultural awareness programs for member of parliament;
- Increasing our Indigenous and multicultural engagement – attending events, continue providing cultural awareness training internally to staff and members;
- Review community engagement resources, including members' entitlement to education resources and the method of delivery of these resources;
- Conduct a strategic planning session on Queensland Parliamentary Service community engagement activities; and
- Implementing an improved engagement strategy in partnership with parliamentary committees

The recent reforms and modernisation of the Parliament have seen the responsibility of parliamentary committees to undertake community engagement enshrined in the Parliament's Standing Orders. This only strengthens the future role of CES in the Queensland Parliament.

In four years we achieved many things, faced many challenges and improved our methods of parliamentary education through introducing community engagement principles and practices. But there is still much more to do!