

Parliamentary Service

BUDGET 2011-12 FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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With reference to SDS 4-2 regarding the Parliamentary Service Management Plan 2011 - 2015 which outlines service goals to continue to develop strategies for the Parliament to engage with the Queensland community, what plans are there in place for this to occur during 2012?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

Last updated: 11/07/2011 9:41 AM

During 2011-12, the Queensland Parliament will expand further upon its current engagement and education programs which are aimed at raising awareness and participation in Queensland's system of democracy.

The Parliament's educational and engagement program, which includes school and public tours, youth parliaments and other parliamentary activities, continues to grow annually. During 2010-11, 1,863 tours were held at Parliament House for more than 25,500 people (including 18,159 students and 7,740 other visitors). Further, 116 parliamentary education activities occurred involving 5,519 people. This is in addition to the 2,357 students who participated in educational programs during the Mackay Regional sitting of Parliament. Other engagement activities, including the successful multifaith service and citizenship ceremony, encouraged more than 3,500 Queenslanders to engage with their parliament.

The parliament also continued its successful public service training seminars holding 19 sessions at Parliament House, with another held in Mackay in the lead up to the regional parliamentary sitting. Almost 700 public servants participated in this important engagement activity with more than 98 per cent of participants rating the training positively. This program will again be facilitated during the forthcoming year with an additional program being implemented in 2012 to support the new parliamentary committee structure implemented with the *Parliament of Queensland (Reform and Modernisation) Amendment Act 2011*. This program will focus specifically on the operation of the new parliamentary committee structure and its implications for public sector officers.

As Members are aware, the Queensland Parliament recently launched a new user-friendly website. This project built upon the very popular broadcast on demand service launched in February. During 2011-12, the website will be improved further with updates to the parliament's committee pages and education resources. I am advised that over 17,500,000 page views occurred during 2010-11 and we are expecting even more in the upcoming year with the improved website and resources.

To celebrate the United Nations International Year of Youth, the Bayside Youth Parliament was held at Sheldon College on 21 October 2010. Over 350 students participated in this event with 90 students taking part in the youth parliament. Later, a successful teacher training session was also held. This model received positive feedback from teachers, students and the Members involved, as well as the media.

A similar combined model of engagement activities was successfully used during the lead-up to the Mackay regional sitting of Parliament, along with a public service seminar on that occasion. As a result of the success of this initiative, it is intended to stage further events based on this model during 2011-12.

During the year, the Parliament moved to further improve its engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Participation in NAIDOC activities now occurs annually continuing our partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission and the Electoral Commission of Queensland to

host information stalls where the community can ask questions about the Parliament and the State and Federal electoral processes.

Further, parliamentary staff also met with the board of Apunipima, the Cape York Indigenous Health Council, and with the Indigenous Justice Group in Cairns who represent communities in the Cape York and Torres Strait areas. The aim of these activities is to ensure that the Queensland Parliament engages with Indigenous peoples in a culturally appropriate way in its decision-making, especially its future committee consultation processes.

Work on this developing strategy will continue through 2011-12 to support expected increased Indigenous engagement under the revised parliamentary committee system. Community Engagement Services will be working closely with the Committee Office to maximise participation by the general public and special interest groups in the process of examining proposed legislation by the new portfolio committees.

Recently, another successful Indigenous Youth Parliament was held in partnership with the Department of Communities. A further 35 Indigenous participants, adding to the 80 already involved in this program since it was first developed in 2009, were provided with a valuable opportunity to learn and increase their leadership, networking and decision-making skills. Due to the success of this program, the Australian Electoral Commission has asked our parliamentary staff to help facilitate a similar event during 2011-12 for all Australian states and territories in Canberra.

The parliament's highly successful High Teas continue to grow in prestige and popularity. Members may be interested to know that the Queensland Parliament's High Teas were recently listed in the top 20 dining rooms serving tea and cakes in Australia. Last year, 15 High Teas were held in the Strangers' Dining Room attended by more than 1,100 people and followed by a tour of the parliament. I understand that 80 members of the hearing-impaired community have booked a High Tea event in the upcoming year and we look forward to welcoming others in the community to partake in this unique experience. In all, more than 34,000 people enjoyed the high quality of catering available at the Queensland Parliament during the 795 events held in 2010-11. More events are expected to be supported in 2011-12.

It is expected that during this coming year the Queensland Parliament will further build upon its current engagement and education activities at both Parliament House and in regional locations throughout the state, in order to increase parliamentary education and awareness, but also to support enhanced engagement with the new parliamentary committees.

With reference to SDS 4 -3 regarding 2011-12 highlights where Parliamentary Service initiatives include developing and delivering a new training and development program for electorate office staff, will the Speaker detail what this will involve and how this will benefit Queenslanders?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

The 2011-2012 Budget includes an amount of \$75,000 for electorate office staff training.

The Human Resource Services unit within the Parliamentary Service will coordinate this training.

There are approximately 220 electorate office staff employed in 94 Members' offices across the State under various full-time and job sharing arrangements.

Over the past five years, the Parliamentary Service has delivered various training packages to electorate office staff. The provision of such training has been an agreed requirement under successive enterprise bargaining agreements.

Training over the last three years has focused on safety and security in electorate offices. The feedback from this training was very positive with a number of electorate office staff commenting that further, broad-based, on-going training programs would greatly assist staff to serve constituents.

In response to the above suggestions, a new electorate office staff training course will be delivered over the coming two years. It is expected that course content will cover:

- a) security and staff awareness training for new staff and update sessions for existing staff
- b) information concerning various support services regularly used by electorate office staff including the Parliamentary Library, Community Engagement and Information Technology Services
- c) skills development for staff in dealing with difficult constituents and complex constituent matters as well as briefings from relevant government agencies about hot topics
- d) employment information useful to electorate office staff (e.g., superannuation, salary sacrifice etc) as well as refresher sessions on workplace relations policies (e.g., code of conduct, workplace harassment etc)
- e) information and advice regarding the various administrative responsibilities and requirements of electorate office staff (e.g., understanding Members entitlements, making travel claims, managing office equipment and consumables).

To ensure that the training remains valuable and meets electorate office needs, final course content will be subject to consultation with electorate office staff. The delivery of training would continue to be via small group training sessions of 20–30 staff held over two to three days in Brisbane.

Implementation schedule

The training program will be developed during September and October 2011 before consultation with electorate office staff. A pilot program will take place before Christmas 2011. Timing for the remaining courses in 2011-2012 will be assessed taking into consideration the timing of the next General election.

With reference to SDS 4-6 regarding the number of catered functions held, will the Speaker provide a list of the functions held at Parliament House hosted by the Speaker and the cost of each function?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

Function Date	Function Detail	Amount excl GST		
01-Jul-10	Afternoon tea for managers of the charities nominated for P150 events	21.82		
05-Aug-10	Luncheon for the finalists of the 2010 Miss Showgirl			
25-Aug-10	Briefing to delegation members of the Ministry of Finance, People's Republic of China	58.91		
25-Aug-10	Morning tea to the Board of Directors and Management of Singapore Airport Terminal Services, following request for visit to Parliament	228.73		
08-Sep-10	Official Dinner for Mr Sun Shao Feng, China Green Holdings – reciprocal hospitality for previous trade-related meeting	365.91		
10-Sep-10	Official Luncheon for Mr Zeng Shouzi, Member of the Standing Committee, Guangdong Provincial Peoples Congress	576.36		
06-Oct-10	Morning tea for members of the Deaf Community	421.82		
07-Oct-10	Dinner for the Temporary Chairs and Government Whips	196.36		
14-Oct-10	Dinner for Trade and Investment Queensland Commissioners	970.00		
28-Oct-10	Dinner for Leader of Opposition, Opposition Whips and Temporary Chair	407.27		
05-Nov-10	Luncheon for Mr A Al Hussayen, Minister of Electricity and Water, Saudi Arabia	416.35		
05-Nov-10	Refreshments for the close of International Women in Politics Conference	588.64		
22-Nov-10	Staff Service Awards 2010	2,971.36		
25-Nov-10	Refreshments for function at end of Parliament 2010	1,117.45		
25-Nov-10	Afternoon tea for Mr Makoto Iida, Member of Kanagawa Prefectural Assembly Goodwill Delegation	121.09		
01-Dec-10	Morning tea for volunteers of the charity Project: Love and Care	1,210.91		
31-Jan-11	Afternoon tea for Hon Jane Aagaard, Speaker Northern Territory Parliament	20.18		
07-Feb-11	Morning tea for NRL Under 16s Indigenous All Stars	175.00		
14-Feb-11	Refreshments for VIPs and the Leaders of the Multi-faith Service	85.09		
03-Mar-11	Morning tea for new Chinese Consul-General in Brisbane, Dr Sun Dali	35.00		
08-Mar-11	Farewell luncheon for Mr Makoto Hinei Japan Consul-General	149.82		
07-Apr-11	Luncheon for partners of the Heads of Mission who visited Queensland with Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd	1,139.09		
18-Apr-11	Luncheon for CEO, ANZ Bank Singapore and Queensland members of the Singapore Business Council of Australia – reciprocal hospitality for previously scheduled trade- related meeting	455.09		
	TOTAL	12,215.89		

Note

Details above refer to official catered functions hosted by the Speaker where catering costs were incurred. Any official functions which did not result in catering costs to the Parliament are not included above.

With reference to SDS 4-4 regarding Parliamentary Precinct Support Services which delivers a range of services that directly support the activities of Members and their staff including information technology, human resources, financial and administrative services, will the Speaker provide details of some of the services which have been delivered to the Leader of the Opposition office and staff?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

The reference in SDS 4-4 regarding support for "Members and their staff" is particular to electorate office staff.

The Office of the Leader of the Opposition ("the Office") is funded and supported by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet which I understand provides information technology, human resource, financial and administrative support to the Office.

The Parliamentary Service provides no such administrative support to the Office.

The only services provided to staff of the Office relate to accommodation and access to the parliamentary precinct including car parking. Office staff are provided with:

- a) office accommodation on level 6 of the Annexe and some support for that accommodation (e.g., I recently approved the purchase of replacement chairs for the Office);
- b) staff car parking
- c) staff security access to the building and associated services

Office staff are not Parliamentary Service employees. I understand they are employed through Ministerial Services Branch of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Staff from the Opposition Leader's Office are generally afforded the same access and support as Ministerial staff and also Department of Public Works contractors who are 'permanently' stationed within the precinct (e.g., cleaners and trade staff).

With reference to SDS 4-3 regarding the hosting of the 19th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Australian and Pacific Region Seminar in September 2011, will the Speaker advise who will be attending, the approximate cost and any benefits which are received from hosting such an event?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

Under Commonwealth Parliamentary Association arrangements, the branches of the CPA are grouped geographically into eight regions.

The Australian Region comprises the Australian and state and territory parliaments, the Commonwealth of Australia Parliament. The Pacific Region includes the following parliaments:

- Norfolk Island
- New Zealand
- Cook Islands

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- Kiribati
- Nauru
- Niue

- Papua New Guinea
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Tonga
- Tuvalu
- Vanuatu

The Australian and Pacific Regions hold a joint regional seminar every second year. At the conclusion of the 18th regional seminar in Wellington, New Zealand in 2009 it was agreed that the Queensland Branch would host the 19th seminar.

The 2011 seminar will be the first time the seminar has been hosted in Queensland since 1976. It is basically well past Queensland's turn to host the event.

A total of 29 members from the abovementioned parliaments are entitled to attend the conference as full participating delegates. There may also be some observers from parliaments attending. Acceptances will not close until the end of July.

The Australian branches and New Zealand contribute funds to cover most seminar and travel costs. Based on the experience of the 18th seminar in Wellington it is unlikely that the total contribution of the Queensland Parliament as host will be in excess of \$20,000. This will be funded through the CPA Queensland Branch budget.

The theme for the seminar is "Risk Management: recovery from natural disasters in the parliamentary context". It is envisaged that this topic will provide some useful exchanges of information and ideas between members across the Australian and Pacific region who have had to deal with an array of issues pertaining to natural disasters in recent years.

There are many benefits that flow from the Queensland Parliament's membership of the CPA and these types of events including the sharing of information and the building and maintenance of close working relationships with other jurisdictions, particularly our Pacific neighbours.

With reference to SDS 4-2, will the Speaker advise the total floor space available in the Parliamentary Annexe and how is it allocated, listed separately by type including but not limited to office space (committee, opposition, media, parliamentary support and other listed separately), parliamentary library, catering, accommodation, housekeeping, recreation, meeting rooms, conference rooms, media conference facilities, common areas and other (specified separately by type)?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

SUMMARY OF PARLIAMENTARY ANNEXE ROOM UTILISATION

Use		Level(s)	Total floor space	Approximate % of total floor space
Overnight accommodation		14 - 23 and 3	3,010 m²	18
Members' offices		9-13	1,345 m²	8
Plant Floor		8	360 m²	2
Recreation facilities				
Gymnasium (153 m²)				
Squash court (98 m²)				
Pool (257 m²)		7	508 m ²	3
Office of the Opposition		6	545 m²	3.3
Parliamentary Library		6	1,366 m ²	8.2
Parliamentary Committees (staff)		6 and 5	350 m²	2.1
Media (not including Dandiir)		5	94 m²	0.6
Meeting rooms		5	113 m ²	1
Function/catering facilities				
BBQ areas	(304 m ²)			
Undumbi	(272 m ²)			
Dandiir	(111 m^2)			
Wine Bar and Café	(107 m^2)			
Speaker/Members' Dining Room	(338 m ²)			
Speakers' Hall	(203 m ²)			
Premiers' Hall	(230 m ²)			
Kitchens	(278 m ²)			
Cafeteria	(180 m^2)	7, 5 and 4	2,023 m ²	12
Other parliamentary support offices				
Information Technology Services	(102 m ²)			
Human Resource Services	(97 m²)			
Financial and Administrative Services	(243 m ²)			
Community Engagement	(129 m²)			
Property Services	(77 m^2)			
Catering staff rooms	(37 m ²)			
Director's Office	(68 m ²)			
Security	(36 m^2)			
Parl Crime and Misconduct Commissioner	(47 m^2)			
Housekeeping level 3	(63 m²)	7, 5, 4 and 3	836 m²	5.4
Foyer/common area		3	570 m²	3.4
Car parks		1 and 2	4,219 m²	25.3
Storage		1 and 2	443 m²	2.7
Plant rooms		1 and 2	590 m²	3.5
Workshops		1 and 2	265 m²	1.5
TOTALS		-	16,700 m²	100

Notes

- 1. General area such as toilets, hallways, lift foyers have been excluded from the results.
- Level 7 BBQ areas have been measure to the extent of the covered area.
- 3. Gym measurements include changing rooms and showers.
- 4. Pool area has been measured to the extent of the glass fencing.
- 5. Meeting rooms on MP office floors 10, 11, 12 and 13 have been excluded (total 66 m²)

With reference to SDS 4-2, will the Speaker detail what funding resources will be made available for each of the newly introduced committees for 2011-12?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

Background

On 19 May 2011, the *Parliament of Queensland (Reform and Modernisation) Amendment Act 2011* received assent. The Act provides for the Legislative Assembly to establish a number of portfolio committees.

On 16 June 2011, the House approved variations to Standing Orders to establish a number of specific portfolio committees.

The Queensland Parliament's Committee system now comprises:

- Finance and Administration Committee
- Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee
- Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee
- Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy Committee
- Community Affairs Committee
- Health and Disabilities Committee
- Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure Committee
- Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Committee
- Ethics Committee
- Committee of the Legislative Assembly.

As the committee is no doubt aware, the seven portfolio committees are also performing the role of Estimates Committees for the 2011-2012 Budget.

Resourcing implications of the new committee system

The introduction of the new committee system has (and will have) resourcing implications for two main reasons:

a) Increased number of committees and therefore support staff

- The new committee system has more committees than the previous system and so a number of additional staff will be required to provide support to those committees.
- There are additional costs to be incurred associated with staffing (e.g., staff salaries, accommodation, computer and office equipment)

b) Expanded committee activities

- The activities of the new committees will require an investment in hearing and meeting rooms (e.g., including technology to enable more public hearings)
- The activities of the new committees will also result in additional operating costs (e.g., additional printing, travel, consultant and advertising costs).

Funding resources for committees in 2011-2012

Because the final adoption of the new committee system occurred after the time when the Parliament's 2011-12 Budget was developed, approved and made ready for publication, there is no additional funding included in the 2011-2012 Budget for the new Committee system, that is:

- The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill does not include any additional funding for the new committee system
- There is no reference to additional funding in the Parliament's Service Delivery Statements

My understanding is that the Government has yet to consider or approve any additional funding for the new committee system. As a result, the total budget allocation for all Parliamentary Committees in 2011-2012 included in the *Service Delivery Statements* is the amount set aside for the former committee system, i.e., \$2.586M.

As I understand it, the Committee of the Legislative Assembly is to have responsibility for seeking additional funding for the new committee system and allocating budgets for each individual committee.

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With reference to SDS 4-2, will the Speaker detail what arrangements have been made in regards to physical space for the newly introduced committees, including but not limited to arrangements for public hearings, meeting rooms and committee secretariat offices, reported separately by committee; and if any audit has been undertaken into the physical space requirements of these committees what was the result of this assessment?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

Audit of space

I have not made arrangements to conduct an "audit" in relation to the "physical space requirements of these committees", nor have I received a request to do so. I understand that assessing the requirements of the new committees was within the purview of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and that committee has not contacted me requesting that an audit be conducted.

I can advise the committee that on 8 April 2011 I received advice that the Cabinet Budget Review Committee had approved funding for the Parliament of \$100,000 for the following purpose:

Funding approved to undertake a business case to examine options for committee meeting space, for example relocation of corporate services. The Parliamentary Service is to work with the Department of Public Works to identify temporary meeting locations. A submission on the implementation of the Review is to be provided to the 2011-12 Mid-Year Review.

I found this perplexing as I had not made a funding request to Government in relation to this funding or for any other accommodation related funding in the current year budget.

Arrangements for committee secretariat offices

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What I can advise is that because of the limited time taken between the formal decision of the House to create the new parliamentary committee structure (16 June 2011) and the implementation of the structure (i.e., to be effective for the conduct of the 2011 Estimates Committee process) urgent interim action had to be taken in relation to accommodating additional staff associated with the new structure.

In April 2011, the Clerk of the Parliament conducted a scan of the precinct and recommended that the only viable temporary option to accommodate the proposed two additional secretariats was to utilise space currently occupied by two library compactus storage units on level 5 of the Annexe within the Information and Technology Services area. On 20 April 2011, the Clerk sought my urgent approval to conduct the necessary works on the precinct to accommodate the proposed two additional secretariats which I provided. I noted that there was no budget for these works but approved them on the basis that they were essential for the operation of the new committees and that correspondence would be prepared to the Treasurer in due course to seek re-imbursement for the costs incurred.

Secretariat staff supporting the committees are now located in the following areas within the Annexe and Parliament House:

COMMITTEE	LOCATION	Existing or
		new/refurbished
Finance and Administration	Level 6 adjacent to low rise lifts	Existing
Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency	Level 5 adjacent to Information Technology	Refurbished
Services	Services	
Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations	Level 5 adjacent to Information Technology	Refurbished
	Services	
Environment, Agriculture, Resources and Energy	Level 6 adjacent to high rise lifts	Existing
Community Affairs	Level 6 adjacent to low rise lifts	Existing
Health and Disabilities	Level 6 adjacent to high rise lifts	Existing
Transport, Local Government and Infrastructure	Level 6 adjacent to library	Existing
Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct	Level 6 in "secure" room	Existing
Ethics	Level C Parliament House	Existing
Technical Scrutiny of Legislation Secretariat	Level 6 adjacent to low rise lifts	Existing

Arrangements for public hearings and meetings

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I understand that on 14 June 2011 the Committee of the Legislative Assembly recommended the following room upgrade proposals to facilitate the new portfolio committee system:

- Seven rooms on the precinct (Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council Chambers, Undumbi, Dandiir and Members' Reading Rooms and the Premiers' and Speakers' Halls) to be upgraded with the requisite sound system (including audio, captioning and log noting functionality) for transcription of committee proceedings
- Three of those rooms (the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council Chambers and Dandiir Room) to be upgraded with the capacity for video streaming broadcast of committee proceedings
- The Dandiir Room to be upgraded with permanent video conferencing facilities.

The Clerk again sought my urgent approval to conduct these necessary works as soon as possible which I provided on 17 June 2011.

I understand it is proposed that the hearing rooms are to be allocated to particular portfolio committees by the Manager, Committee Office on the basis of advice of the business to be conducted by each of those committees on any given Wednesday morning of a sitting week.

Again, I noted that there was no budget for these works but approved them on the basis that they were essential for the operation of the new committees and that correspondence would be subsequently prepared to the Treasurer seeking approval to commit capital works expenditure outside of the standard budget process.

With reference to SDS 4-2, will the Speaker advise what work has been undertaken into assessing the ideal solution required in terms of floor space for the new seven portfolio committees in terms of accommodation for both staff offices, meeting rooms and hearing rooms?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

Work undertaken in 2009

Action was taken in 2009 to conduct a *Strategic Review of Parliamentary Buildings* which considered the issue of providing ideal accommodation for an expanded committee system and committee office should it eventuate in the future.

That review indicated that the "ideal solution" to address not only the possibility of a new expanded committee structure requiring "staff offices, meeting rooms and hearing rooms", but also other fitness for purpose accommodation pressures within both parliamentary buildings, was to investigate construction of a new building adjacent to the Annexe.

The Strategic Review suggested that the three-level building could accommodate:

- a new Community Engagement and Parliamentary Education Office
- new committee office accommodation including staff offices, meeting rooms and public hearing rooms
- new office accommodation for the Office of the Leader of the Opposition.

It is worth noting that this review documented the accommodation problems within the precinct and proposed solutions well before the current interest in accommodation arising out of the introduction of the new committee system.

I understand a copy of the relevant section of the *Strategic Review of Parliamentary Buildings* document (Report 2 – Fitness for Purpose Report) was provided to the Committee System Review Committee which in its report supported the recommendations contained in it.

Work to be undertaken in 2011-2012

As I noted in my previous answer, I can advise that on 8 April 2011 I received advice that the Cabinet Budget Review Committee had approved funding for the Parliament of \$100,000 for the following purpose:

Funding approved to undertake a business case to examine options for committee meeting space, for example relocation of corporate services. The Parliamentary Service is to work with the Department of Public Works to identify temporary meeting locations. A submission on the implementation of the Review is to be provided to the 2011-12 Mid-Year Review.

I had not made a funding request to Government in relation to this funding or for any other accommodation related funding in the current year budget.

I presume that the Committee of the Legislative Assembly will give carriage to the above review when it assumes responsibility for the Parliamentary Service and accommodation.

With reference to SDS 4-2, will the Speaker advise of any work that has been done or any estimates undertaken into any options to expand the floor space available in the Parliamentary Annexe and, if so, will the Speaker advise the details?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

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See answers to Questions 8 and 9.

With reference to SDS 4-2, will the Speaker advise if there has been any comparison, study or other such work been done by Parliamentary Services or the Speaker regarding the provision of onsite accommodation for MPs versus the payment of a reasonable travel allowance to MPs as exists in other Australian Parliaments as well as the Queensland Public Service and, if so, will the Speaker advise of the results and/or findings of this work?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

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Prior to receiving this question, I have had this issue raised with me on only one occasion previously.

In 2010, the Speaker's Advisory Committee (SAC) received briefings regarding the *Strategic Review of Parliamentary Buildings* which had been conducted by the Parliamentary Service in 2009.

Specifically, SAC was briefed regarding Report 2 of the Strategic Review (Fitness for Purpose). This particular report highlighted a number of accommodation problems within the precinct and made recommendations to address them.

During the first briefing (20 May 2010), a SAC member raised the issue of whether the review had considered the issue of the on-going viability of providing overnight accommodation for Members and whether an allowance could be provided in lieu of this accommodation, thus releasing overnight accommodation floors in the Annexe for other purposes. The Member was advised that the report had not considered this option and that the review had assumed, based on experience, that the Annexe would continue to be used for Members' accommodation.

At the second briefing (10 June 2010) the Member who had raised the matter during the previous meeting advised the committee that he no longer wished to pursue the matter and that he supported the report's recommendations being progressed by the Speaker in due course.

As a result, I took no action to investigate the issue further.

I understand from the Clerk that around this time the Clerk asked officers from the Corporate Services Division to make enquiries of allowances provided in other jurisdiction without on-site accommodation.

Since receiving this Question on Notice (and while this matter does not relate to the Parliament's current appropriation) I have asked the Parliamentary Service to renew the examination of accommodation allowance arrangements in other jurisdictions.

Information has not been obtained from every Australian jurisdiction. However, the information gathered has, as expected, illustrated a diverse range of approaches to providing Members with accommodation allowances, unique to the requirements of their particular jurisdiction.

In general terms, the schemes adopted in other jurisdictions provide for a set allowance (paid on either a per night basis or annual basis in advance) to compensate Members for accommodation and meal costs they incur where they are required to visit their capital city for parliamentary business.

The various schemes provide for:

- overnight allowances, ranging between \$200 and \$250 per night
- an eligibility criteria based on electorate distance from capital cities of 30-75 km (with certain exemptions in some jurisdictions for the Premier, Ministers, Leader of the Opposition, etc)
- a maximum number of nights claimable ranging from 100 to 180 nights per annum
- a requirement for Members to annually certify as to the business conducted for each night claimed.

Based upon the information available, the estimated cost of adopting a similar scheme with similar criteria for the Queensland Parliament might range between \$1.2M and \$1.8M per annum.

Bearing the above in mind, I would now like to discuss the broader thrust of this question, i.e., a comparison of the relative merits of the provision of on-site accommodation for MPs versus the payment of a reasonable travel allowance to MPs.

In essence, what is being requested here is a cost benefit analysis of these two options. In order to undertake an effective cost benefit analysis, one must ensure that all the costs/benefits are included, and each cost benefit is properly quantified.

So, for example, if we were to consider a cost benefit analysis of the current arrangements (i.e., where on-site overnight accommodation is provided), the cost and benefits would include (at a minimum) the following:

COSTS/BENEFITS OF ON-SITE ACCOMMODATION

ON-SITE ACCOMMODATION						
COSTS	BENEFITS					
Building services (cleaning, security, maintenance)	Convenience to Members					
Building depreciation (and consequential capital investment)	Recurrent savings in travelling allowances paid to Members					
Inefficient use of floor space (low occupancy rates)	Higher safety/security of Members					
Operation of dining rooms outside of sitting weeks						

COSTS/BENEFITS OF MOVING TO AN ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCE ARRANGEMENT

ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCE ARRANGEMENT					
COSTS	BENEFITS				
Loss of on-site accommodation convenience/amenity for Members	Additional floor space becomes available				
Recurrent cost of providing travelling allowances to Members	Savings in some building services				
	Savings in Catering Services through closure of dining rooms outside of sitting weeks				
	More efficient use of floor space				

However, it is not possible to undertake an effective cost benefit analysis of these options because at this stage there are too many variables and unknowns. These include:

What model for allowance payments would apply?

The actual amount of travelling allowance costs that will be incurred is unknown because no model has been determined. For example:

- Will all 89 MPs receive an accommodation allowance, or will only the 80 Members who are currently provided with a bedroom receive the allowance; or will new eligibility rules be established based upon the distance of the MP's electorate from Brisbane?
- Whether it would be an all in or all out scheme or a hybrid scheme with some members being able to choose to take the on-site accommodation or an allowance. (The ability to make savings of fixed costs would be reduced under a hybrid scheme, because under such a model it may not be possible to reduce costs in areas such as security, catering etc.)
- What will be the number of days per annum that an MP is able to claim (60 days, 120 days or more)?
- What will be the rate of the allowance (\$240, \$260, \$280 per overnight stay?)
- What would be the substantiation requirements?

b) What exact purpose would the vacated space be put to?

The conversion of the space to an alternative usage would obviously result in a capital cost. This must be factored into the cost benefit analysis.

The precise purpose for which it would be used would also have implications for recurrent costs (cleaning, servicing, maintenance) depending upon the new purpose. For example the cost of maintaining offices is different from maintaining large meeting rooms or common areas.

c) How would the loss of accommodation amenity for Members be quantified?

The loss of convenience to Members would be significant – how would this be quantified? It would need to be quantified differently for different MPs, depending upon their own personal circumstances and parliamentary and or executive responsibilities.

It is not until these matters have been discussed in more detail and some threshold decisions taken that a true cost benefit analysis could be undertaken.

With reference to SDS 4-2, will the Speaker advise if any work has been undertaken into any option of converting existing MP accommodation rooms into office, meeting, committee or hearing rooms?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

As outlined in my answers to previous questions:

- a) I have not instructed that any such work on this option be undertaken
- b) I note that I have received advice that the Cabinet Budget Review Committee (without any submission by me or discussion with me) has approved funding for the Parliament of \$100,000 to undertake a business case to examine options for committee meeting space, for example relocation of corporate services and that the Parliamentary Service is to work with the Department of Public Works to identify temporary meeting locations.

Notwithstanding the matters I raised in my answer to Question on Notice Number 11, I believe there are a number of inherent constraints in converting accommodation floors for the purposes outlined in the question. These constraints relate to the original building design:

The relatively small size of bedrooms floors

Bedroom and office floors in the upper Annexe are significantly smaller in size than lower level floors such as level 6. For example, level 14 has an area of approximately 400m2 compared to more than 3,000 m2 on level 6.

This means that clearing and refurbishing level 14 would realise a relatively small amount of space (equivalent roughly to the size of the current Opposition Office on level 6). Levels 15 through 18 are only marginally larger at around 500m2 per floor (because these floors were designed to accommodate the ministerial suites).

In other words, the accommodation value of converting such floors (i.e., the space realised for the conversion investment) may be quite limited.

The unusual shape of bedroom floors

Because these floors were specifically designed for overnight accommodation, the floors are long and narrow. The practical usability of this space may be limited.

This shape would present some challenges when converting to open plan office space and it may be difficult or impractical to install larger meeting rooms due, for example, to the location of supporting pillars.

The requirement for new services if use changes

Each of these floors currently utilise individual air-conditioning units located in each bedroom. If the floors were cleared and made ready for another purposes, larger air-conditioning services would need to be located somewhere (perhaps a plant room similar to level 8 would have to be constructed on one of the vacated floors). This may mean a large loss of space to services.

The increased pressure on lifts

The more people that are located above level 6, the greater the pressure on the high-rise lifts.

The current performance of the high rise lifts (which is a topic of regular complaint by Members) would be reduced in the event of staff and perhaps members of the public accessing floors above level 9.

Move away from the original compartmental design of the building

As the 2009 Strategic Review of Parliamentary Buildings noted, the original compartmental design of the building was very effective but has been adversely affected by ad hoc decision making over the last 30 years.

It has had a particular impact on levels 3 to 6 which were originally designed as the public and common area floors of the building.

Aside from the impact on services (such as lifts) already outlined above, the use of the tower for persons other than Members and possibly the public may have security and privacy implications for Members, jeopardising the original intent of the compartmental design.

With reference to SDS 4-2, will the Speaker advise the actual cost of maintaining the Parliamentary precinct, broken down separately into Parliament House and the Parliamentary Annexe, with major costs listed separately?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

Before providing my response, there are a number of important points to note here:

a) Defining "maintenance"

The term "maintenance" can have different meanings to different people. For example, some may consider the cost of maintaining the precinct to include things such as the cost of electricity, local government rates and other utilities; repairing the stonework; cleaning rooms within the buildings; and replacing water or sewerage pipes.

For accounting purposes, however, the above costs are not considered "maintenance". The information I provide in my answer will utilise the accepted public sector accounting definition of maintenance.

b) Reporting maintenance broken down separately into Parliament House and the Parliamentary Annexe

Current accounting and reporting arrangements in place do not allow me to report *all* maintenance costs separately by building because the Parliamentary Service does not always capture costs separately by building. Where information by building is available, I have provided it.

c) The "actual cost"

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Finally, the question asks for "actual costs" which suggests a request for information concerning costs incurred in 2010-11. I note that because the 2010-2011 year has not yet closed for accounting purposes, there are still a number of accounts that have yet to be received and/or processed.

To assist the committee, I have estimated actual costs where it is reasonable to do so accurately.

The following table summarises maintenance costs (actual and estimated) for 2010-2011.

PRECINCT MAINTENANCE COSTS 2010-2011 (ACTUAL AND ESTIMATED ACTUAL)

	TYPE OF MAINTENANCE	PARLIAMENT HOUSE	PARLIAMENTARY ANNEXE			
PLANNED	Service Maintenance	\$242,252	\$734,349			
			\$137,161 (both buildings)			
Condition-based Maintenance		\$ 35,856	\$12,661			
			\$13,684 (both buildings)			
UNPLANNED	Repairs/rectification works		\$830,038 (both buildings)			

Notes

 Service maintenance is designed to retain an item or asset in its original condition as far as practicable by providing systematic inspection, detection and prevention of incipient failure. Service maintenance may be mandatory (required to meet various Building Acts, Regulations or other statutory obligations) or non-mandatory.

Service maintenance is delivered primarily by primarily private sector contractors (contracted via an actual Service Maintenance Contract). Service Maintenance Contracts cover a wide range of maintenance demands, including-

Grease Trap Car Park lighting Car Park Boom Gates Convotherm Ovens Kitchen Drainage Automatic Doors UPS for security doors	Fire systems/doors Lifts Backflow Prevention Security systems/equipment Gas monitoring Lightning Protection Kitchen canopy clean		Air conditioning systems Kitchen Filters Safety harness mountings Roller shutters TV Audio systems Generator Fuel tank
Thermal Imaging electrical		•	Pest control

The remaining service maintenance is delivered by DPW on-site trade staff.

Condition-based maintenance is that required to restore asset to required condition standard, usually identified through specific
condition assessment/inspection process. These "condition assessments" usually classify maintenance according to "building
elements" such as finishes (e.g. painting walls and ceilings) services (e.g. maintaining chilled water pipes) and structure (e.g. carrying
out repairs to the swimming pool).

Costs incurred for *Condition Based Maintenance* in 2010-2011 were significantly less than budgeted. For example, the budget for *Condition Based Maintenance* in Parliament House included an allocation of \$294,000 to commence the interior painting. However, progress for this project was slower than originally planned.

3. Repairs/rectification works and minor works involve actual repair to the building, infrastructure or plant and equipment for example carpentry repairs such as broken furniture, locks; plumbing repairs such as broken underground pipes, tap washers, leaks; electrical repairs such as lights, switches; and refrigeration repairs such as air-conditioning, food refrigerators. Repairs can also be required to some items that are not otherwise covered by existing service maintenance contracts (eg sound system microphone repairs/replacement, fire hydrant/pump repairs). Works can also include items such as undertaking minor office renovations where not deemed capital works (labour and materials); or assisting with major function set-up such as the Opening of Parliament (labour and materials).

A significant amount of these types of works are delivered by on-site DPW trade staff (\$558,757) but private sector contractors were also engaged to perform some works (\$229,873). There were also building materials purchased to deliver some of these works (\$41,408).

With reference to SDS 4-6, will the Speaker detail in relation to the number of catered functions held, how much revenue was raised by these functions and how were these funds expended?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

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The Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service offers function and catering services to a range of clients including Members, Parliamentary Service internal clients (Education Services, Parliamentary Committees, etc.), Ministerial Offices, government departments, and a range of external clients (including business and community organisations).

The catering services provided may range from a simple lunch menu for 4-6 guests to large catered events for hundreds of guests.

In the 2010-11 year, a total of 795 catered functions were held, delivering total revenue of \$1.023M (excluding GST).

This revenue from catered functions is used solely for the purpose of meeting costs incurred in delivering the full range of catering services on the precinct including the purchase of food and beverages consumed, the employment of additional temporary and casual staff, the payment of overtime for existing staff, and other costs such as linen and laundry.

Any "profit" from the function trade is essentially used to offset the cost of less profitable catering activity.

With reference to SDS 4-3, will the Speaker detail, in relation to the replacement of electorate office computer equipment and upgrade of Internet bandwidth in all electorate offices, what was the total cost and, by electorate office, list each completion date and the internet bandwidth now available?

SPEAKER'S RESPONSE

All electorate office desktop computers and data communication systems were upgraded in the later half of 2010. The planning, development, testing, documentation and implementation phases of the project occurred over the preceding 18 months.

Each electorate office was visited by Information Technology Services staff during the rollout period between September 20 and December 10, 2010. During this visit, new office computers and other local area network equipment were installed and the old computers decommissioned. Office staff received familiarisation training with the new computer equipment, the Windows 7 operating system and the new and enhanced features of the latest solution.

The new data communications system provided an upgrade of the standard 1.5MB/256KB ADSL Service to the fastest available broadband service within the constraints of the electorate office's geographical location and available internet service. As a result of the upgrade, 40 offices were upgraded to an ADSL2+ service while the remaining offices were upgraded to an enhanced ADSL.

As many variables affect the true performance of any broadband service, it is not possible to provide an accurate and reliable performance throughput figure for each service. However, the following page summarises the nominal link description for each service as well as the results of the ISP tested download and upload speeds at the time of commissioning.

I can confirm however that the throughput performance of all new broadband services is faster than the pre-existing service.

The cost of providing the new computer system and improved broadband was \$617,780.29, including:

hardware (including maintenance) and software
 ADSL upgrade
 travel, freight and other miscellaneous costs
 \$ 545,350.60
 \$ 50,000.00
 \$ 22,429.69

As this work did not involve any contractors or other non-Parliamentary Service personnel, the cost of the staff resources involved in these phases is not included in the above costs.

UPGRADE OF ELECTORATE OFFICE COMPUTER EQUIPMENT AND DATA COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Site Name	PC and LAN	Tested Download	Tested Upload	Nominal Broadband Product
Site Puille	Upgrade	Speed in kb/s	Speed kb/s	Description
	Complete	Speed in Roys	Броса поло	2 esemption
	1			
ALBERT	19 Nov	11468	775000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
ALGESTER	17 Nov	9281	714000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
ASHGROVE	13 Oct	8160	384000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
ASPLEY	10 Dec	8160	384000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
BARRON RIVER	15 Oct	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
BEAUDESERT	15 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
BRISBANE CENTRAL	15 Oct	18543	997000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
BROADWATER	13 Oct	8032	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
BUDERIM	4 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
BULIMBA	10 Dec	7248	1023000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
BUNDABERG	8 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
BUNDAMBA	7 Dec	17543	1021000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
BURDEKIN	23 Sep	8032	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
BURLEIGH	19 Oct	1808	571000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
BURNETT	9 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
CAIRNS	11 Oct	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
CALLIDE	8 Dec	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
CALOUNDRA	10 Nov	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
CAPALABA	2 Nov	7616	384000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
CHATSWORTH	3 Dec	7911	987000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
CLAYFIELD	20Sep	15777	838000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A) 24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
CLEVELAND	3 Nov	22676	1021000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
CONDAMINE	1 Dec	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
COOK - Cairns	13 Oct	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
COOK - Carris COOK – Thursday Island	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
ž	17 Nov	4896	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
COOMERA CURRUMBIN	17 Nov 18 Oct	8160	384000	
DALRYMPLE - Charters Towers	18 Oct	8032	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL) 8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
	14 Oct	8160	384000	
DALRYMPLE - Atherton		6080		8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
EVERTON EEDING CROWE	12 Oct	·	384000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
FERNY GROVE	11 Oct	18160	1023000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
GAVEN	11 Oct	17337	791000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
GLADSTONE	4 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
GLASS HOUSE	8 Nov	n/a	n/a	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
GREENSLOPES CRECORY Empres de	2 Dec	7072	704000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
GREGORY - Emerald	9 Dec	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
GREGORY - Longreach	7 Dec	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
GYMPIE HEDVEY DAY	1 Nov	4992	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
HERVEY BAY	10 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
HINCHINBROOK	20 Oct	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
INALA	20 Oct	n/a	n/a	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
INDOOROOPILLY	18 Oct	8598	1021000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
IPSWICH NEGT	8 Dec	1757	775000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
IPSWICH WEST	9 Dec	5056	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
KALLANGUR	10 Nov	8160	384000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
KAWANA	9 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
KEPPEL	3 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)

Notes

- Cook Thursday Island electorate office does not have IT hardware on-site. It is located in Cairns.
- As noted earlier, speed testing was conducted by the ISP. Entries listed as "n/a" are a result of either
 - the electorate office computer equipment not being powered on when the ISP attempted to conduct its test; or the ISP inadvertently failed to record the outcome of the test.

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UPGRADE OF ELECTORATE OFFICE COMPUTER EQUIPMENT AND DATA COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Site Name	PC and LAN	Tested Download	Tested Upload	Nominal Broadband Product
Site Fullie	Upgrade	Speed in kb/s	Speed kb/s	Description
	Complete	~ [~F****	
	•			
LOCKYER	12 Nov	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
LOGAN	16 Nov	22195	1021000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
LYTTON	1 Nov	18819	963000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
MACKAY	1 Dec	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
MANSFIELD	30 Nov	13780	743000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
MAROOCHYDORE	8 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
MARYBOROUGH	11 Nov	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
MERMAID BEACH	20 Oct	6649	596000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
MIRANI	2 Dec	8032	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
MOGGILL	6 Dec	9636	1023000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
MORAYFIELD	9 Nov	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
MOUNT COOT-THA	21 Oct	7616	384000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
MOUNT ISA – Mount Isa	22 Sep	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
MOUNT ISA - Cloncurry	23 Sep	8032	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
MOUNT OMMANEY	19 Oct	7200	864000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
MUDGEERABA	12 Oct	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
MULGRAVE	12 Oct	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
MUNDINGBURRA	18 Oct	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
MURRUMBA	11 Nov	8032	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
NANANGO	20 Sep	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
NICKLIN	3 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
NOOSA	2 Nov	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
NUDGEE	8 Dec	12141	782000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
PINE RIVERS	9 Dec	18386	989000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A) 24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
PUMICESTONE	11 Nov	1504	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL2+A)
REDCLIFFE	6 Dec	6560	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
REDLANDS	4 Nov	8160	384000	
	<u>_</u>	7616	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
ROCKHAMPTON	2 Nov	\$		8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
SANDGATE	7 Dec	n/a	n/a	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
SOUTH BRISBANE	16 Nov	12209	782000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
SOUTHERN DOWNS	18 Nov	3128	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
SOUTHPORT	14 Oct	8160	693000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
SPRINGWOOD	15 Nov	8160	811000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
STAFFORD	14 Oct	11456	384000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
STRETTON	1 Dec	11707	1021000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
SUNNYBANK	18 Nov	12422	937000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
SURFERS PARADISE	21 Oct	7616	789000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
THURINGOWA	21 Oct	16961	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
TOOWOOMBA NORTH	29 Nov	16961	807000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
TOOWOOMBA SOUTH	30 Nov	19030	997000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
TOWNSVILLE	22 Sep	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
WARREGO - Roma	16 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
WARREGO - St George	17 Nov	n/a	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
WATERFORD	18 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
WHITSUNDAY	30 Nov	8160	384000	8Mbps/384kbps (ADSL)
WOODRIDGE	19 Nov	14027	789000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)
YEERONGPILLY	22 Oct	6693	693000	24Mbps/1Mbps(ADSL2+A)

Note:

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- b) The ISP inadvertently failed to record the outcome of the test.