**Key Parliamentary Terms**

**A**

**Act of Parliament**  A law made by Parliament, a Bill which has passed all three readings and received Royal Assent from the Governor.

**Amendment**  An alteration to a Bill or Motion by the addition or deletion of words.

**B**

**Backbenchers**  Members of the Parliament who are not part of the Ministry or the Shadow Ministry.

**Ballot**  The process by which votes are cast in an election; how votes are gathered; and the vote itself.

**Bar of the House**  A barrier(s) at the entrances to the Chamber beyond which only Members may pass. Once the three Bars are closed during a division, no Member can enter or leave the Chamber.

**Bells**  The method by which Members are called to the Chamber. The bells are rung throughout all of the parliamentary buildings.

**Bicameral**  A Parliament with two Houses — an Upper House and a Lower House.

**Bill**  A proposal for a new law, which is presented to Parliament in draft form. It needs to be passed by the Parliament and receive Royal Assent before becoming a law.

**Budget**  The Government's annual proposals for income and spending which is presented by the Treasurer.

**C**

**Cabinet**  Consists of all the Ministers and is responsible for the Government's policy development. Currently there are 18 Ministers (including the Premier) in Cabinet in Queensland.

**Chairperson of Committees**  An elected member who holds the position of Deputy Speaker and who may, as Deputy Speaker, chair the debates during the Consideration in Detail stage of the legislative process.

**Chamber**  The meeting room in which Members of the Legislative Assembly meet and participate in debates.

**Clerk of the Parliament**  The most senior permanent officer in the Parliamentary Service. The Clerk records all decisions made in the Chamber and advises the Speaker on procedural matters and practices of the House.

**Coalition**  The combining of two or more parties in the Parliament to act as a Government or an Opposition.

**Crown**  The term for the British Monarch who is represented in the Queensland Parliament by the Governor.

**D**

**Debate**  A formal presentation of varying viewpoints on a Bill or any other matters before the House.

**Democracy**  Government by the people. A way of governing a country or state in which the people elect representatives to form a government which makes decisions on their behalf.

**Division**  A formal vote in Parliament heralded by the ringing of the bells.
**Election**  The method people use to select their representatives for Parliament.

**Electorate**  An area represented by a Member of Parliament. Determined by land zoning, it includes all those people residing in that particular area who are entitled to vote.

**Executive**  see 'Minister'.

**Frontbenchers**  Members of the Ministry or Opposition Shadow Ministry who occupy the front seats in the Chamber.

**Government**  The party or coalition with the majority of elected representatives in Parliament.

**Governor**  The representative of the Queen in each State of the Commonwealth of Australia.

**Hansard**  The printed of the proceedings in Parliament. The term is also used to refer to the parliamentary staff who record, edit and produce the written record.

**House**  The Chamber or room in which the Legislative Assembly meets — the Lower House.

**Independent**  A Member of Parliament who does not belong to any political party.

**Leader of the House**  A Government Member who is appointed to the position to organise and co-ordinate the Government's business in the Legislative Assembly.

**Leader of the Opposition**  The leader of the party or parties (in a coalition) which has the next largest number of representatives in Parliament after the Government.

**Legislation**  Bills passed by the Parliament which, as Acts, become the State's laws.

**Legislative Assembly**  The Lower House in the Parliaments of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. The only House in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory.

**Legislative Council**  The Upper House of all States except Queensland, who Upper House was abolished in 1922.

**Mace**  The ceremonial staff which represents the authority of the Speaker and Parliament and is carried into the Chamber by the Sergeant-at-Arms.

**Member of Parliament**  A person elected to a Parliament. In Queensland, a person elected to the Legislative Assembly.

**Minister**  A Member of the governing party in Parliament who is part of the Executive Government (Cabinet) and responsible for a Government Department, eg the Minister for Education.

**MP**  Member of the Legislative Assembly.

**Oath**  Before Members take their seats in Parliament, the Queensland Constitution requires them to swear an oath or take an affirmation of office and allegiance to the Crown.

**Opposition**  The second largest party or coalition of parties after the Government party, which has a formal status and whose role is to scrutinise the policies and administration of Government and offer alternatives to the electorate.
Parliament  An assembly of elected representatives forming the Legislature of a nation or state. In Queensland, the Parliament consists of the Queen and the Legislative Assembly.

Petition  A formal citizens' request in writing to Parliament, supported by signatures, which asks for a particular action to be taken on a matter.

Portfolio  A Minister's area of responsibility as a member of Cabinet.

Premier  The leader of the governing party in each State.

Press Gallery  A group of media people who report on Parliament. Also the actual Gallery in the House which is reserved for the media.

Public Gallery  The Gallery or seating area above the Chamber from which people can view parliamentary proceedings.

Queen  The Queen is the highest authority in the State and is represented by the Governor.

Question Time  A period of time when Members may ask questions of Ministers concerning their portfolios. This is a set time that occurs during each sitting day of Parliament.

Quorum  The minimum number of Members that must be present in the Chamber for parliamentary business to be conducted. The present quorum in the Queensland Legislative Assembly is 16.

Referendum  A ballot which allows electors to express their views about an issue, eg should daylight saving be introduced into Queensland.

Royal Assent  When the Queen's representative, the Governor, signs a Bill which makes it an Act of Parliament or law.

Sergeant-at-Arms  A parliamentary officer who is the bearer of the Mace and assists the Speaker of the House in maintaining order in the Chamber and the parliamentary precinct.

Shadow Minister  A member of the Opposition who follows closely the areas of responsibility of a Government Minister, eg Minister for Education (Government), Shadow Minister for Education (Opposition).

Sitting Day  A day on which the Parliament (that is, the Members of the Legislative Assembly) meets to conduct parliamentary business.

Standing Orders  The rules which govern the conduct of business in Parliament.

Treasurer  The Government Minister responsible for economic and financial policy and who prepares the Government's budget.

Teller  A person who counts the votes in the Chamber.

Unicameral  A Parliament with only one House, such as Queensland — the Legislative Assembly.
Westminster System The British system of government which provides the basic model for the Parliaments of Australia.

Whip A Member of Parliament who is responsible for organising members of his/her political party to take part in debates and votes, and assists in arranging the business of a House of Parliament. The whip acts as a teller and also counts the votes in a division.