

# Objective 1

## Assembly and Committee Support

To support the Legislative Assembly (and its committees and Members) in fulfilling its functions within the institution of Parliament to:

- » make law (and supervise delegated law making)
- » approve and scrutinise the State's finances
- » scrutinise the actions of executive government (and oversight independent bodies), and
- » provide a forum for debate and grievance.

To achieve this objective, Parliamentary Service resources have been allocated to provide Members with a range of procedural, research, advisory and information services. These resources are primarily delivered through the following Parliamentary Service offices and Divisions:

- » the Office of the Speaker
- » the Office of the Clerk
- » the Office of the Deputy Clerk, and
- » the Assembly and Committee Services Division.

In 2020-21 the Assembly and Committee Services Division comprised the following three Service Areas:

- » Chamber, Education and Communication Services;
- » Committee Office (including Office of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner), and
- » Parliamentary Reporting and Broadcasting Service (Hansard).

The key performance indicators for Objective 1 relate to the extent to which the quantity, quality, timeliness and cost of specified services provided by each of the service areas meet the agreed standards and targets. The methods of measurement include client survey, benchmarking, internal assessment through information management systems and external assessment through audit reports.

Key performance indicators for Objective 1 are set out in the table on page 25.

## Objective 1 Highlights

### PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING AND BROADCASTING SERVICE (HANSARD)

Percentage of Hansard transcripts published on time

99%

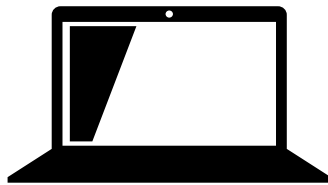
Total audio hours transcribed

559.67

### COMMITTEE OFFICE



121 hearings and briefings



169 participants participating remotely



441 submissions considered

### TABLE OFFICE



1,051

Questions on Notice processed



2,492

Tabled Papers and Reports registered

# Objective 1 is supported by the following offices and Service Areas:

## Office of the Speaker

The Office of the Speaker provides executive, administrative and protocol support to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in relation to the Speaker's various roles.

## Office of the Clerk

The Office of the Clerk provides timely and accurate support to the Clerk of the Parliament to discharge his responsibilities as the Principal Officer of the Legislative Assembly, Chief Executive Officer of the Parliamentary Service, and Accountable Officer for the Parliamentary Service and the Legislative Assembly. The office also takes carriage of petitions and the Register of Interests.

## Office of the Deputy Clerk

The Office of the Deputy Clerk provides timely and accurate support to the Deputy Clerk to discharge his responsibilities as head of the Assembly and Committee Services Division.

## Chamber, Education and Communication Services

This area comprises two discrete offices – the Table Office and Parliamentary Education and Communication.

### Table Office

The Table Office provides impartial advice, parliamentary information and administrative support services to assist the effective operations of the Legislative Assembly.

The Table Office is responsible for:

- maintaining accurate information on all business before the Assembly
- processing of legislation through the Assembly (introduction, amendment and presentation for royal assent)
- monitoring bills, questions, motions and petitions to ensure compliance with the rules of the Assembly
- liaising with Members, ministerial offices and public sector entities on the tabling of documents
- providing safe custody and maintenance of and access to parliamentary records
- conducting research and providing advice on parliamentary procedural matters, and
- managing the Queensland Parliamentary Internship Program, where university students undertake a nominated research project under the supervision of a Member of Parliament or senior officer of the Parliamentary Service.

## Committee Office

The Legislative Assembly establishes parliamentary committees to assist it to fulfil its functions. Committees consider legislation, inquire into specific issues, oversee specified independent entities, reporting back to the Parliament. They provide a forum for investigation into matters of public importance and give Members the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of such issues. Committee inquiries enhance the democratic process by taking the work of the Parliament to the people and offering a direct, transparent way to input into its decisions.

A report on the operation of committees during 2020–21 is contained on page 21.

Staff in the Committee Office are responsible for:

- providing advice and support to each committee in the conduct of its inquiries, and fulfilment of its functions more generally
- maintaining each committee's records system
- planning and organising for the collection, analysis and reporting of information and evidence
- business improvement activities, and
- activities aimed at increasing the awareness of the role of the Parliament and the committee system.

## Parliamentary Reporting and Broadcasting Service (Hansard)

The primary role of the Parliamentary Reporting and Broadcasting Service is to produce an accurate, timely and accessible record of the proceedings of the Parliament and Parliamentary Committees and the internet broadcast of proceedings of Parliament and its committees. Other services provided include:

- production of an index to the debates of the Parliament
- production of Members' speeches, and
- transcription and editorial services to other parliamentary service areas.

## Office of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner

Under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001*, the primary role of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner is to assist the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee (PCCC) in enhancing the accountability of the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) by undertaking a range of important functions on behalf of, and reporting back to, the PCCC.

The functions of the Parliamentary Commissioner, as required by the PCCC, include:

- conducting audits of the records, operational files and other material held by the CCC
- investigating complaints made against the CCC (including allegations of possible unauthorised disclosure of confidential information)
- inspecting the register of confidential information kept by the CCC, and
- previewing reports by the CCC to the PCCC.

In certain circumstances, the Parliamentary Commissioner can also investigate on their own initiative complaints about the CCC or a CCC officer, and similar matters.

The Parliamentary Commissioner has further mandatory responsibilities under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* and the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* including the conduct of an annual review of intelligence data in the possession of the CCC and the Queensland Police Service and regular audits and inspections of the records of the CCC to determine the extent of compliance with legislative requirements relating to surveillance device warrants, controlled operations and assumed identities.

With the CCC declared an eligible agency under Commonwealth telecommunications legislation, the Parliamentary Commissioner is the inspection entity under the *Telecommunications Interception Act 2009*. This involves six-monthly inspections of the CCC's telecommunications interception records and provision of an annual report to the Queensland Attorney-General.

# Report on parliamentary committee activities for 2020-21

Queensland's parliamentary committee system was significantly reformed in August 2011 in order to improve openness and accountability, better connect the work of Parliament with its committees, and increase the levels of public consultation within Queensland's legislative process. The reforms have seen an increase in the volume of committee work undertaken and the public having greater input into matters that are debated by the Parliament. An overview of the committee work conducted during the year is detailed below.

In January 2020, portfolio committees commenced a new responsibility of reporting to the Parliament on the compliance of legislation with the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

The Parliament's portfolio committees undertook 46 formal inquiries, which comprised:

- 32 inquiries into bills that were introduced in the Parliament and then referred to committees for examination
- 4 inquiries on matters of community importance referred by the Parliament
- 9 inquiries as part of fulfilling statutory oversight, public accounts and public works responsibilities, and
- 1 inquiry initiated by a committee under self-referral powers.

A total of 327 portfolio committee hearings, briefings and meetings were held during the year. These comprised 121 hearings and briefings (mostly held in public) and 206 private meetings.

Committee inquiries are a key avenue for public consultation and engagement between the public and the Parliament, and support the Parliament to scrutinise government activity. Committees received and considered 441 submissions, and heard evidence from 1,060 persons. These 1,060 persons comprised 417 representatives of organisations, 151 individuals and 492 public servants.

The government responded to 10 committee bill inquiry reports in 2020-21, all within the legislated timeframe. There were a total of 34 recommendations contained in those reports (other than that the bill be passed or not passed). The public consultation as outlined above greatly contributed to the formulation of these recommendations.

One indicator of the influence of portfolio committees is the number of recommendations contained in inquiry reports that were agreed to by the government. The 34 recommendations comprised 17 proposing legislative amendments, and 17 other recommendations.

Of all bill inquiries for which government responses were received in 2020-21:

- of 17 proposed legislative amendments, 13 were accepted by the government (76%), and
- of 17 other recommendations, 13 were accepted by the government (76%).

Committees tabled a total of 103 publications, mostly reports, in the Parliament during 2020-21.

The review of budget estimates for the 2020-21 appropriations was conducted by the seven portfolio committees during the financial year. Each portfolio committee is responsible for examining the proposed expenditures of the Government departments for their respective areas of responsibility, and advising the Parliament accordingly. Seven estimates hearings were held from 7 to 15 December 2020 with each of the committees reporting back to Parliament in February 2021.

Committees conducted 32 Bill inquiries, including the *Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Bill 2020*, the *Waste Reduction and Recycling (Plastic Items) Bill 2020*, the *Youth Justice and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021* and the *Nature Conservation and Other Legislation (Indigenous Joint Management) Amendment Bill*

Image: Legal Affairs and Safety Committee – Mount Isa, 18 March 2021



2020, the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2021*, the *COVID-19 Emergency Response and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021* and the *Criminal Code (Consent and Mistake of Fact) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020*.

In 2020-21 committees also commenced a number of inquiries into matters of public interest including serious vilification and hate crimes, vehicle safety, standards and technology including engine immobiliser technology, and social isolation and loneliness. They also reviewed a number of Auditor-General reports, and reported on their reviews to the Parliament. A number of committees undertook proceedings in support of their responsibility for oversight of specific independent entities, including the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee commencing an inquiry into the Crime and Corruption Commission's investigation of former councillors of Logan City Council and related matters.

An important function of committees is to enhance the democratic process by taking the work of the Parliament to the people and giving them a direct way to input into its decisions.

As in 2019-20, in 2020-21 the COVID-19 pandemic greatly reduced the amount of committee travel undertaken. However, in addition to Brisbane hearings committee proceedings were held in the Torres Strait, Townsville, Cairns, Yeppoon, Mount Isa and Moreton Island.

The use of video conferencing by parliamentary committees has become 'business as usual' over the past eighteen months, with 169 participants participating remotely in 21 committee proceedings held on the Parliamentary precinct, in 2020-21.

The volume of committee work completed and the outcomes achieved during 2020-21 continues to demonstrate that parliamentary committees are supporting parliamentary scrutiny of government activity, and contributing to an open, consultative and modern parliamentary system.

## Public consultation by parliamentary committees

A number of strategies have been implemented since 2011 to promote Queensland's committee inquiry process and raise awareness of how Queenslanders can be involved with committee inquiries and influence decision making, including:

- publishing inquiry details on the Parliament's website
- issuing media releases
- utilising the Parliament's social media channels
- chairs giving media interviews
- identifying persons and groups who may be interested in each particular inquiry and directly contacting those persons with information about the inquiry and how they can participate
- sending information about committee activities to committee subscriber email alert lists, including when submissions are invited and public proceedings held
- where an inquiry may have a focus in a particular regional area, advertisements may be placed in relevant local community newspapers, and
- placing advertisements and articles in trade journals and publications relevant to a committee inquiry topic.

Committee hearings held at Parliament House are generally broadcast live on 'Parliament.TV' via the Parliament's website, and can be watched on replay following the hearing. The live broadcast allows people across Queensland with an interest in particular inquiries to follow hearings and events as they occur. Transcripts of public proceedings are also published. Where appropriate, the Parliament's Indigenous Liaison Officer may assist in raising awareness of inquiries amongst First Nations people and communities, supporting consultation activities, and providing assistance to those who may wish to participate.

Implementation of new videoconferencing capacity in February 2020 was timely. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen an increased use of video conferencing for committee proceedings. As detailed above, the new capacity has ensured committees can continue to meet, and to hear from people all around the state, the country, and internationally, fulfilling their functions while maintaining social distancing.



*Image: State Development and Regional Industries Committee visit to Moreton Island, March 2021*

## Major Initiatives

Key projects	Overview	Status
Transition from 56th to 57th Parliament	Ceremonial Opening of Parliament and New Members Induction	Complete
Provide support for the Opening of the 57th Parliament	Senior Parliamentary Officer (Bills and Research) was the project manager for this project. Table Office also managed procedural aspects of the Opening of the Parliament.	Complete
Coordinate and manage Queensland Parliamentary Research Internship Program	University students undertake a nominated research project under the supervision of a Member of Parliament or senior officer of the Parliamentary Service	Complete
Continuous review and update of procedures, manuals and templates to enhance consistency and enable more efficient resource allocation and committee support	May 2020 and January 2021 editions of the Committee Office practice and procedures manual were published.  Committee Office Style Guide revised and republished December 2021.  Revised processes for Technical Scrutiny advice to committees were implemented.	Ongoing
Map business processes	Completed in December 2020. Seven key processes mapped, with outcomes informing business requirement specifications, piloting of a group email distribution system, updates to checklists and revised or new processes being documented.	December 2020
Review implementation of changes to committee support arising from the <i>Human Rights Act 2019</i>	Review completed November 2020. Ongoing review and planning for 2022 continues.	October 2020
Benchmark services against comparable organisations	Completed, and informing business process improvement work.	February 2021
Implement standardised processes to support committee performance of statutory oversight function	<i>Good Practice Guide to Oversight</i> published in March 2021, and Oversight Officer role working across all committee secretariats.	December 2020
Continue to improve committee data quality, collection methodology and reporting systems	Phase 1 and 2 were completed in 2020. Ongoing continual improvement.	Ongoing
Develop and implement committee engagement practice guide	<i>Good Practice Guide to Communication and Engagement</i> published to staff in February 2021. Pending publication to Members.	October 2020
Develop and implement improved processes for making and managing submissions to committee inquiries	Trialling of data analysis software commenced. Online submission portal used for some inquiries. Proposal for custom e-submissions system was developed and is under consideration in context of organisational priorities.	February 2021

# Key Performance Indicators

Measures	2020–21 Target	2020–21 Actual
<b>Table Office Measures</b>		
Number of Questions on Notice processed	1,500	1,051
Number of Tabled Papers and Reports registered/archived	2,200	2,492
<b>Committee Office</b>		
Number of Parliamentary Committee publications tabled	60	103
<b>Parliamentary Reporting and Broadcasting Service (Hansard)</b>		
Internet publication of the first two hours of proceedings (Hansard) each sitting day	2.30pm each sitting day	99%

## Looking ahead

### Initiatives in 2021–22 include:

#### *Table Office*

- Update of the Tabled Papers Database
- Digitisation and publication of historic tabled papers between 1955 and 1987.

#### *Committee Office*

- An event to mark the 10 year anniversary of the portfolio committee system will be held in October 2021. A panel of current and former Members of Parliament including those who worked on the Committee System Review Committee in 2010, will participate in a live, interactive 'Q&A' session, broadcast via the Parliament's facebook account.
- Work will continue on implementing good practice communication and engagement, including a stakeholder survey.
- Committee report structures and style will be evaluated and refined.
- Planning for Committee hearing rooms and office accommodation ahead of the Annexe refurbishments scheduled for 2022-23 will be progressed.