

From the Speaker

"A new Parliament refreshes the membership of the Legislative Assembly to ensure that it reflects the community Parliament is tasked to serve."

It gives me great pleasure to present the Annual Report for the Queensland Parliamentary Service for 2020-21.

2020-21 was a year of change for the Queensland Parliament. Some changes were familiar as a consequence from the election of the 57th Parliament in October 2020. Other changes only eventuated in response to the extraordinary events of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A new Parliament refreshes the membership of the Legislative Assembly to ensure that it reflects the community Parliament is tasked to serve. Of the 93 MPs elected at the October 2020 State Election, 10 were elected for the first time.

The 57th Parliament was opened by His Excellency the Governor on Wednesday 25 November 2020 with an address in the Legislative Council Chamber. This was followed by the customary reception on the Speaker's Green.

It was a great accomplishment of the Parliamentary Service to deliver this event with the customary number of guests in a Covid safe manner.

Covid-19 continued to cast a long shadow over the operation of the Parliament as was the case across the wider Queensland community. The impact of Covid-19 measures was pervasive across all operations of the Parliamentary Service at the beginning of the 2020-21 financial year.

To the credit of the service, most operations returned to normal through the 2020-21 financial year, including public facing offerings such as the Sometimes Strangers' dining experience, school tours and public functions.

From a Parliamentary perspective, while limited Covid spaced seating may make a Speaker's job easier, a return to a full Parliament is welcomed for the atmosphere it provides.

Despite the Covid-19 disruption the Parliamentary education unit has also continued to deliver engaging events for school students to learn about our democracy.

In September 2020, the Junior Indigenous Youth Parliament was held in Cairns, while a Youth Parliament was held on the Gold Coast in June 2021. Several more Youth Parliaments are planned for 2021-22.

Like all institutions, the Parliament has had to deal with the challenges of Covid-19. The Parliamentary Service is also focusing on the challenges for tomorrow.

The 2021-22 state budget delivered in June 2021 provided funding for Stage 2 of the Critical Infrastructure and Services Upgrade of the Parliamentary Annexe.

The Parliamentary Annexe is a facility, in the Australian context, unique to Queensland. Unlike other states and the Commonwealth, a single building is used to provide not just facilities for the operation of Parliament and offices for Members, but also bedrooms for all Ministers and Members who reside outside the City of Brisbane.

This facility initially built in the mid-to-late 1970s reflects Queensland's decentralisation and the principle that Parliament should meet the needs of Members from all across Queensland.



From 2022-23, Stage 2 of the Critical Infrastructure and Services Upgrade will deliver the upgrade and repair of the external façade of the Parliamentary Annexe to address increasing safety risks, together with replacing carpets and soft furnishings and painting of Members offices and bedrooms on floors 9 to 23.

Planning for Stage 2 of the Critical Infrastructure Program has already commenced and will continue throughout 2021-22 ahead of the commencement of work in July 2022.

The project will deliver a value for money outcome that will extend the life of the Annexe at a fraction of the cost of replacing the building.

When finished the Annexe will be able to continue to provide Members, especially those from outside the City of Brisbane, a facility fit for the needs of Members and the constituents they represent.

The proposed future refurbishment follow completed works on the Parliamentary Precinct in 2020-21 including:

- The design and installation of the external LED colour lights illuminating the external façade of Parliament House
- Reinstatement of the rainwater catchment system located between Parliament House and the Annexe, and
- Completion of the fire sprinkler project including replacement of ceiling and fascia sheeting on outdoor colonnades along with installation of new LED energy efficient ceiling lights.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge my fellow members of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly for their collaboration and advice to ensure the running of a modern and efficient Parliament.

On behalf of the Members of the 57th Parliament, I thank the Clerk Neil Laurie, the Executive Management Group and all Parliamentary Service staff for their hard work and dedication during the 2020-21 Financial Year.

Honourable Curtis Pitt MP
Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly