



# **ESTIMATES COMMITTEE E**

## **Report to the Legislative Assembly of Queensland**

Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry  
Department of Natural Resources  
Department of Mines and Energy

Estimates Committee E  
Report No. 1  
8 October 1996

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## **Report No. 1 to the Legislative Assembly of Queensland**

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## **CHAIRMAN**

Mr J A Elliott, MLA  
(Member for Cunningham)

## **DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

Hon. A McGrady, MLA  
(Member for Mount Isa)

## **MEMBERS**

Hon. R J Gibbs, MLA  
(Member for Bundamba)

Mr G E Malone, MLA  
(Member for Mirani)

Mr H Palaszczuk, MLA  
(Member for Inala)

Mr T D Radke, MLA (*to 24 September 1996*)  
(Member for Greenslopes)

Miss F Simpson, MLA (*from 24 September 1996*)  
(Member for Maroochydore)

## **RESEARCH DIRECTOR**

Mr G Kinnear

## **RESEARCH OFFICER**

Mr A Timperley

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## REPORT TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

### Introduction

- 1 On 13 September 1996, the Legislative Assembly referred to the Committee, for examination and report, the proposed expenditure contained in the *Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1996* for the organisational units within the portfolios of the following Ministers—
  - Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry
  - Minister for Natural Resources
  - Minister for Mines and Energy
- 2 In accordance with amendments to Sessional Orders on 24 September 1996, Miss F Simpson, MLA replaced Mr T Radke, MLA as a Member of the Committee. During various stages of the public hearing of 24 September 1996, Mr T Mulherin, MLA substituted for the Hon. R Gibbs, MLA.
- 3 The Committee conducted a public hearing on 24 September 1996 to receive evidence from the Honourable T Perrett, MLA, Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry, the Honourable H Hobbs, MLA, Minister for Natural Resources and the Honourable T Gilmore, MLA, Minister for Mines and Energy regarding proposed expenditure with their portfolios.
- 4 Answers to questions on notice asked prior to the hearing and answers to questions on notice and additional information received as a result of questions asked during the public hearing are presented separately in an additional volume of information.
- 5 The Committee draws the attention of the Legislative Assembly to the following matters which arose during consideration of the Estimates.

## Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry

### Introduction

- 6 The Committee examined proposed expenditure of \$360,519,000 for 1996–97.
- 7 Major new initiatives include—
  - funding of \$5,100,000 for rural industry and research;
  - provision of \$3,700,000 for rural industry research and enhanced information services;
  - allocation of \$2,600,000 for fisheries management and protection; and
  - provision of \$2,500,000 for papaya fruit fly

**Corporate Service Agency**

- 8 The Minister informed the Committee that the cost of running the corporate sector of the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry (DPI) had been quite a concern when he became Minister. In an effort to reduce costs and put service delivery staff back into areas where they are needed, a Corporate Service Agency has been established. The Deputy Director-General advised the Committee that the Corporate Service Agency (CSA) was designed to ensure that significant economies of scale are achieved through utilising the combined resources of the old Lands Department as well as those which resided in the previous Department of Primary Industries.
- 9 The CSA is expected not only to service the corporate service, that is, the transaction type of corporate service requirements of both DPI and the Department of Natural Resources, but it is hoped that it will provide a model which will attract interest from other agencies and perhaps be a model right across the public sector. The actual budget allocated to the agency during 1996–97 is \$13m, with the allocation being split equally between the two departments. The Committee notes that the total number of people employed in the CSA is currently 268 and that a target for a 5 per cent reduction in these numbers exists for the coming year.

**Regional Structure of the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry**

- 10 The Minister was questioned regarding whether there have been, or whether there are plans for any changes to the regional structures of DPI. The Minister indicated that the regional structure of DPI had been an experiment that in Queensland, like in other States, did not work as it had been hoped it would. From his own experience and from talking to people within industry, the Minister observed that regionalisation had created five smaller departments within one department, which certainly gave the opportunity for bureaucracy to thrive.
- 11 The Deputy Director-General advised the Committee that two layers of management from the regions have been removed. Savings of around \$1m per year have been achieved by taking out the line of regional directors and their support staff. To ensure coordination across the regions, positions which previously related to a management line function in the Agriculture Business Group of the organisation were redesignated as positions called Rural Service Coordinators. The Committee notes that these officers will ensure that there is coordination of client services in the regions and that all of the delivery functions of the organisation will target clients.

**Service delivery to beef producers**

- 12 In response to a question from the Committee regarding enhancement of service delivery to beef producers, the Minister informed the Committee that it is widely recognised by the beef industry that it is crucial that there are sufficient front-line departmental staff to ensure that the results of research and development are quickly made available and used by producers. A new initiative involving 12 new positions with an investment of \$502,000 has been provided in the Budget as part of this process.

- 13 Furthermore, the Minister advised the Committee that three new extension officer positions have been created to boost the front-line services to the beef industry. Officers are being appointed to Mount Isa, Bowen and Rockhampton. These locations were chosen to increase the level of service to rural areas where the need was greatest and where there existed the greatest opportunity for benefit. The officer at Mount Isa will overcome the problem of irregular service to the more remote areas in far-western Queensland such as Camooweal and Boulia. The Bowen district will have a new officer with skills in business management and financial planning to meet the high demand for this expertise in that area. A new officer at Rockhampton, based at the Tropical Beef Centre, will improve the quality and timeliness of information delivery to central Queensland producers.

### **Papaya Fruit Fly and other exotic pests**

- 14 The Minister informed the Committee that the Government has provided additional funding this year to implement a comprehensive monitoring system for exotic fruit flies. An intensive trapping grid targeting papaya fruit fly and other fruit flies has been put in place in all major horticulture areas across the State. The fruit fly monitoring activity will provide employment for more than 13 full-time staff equivalents engaged in the placement and servicing of the traps throughout the State and the identification of the pests detected. The surveillance program will provide an early warning of any exotic fruit fly or other pest incursion and ensure that a timely response to any detection will be possible.
- 15 With respect to papaya fruit fly, the Minister advised the Committee that over \$8m was spent in 1995–96 on various activities in north Queensland. Furthermore, the Committee notes that the response to the papaya fruit fly incursion has contributed positively to the labour market in north Queensland. A total of 75 full-time and 309 casual staff have been employed on eradication, monitoring and quarantine surveillance. The Minister advised the Committee that the eradication program has achieved outstanding success to date, and the probability of complete eradication of the pest is now very high. Furthermore, the lack of detection of the papaya fruit fly in other States is also a measure of the success of the quarantine restrictions imposed on the movement of fruit.

### **Forest Industry**

- 16 In response to questioning regarding whether Forestry Commercial is earmarked for privatisation as outlined in the FitzGerald Commission of Audit, the Minister informed the Committee that any changes to the forest industry should not be detrimental to the people who rely on the industry for their living. The Acting Executive Director (Forestry) advised the Committee that a number of options exist for the management of the Crown's commercial forestry operations in Queensland. They range from its current commercialisation within DPI, to corporatisation under the *Government Owned Corporations Act 1993* or to full privatisation. The Acting Executive Director indicated that the experience of other States and in New Zealand suggests that privatisation of forestry operations is a difficult exercise, particularly when native forest property rights are involved.

- 17 Furthermore, the Acting Executive Director advised the Committee that an implementation office within the Treasury Department is about to explore the recommendations of the FitzGerald Commission of Audit report and DPI will be inputting into those deliberations with regard to this matter.

### **Aquaculture Industry**

- 18 The Minister informed the Committee that the Government's policy of making aquaculture development a priority has been supported by recent departmental forecasts which indicate that the value of aquaculture product in Queensland may increase from \$36m in 1994–95 to over \$120m by the year 2000, and some \$225m by the year 2005. Furthermore, by the year 2005, aquaculture is likely to be employing a significant number of Queenslanders in regional areas.
- 19 The greatest contributor to the value of aquaculture is the marine prawn sector, with black tiger and kuruma prawns accounting for \$21.77m of the current gross value estimates and \$156m of the gross value forecasts for the year 2005. Pearl oyster, barramundi and red claw crayfish are also significant contributors. The Minister also asserts that the industry is expected to further expand through the development and production of technologies for new species such as eels, marine fin fish and fresh water species.
- 20 The Acting Executive Director (Fisheries) informed the Committee that aquaculture expansion is creating a lot of attention from investors and that DPI is carrying out collaborative work with investors in the area of aquaculture developments and also with respect to some research into aspects of new species, nutrition and health.

### **Department of Natural Resources**

#### **Introduction**

- 21 The Committee examined proposed expenditure of \$496,095,000 for 1996–97.
- 22 New initiatives include—
- water infrastructure Capital Works Program
  - research, development and enhancement of pestweed and animal control programs
  - tree clearing policies, guidelines and accurate baseline data
  - completion of the automation of the land titling process

#### **Privatisation of Water Providers**

- 23 Inquiries were made by the Committee regarding the FitzGerald Commission of Audit recommendations to privatise or corporatise water providers. The Minister advised the Committee that there was general support for the concepts enunciated in the audit report. The Minister acknowledged that currently water boards were doing a good job. However, he advocated some element of corporatisation or privatisation of water providers if greater
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efficiencies could be achieved, but only with extensive consultation with local communities. It was stressed that with any form of private investment in water infrastructure, water prices would rise in line with the CPI, unless Cabinet approved otherwise. Water pricing would be kept at a level that is acceptable to the whole community.

### **Body Corporate and Community Management Legislation**

- 24 In response to a question regarding the timing of the introduction of Body Corporate and Community Management legislation into the Parliament, the Minister informed the Committee that the Bill would be introduced in early 1997 with a view to it commencing within the first half of 1997.
- 25 The legislation addresses four main regulatory areas relating to predominately residential owner-occupied developments, holiday letting, hotels, serviced apartments, and the commercial and industrial developments of six lots or less. The legislation will allow for more feasible use of community titles and provide for improved dispute resolution.
- 26 The Committee notes the Minister's explanation that the delay in the draft Bill being available to the public (originally planned for release in July 1996) was the result of drafting delays in the Office of Queensland Parliamentary Counsel due to competing priorities.
- 27 The draft Bill will be released in December 1996 as part of an extensive public consultation process to allow various stakeholders such as industry bodies, including, for example, unit owners, associations, and the Body Corporate Managers Institute, the opportunity to become aware of the substantial differences between the new legislation and the existing 1980 Act.

### ***Land Title Act 1994***

- 28 Information was sought by the Committee regarding changes to the *Land Title Act 1994* relating to the issuing of duplicate certificates of titles at the time of transaction when freehold is registered.
- 29 The Minister advised the Committee that amendments he initiated to Section 42 of the Act require the Registrar of Titles to issue a certificate of title for mortgaged land if one is requested by the registered owner and the registered mortgagee consent to the issue of the certificate of title. These amendments have reduced the concerns of those who were previously unable to request a certificate of title because their land was mortgaged. This initiative was introduced without imposing new fees and no additional costs to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

### **Locust and Mice Plagues**

- 30 Funds amounting to \$2.561m have been outlaid for plague locust control. Questions were raised during the hearing regarding the level of additional resources allocated this financial year

to control potential plague pests such as locusts and mice. The Minister stated that approximately \$900,000 will be made available for swarm control during 1996–97.

- 31 Furthermore, additional research staff will be appointed to develop suitable rodenticide and long-term integrated methods for limiting the potential for mice plagues. Some \$150,000 will be allocated each year for the next five years. A Plague Pest Advisory Committee has been established with representation from industry and local government.

### **Strategic control of critical weeds**

- 32 The Committee notes that the initial on-ground strategic control of critical weeds will be completed by June 2000. Accordingly the Minister was requested by the Committee to outline the resources to be utilized to combat the devastating impact of weed infestations.
- 33 In response, the Minister stated that Government has allocated in excess of \$3.5m in 1996–97 for the continuation of the Strategic Weed Eradication and Education Program (SWEEP). The funding allocation will provide for at least 80 officers involved in hands-on eradication of weed infestations such as alligator weed, senegal tea and siam weed and the removal of established weeds such as rubber vine, prickly acacia and mesquite.
- 34 During 1996–97, there will be a need for follow-up treatment of control areas if the full benefits of SWEEP are to be realised. Control projects are resourced as part of a collaborative arrangement with land holders and local government. There is the potential for complementary additional funding as part of the National Weed Strategy.

### **Commercialisation of State Water Projects**

- 35 The Minister was asked to explain how DNR will respond to proposals to commercialize State water projects in line with the water industry reform agenda as outlined in the 1994 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) intergovernmental agreement.
- 36 In response, the Minister stated that Cabinet recently approved a submission on water industry reforms in Queensland, including commercialization of Government service delivery. The reforms are progressing in consultation with all stakeholders, including water users, local authorities and Government departments. Furthermore, the Minister explained that the FitzGerald Commission of Audit has recommended corporatisation of the water service supply currently being delivered by the State Water Projects Unit in DNR. Cabinet has agreed that the management of DNR's water service delivery will be in a fully commercial organisational structure within DNR by July 1997. Commercialization is aimed at improving services to clients while enhancing budget outcomes through the introduction of best business practice.

**Tertiary Treatment of Sewage Effluent**

- 37 Information was sought by the Committee as to what means exist in the Budget for the Minister to encourage and enforce the introduction of tertiary treatment of sewage effluent by local councils.
- 38 The Minister informed the Committee that local councils will be encouraged, through education programs, to participate in schemes for tertiary treatment of sewage effluent for industrial, agricultural and recreational use. Funds will be available from the local government subsidy scheme. In addition, funding is available from within DNR for the study of water and waste water infrastructure in Queensland.

**Dam Safety**

- 39 Questions were directed to the Acting Director-General of DNR regarding dam safety standards and the number of categories of dams in Queensland subject to these standards.
- 40 In reply, the Acting Director-General explained that all referable dams in Queensland are subject to dam safety standards. Dams of a certain height or hazard category are required to be safe under current legislation. There are over 700 dams in this category.
- 41 Further information was sought regarding procedures for dam safety inspections. The Acting Director-General advised the Committee of an ongoing program to ensure State-built dams are safe. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of owners of other dams (those not owned by the State) to ensure safety regulations are met. DNR has monitoring programs, and education programs to advise the private sector of safety requirements.

**Water Property Rights**

- 42 Inquiries were made regarding the practice of implementing water property rights that are separate from land title. The Minister explained that under the COAG agreement, a commitment has been made by the Government to have water property rights separated from the land, and valuations adjusted accordingly. This practice will be introduced over the next two years. Before a system of water rights can be introduced, a Water Allocation Management Plan has to be commenced. Funding for this initiative has increased from \$500,000 in 1995-96 to \$2.5m in 1996-97.

**Proposed Natural Resources Management Bill**

- 43 Questions about the proposed Natural Resources Management Bill were raised by the Committee regarding the Government's powers to reject applications for irrigation licences and to deal with any resulting litigation.
- 44 The Minister replied that there is a need for the State Government to have some flexibility in relation to receipt of licence applications involving sensitive issues of this type. However, the
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Minister stated that it would not be right to have legislation that allows the Minister to reject an application out of hand without some justification. There must be checks and balances to allow fair treatment for all applicants and to let applicants have their fair day in court. Furthermore, the Minister stated that there is a need for some change and those issues raised by the Committee would be addressed when those changes were made.

## **Maps**

- 45 The Committee notes the achievements of DNR in relation to increased production of maps from 61 maps produced in 1995–96 to a proposed 88 maps in 1996–97 with no increase in staffing levels or funding. The Minister advised the Committee that advanced technology in mapping has enabled new maps known as image maps to be developed to replace topographic line maps. Topographic maps take up to 10 months to be produced manually at a cost of \$60,000 per map. On the other hand, image maps are produced by using computerised methods in less than 2 months at a cost of only \$7,000 per map.

## **Tree Clearing Guidelines**

- 46 The Minister was asked whether tree clearing guidelines would be made available by June 1997 and whether the guidelines would be applied Statewide. In response, the Minister indicated that the guidelines were likely to be released by June 1997. The original target of June 1996 was not able to be met due to the fact that further consultation was necessary to ensure the guidelines were acceptable to the community as a whole.
- 47 The Minister stated that regional clearing groups have been involved in the consultation and development process with the Statewide Trees Group and to this date, positive results have been produced. Further clarification was sought as to the need for committees established within DPI and the Department of Environment to investigate tree clearing guidelines when DNR was the lead agency on the issue of tree clearing. The Minister responded that there was not a need for these committees to investigate the issue and that the State Trees Group will in fact develop and implement the guidelines although expertise of other departments will be utilised if necessary.

## **Native Title Unit**

- 48 Information was sought from the Minister in relation to DNR's capacity to process the increase in native titles from 91 claims in 1995–96 to an expected 200 claims in 1996–97.
- 49 The Minister stated the Native Title Unit in DNR collates the Queensland Government's response to native title claims. An interim database within the unit records all native title claims as notified by the National Native Title Tribunal. Copies of maps produced by the unit are provided to the National Native Title Tribunal, on a 50 per cent cost share arrangement. Expenditure in DNR totalled \$600,000 in 1995–96 and around \$1.3m has been allocated in 1996–97.

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## Department of Mines and Energy

### Introduction

50 The Committee examined proposed expenditure of \$315,024,000 for 1996–97.

51 New initiatives include—

- allocation of funds for Moura Inquiry recommendations implementation;
- provision of funds for acquisition of airborne geoscience information (AIRDATA project);
- provision of funds for solar hot water rebate scheme; and
- allocation of funds for restructure of the electricity supply industry.

### Reticulated Power North of the Daintree

52 The Minister was requested to inform the Committee of the status of reticulated power north of the Daintree. In response, the Minister stated that the process for power north of the Daintree was continuing and the planning phase is near completion. Current calculations for a hybrid scheme, which involves some overhead and some underground power supply, ranges from \$8,300 per customer lot. That is predicated on the connection of 1,025 customers over a 40-year period. For the connection of 620 customers over the same 40-year period, the capital cost of connection per customer will be \$13,800. The Minister anticipates that taking into account generational change, just over 1,000 lots will be connected within 40 years.

53 The method of charging will include a capital payment by the corporation and an initial capital payment by the customer. For example, in the first instance, the customer would pay \$4,150 and so would the corporation. In the second instance, the customer and corporation would put up capital of \$6,900 each per connection.

### Revised Eastlink Proposal

54 The Minister informed the Committee that he was not in a position to speculate on the additional cost of his Government's revised Eastlink proposal compared to the proposal of the previous Government. The Committee notes the Minister's explanation that the revised proposal will certainly cost something more. The Minister explained that extra costs will be offset by cheaper costs for the export of power south of the border and economic benefits to coal producers in the Surat and Millmerran basins by having greater access to the Eastern State Grid.

55 With reference to the proposed route of the revised proposal, the Minister advised the Committee that there are 2 or 3 options that are available and that the corridor would not be determined before January/February 1997. The Minister explained that the revised proposal will be longer than its predecessor as it will travel as much as possible through Crown lands. Wherever possible the proposal will not utilise private property in preference to Crown

forestry reserves. However, the Minister stated that as a last resort the revised proposal is going to have to cross some freehold land.

### **Funding for Mines Inspectorate**

- 56 The Committee inquired about the provision of funds being available to implement recommendations for the reform of the mines inspectorate in line with the Moura implementation process.
- 57 The Minister stated that the Warden's report containing recommendations for changes to the inspectorate has yet to be released. However, in expectation of significant changes, the Minister has indicated to Cabinet that some \$2m extra will be required to properly fund the new inspectorate.
- 58 The Committed noted that a budget line item in the estimates did not exist for this proposed expenditure. In response, the Minister reassured the Committee of his Government's commitment to fulfil its obligations under the Moura implementation process and that the Cabinet decision on the funds will be part of the mid-year Budget review. The issue was not addressed in this Budget as the report containing the recommendations for reform of the mines inspectorate is yet to be released.

### **Queensland Coal Board**

- 59 Details were sought by the Committee relating to plans for the balance of funds of the Queensland Coal Board upon the Board's cessation and how Queensland Coal Board functions will be administered in future years.
- 60 The Minister stated that it was Government policy to cease the operations of the Coal Board. However, a number of functions of the Board will continue, with a statistical function to be performed by DME. Furthermore, the Coal Industry Fund currently holds \$3.125m and the Coal Miner's Severance Fund holds \$5.479m. The Minister advised the Committee that both funds will continue to be maintained for their prescribed functions.

### **Energy Innovation – Lighting Efficiency Scheme**

- 61 Inquiries were made by the Committee regarding the Domestic and Commercial Lighting Efficiency Scheme. In reply, the Minister stated that the schemes had been cancelled as they were expensive to operate and of doubtful value. The domestic lighting scheme was costing \$50 for every application for a \$5 light bulb. For 1995–96, under the Commercial Lighting Efficiency Program, there were four applications, each costing \$13,250 to administer. In terms of compact fluorescent lights, there were 222 rebates which totalled \$12,500. Each of those payments cost DME \$50 to process.

**Native Title Claims**

- 62 Questions were asked in relation to the impact of native title claims on the processing of mining leases, explosion permits and mineral development licenses (MDLs) and associated costs of native title administration within DME. The Minister advised that at the end of August 1996, grants of 74 mineral leases and 20 MDLs were delayed by native title uncertainties. Furthermore, \$170,000 has been set aside for native title administration and the needs for further funds will be examined in the mid-year Budget review.

**Departmental Savings**

- 63 The Committee notes that as part of the change of priorities for DME, savings of \$13.8m were made through discontinuing some initiatives and from ongoing savings within the department. The Minister explained that the discontinuation of the Office of Energy Management has created savings of approximately \$10m. The Historical Tenures Database has been discontinued and the Extractive Industries Unit temporarily has ceased operations until legal issues relating to funding have been resolved.

**SIMTARS**

- 64 Information was sought by the Committee regarding the amount of revenue the Safety in Mines Testing and Research Station (SIMTARS) expects to raise in 1996–97 from grants and how this compared to the amount raised in 1995–96.
- 65 The Director of SIMTARS stated that SIMTARS expects to achieve between \$809,000 and \$1m of externally funded research this year largely through ACARP, the industry organisation funding research and coal. This compares to about \$113,000 for 1995–96. The organisation's fee for service target in 1996–97 is in the vicinity of \$2.5m. SIMTARS also has a \$2.5m base from the Government for the provision of general services including the support of the mining and energy inspectorate.

**AIRDATA**

- 66 The Committee noted funds of \$1.5m being provided annually over the next three years to acquire geoscientific data through airborne surveys and that DME spent \$3.5m over the past two years on acquiring this data. The Minister identified the causal link between AIRDATA acquisition and geoscientific information and an increase in exploration and, ultimately, new discoveries. It is estimated that returns to the State's economy from Stage 1 of the AIRDATA initiative are about \$145,000 per annum from exploration permit rentals, which is a 57 per cent increase. It is considered to be a worthwhile investment in the future mining potential of Queensland.

## **Coal and Metalliferous Royalties**

67 The Minister was asked whether changes would be made to the coal and metalliferous royalties based on previous arrangements to implement a mid-term review some time in 1997. In response, the Minister informed the Committee that a review of changes made by the previous government would occur with an emphasis on how the royalties are structured. If amendments are required to the structure they will be made after full and proper consideration of the facts. Furthermore, the Minister expressed some concern about the royalty proposal in terms of downstream processing and the consequent effect on other people paying royalties within the State.

## **Electricity Costs**

68 Inquiries were made by the Committee as to whether electricity customers in rural areas will pay more for electricity than customers in the city with the introduction of a competitive electricity market. The Minister informed the Committee that the Government is absolutely dedicated to tariff equalisation so people who reside in remote locations are not disadvantaged. In 1996–97, \$83.5m is outlaid for tariff equalisation payments in Queensland by way of subsidy to the electricity industry.

## **Estimates Committee Procedures**

### **Attendance of Director–Generals at public hearings**

69 The Committee believes that it is essential that Director–Generals of Government Departments be in attendance at the Estimates Committee public hearing. The Committee notes that this was not the case at its public hearing on Tuesday, 24 September 1996.

### **Meeting venues**

70 The Committee recommends that a specific sessional order should only permit meetings of Estimate Committees to be held within the boundaries of the parliamentary precinct.

### **Tabling of documents at the public hearing**

71 The Committee is concerned that documents presented at the public hearing may not be automatically covered by parliamentary privilege for all purposes.

72 The Committee recommends that the issue of tabling documents at the public hearing, parliamentary privilege and the public availability of these documents be considered in any future review of Estimates Committees.



**Invitation of public officials**

- 73 The Committee understands that it is the prerogative of a Minister to determine whether a public official invited to attend the Committee's public hearing will be permitted to attend. However, the Committee feels that if a Minister determines that an invited public official shall not attend the public hearing, then the Minister should be required by a sessional order to inform the Committee, in writing, of the reasons for this decision. Such notification should be required to be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of the public hearing.

**Recommendation**

- 74 The Committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, in accordance with the estimates referred to the Committee, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

**Acknowledgements**

- 75 The Committee takes this opportunity to express its appreciation of the level of co-operation and contribution by Ministers and departmental officers with respect to the Estimates Committee process.
- 76 The Committee also wishes to acknowledge the staff of the Committee Secretariat – Mr Graeme Kinnear, Research Director, Mr Andrew Timperley, Research Officer and Ms Annette Henery, Executive Assistant for their valuable support and assistance during the Estimates process.

**TONY ELLIOTT**  
**CHAIRMAN**

## RESERVATIONS

- 1 Whilst the non-Government members of the Committee endorse the recommendation contained within the body of the majority of the report, we feel it is important to note our reservations in regard to some aspects of the Budget estimates.

### Department of Mines and Energy

- 2 It is quite apparent that the Minister for Mines and Energy, Mr Thomas Gilmore, does not have a true understanding of the role and purpose of the Estimates Committee. The Opposition believes that the role of the Estimates Committee is to allow the Parliament to examine in detail the financial estimates and the role of that particular Department at this time. The attitude of the Minister was one of total non-compliance with non-Government members.
- 3 With regards to questions from Government members to public servants, the Minister was more than happy to allow public servants to answer. However, when a non-Government member directed a question to a public servant, the Minister was reluctant to allow the public servant to answer. This is certainly contrary to the spirit of the estimates procedure.
- 4 I refer to question regarding the 2 SES positions in the Department. The Minister refused to name the female SES officers. This demonstrated that the Minister treated the Committee with contempt.
- 5 I refer to another question concerning an additional payment to the Director of the State Gas Pipeline Unit. The Minister requested that this matter be placed on notice and when the answer was forthcoming, it simply said, 'Yes'. This is not the way in which a Minister should answer questions if he is genuinely concerned about imparting information to Members of Parliament.
- 6 We witnessed another example where a question was asked about the overseas telephone calls on the telephone account of the Director-General in his home, where again the Department is paying the costs of those calls. We believed it was a legitimate question to ask, yet the Minister simply refused to answer.
- 7 We, the undersigned, believe that the Minister has a lot to learn about the way in which Estimate Committee meetings should impart information and we regret his behaviour in this instance.

## **Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry**

### **Secondments to DPI from other Government Departments**

- 8 The Minister was asked by Mr Gibbs to provide details on the number and level of officers on secondment to DPI from other Government Departments.
- 9 We have reservations that 21 officers have been seconded to DPI including two SES position, three AO 8 positions, one AO 7 position and three AO 6 positions.

### **Corporate Service Agency**

- 10 Mr Gibbs asked the Minister to outline the size of the Corporate Service Agency and the cost of operating the unit.
- 11 We are concerned that 268 officers are employed in administrative roles in the CSA at a cost of \$13 million per year.
- 12 This cost is as a direct result of the break up of the Department of Primary Industries into DPI and the Department of Natural Resources.
- 13 We have reservations that the creation of the Department of Natural Resources has resulted in a significant increase in cost to the public.

### **The need for a Corporate Legal Consultant**

- 14 The Minister was asked by Mr Gibbs to advise the committee on the cost of the Corporate Legal Consultant or Corporate Counsel, the function of the position, the number of officers employed in the legal group of the DPI and associated employees.
- 15 We have grave reservations about the need to appoint a legal consultant, on a salary of \$95,000 when DPI already has in place a Legal Services Group with a budget of over \$460,000 and a staff of seven.
- 16 We find it hard to understand why the Minister requires a legal consultant, at significant cost to the public, on top of the Legal Services Group and Crown Law advice.
- 17 It is a matter of concern that, in total, the Minister has a budget for legal advice of almost \$625,000 when the services of Crown Law are included.
- 18 The need for a Corporate Counsel consultant should be reconsidered.

**Mr Chris Nicholls – Ministerial Staffer in Mr Perrett’s Office**

19 Mr Gibbs attempted to ask the Minister a series of questions in relation to Mr Nicholls, a staff member in Mr Perrett’s office.

20 All of the questions Mr Gibbs attempted to ask concerned the protection of public money.

21 During the proceedings of Estimates Committee A, the Treasurer refused to answer questions relating to Ministerial Staff stating that the such questions should be referred to individual Ministers.

22 In answer to a question by Mr Hamill in relation to Mr Nicholls, the Treasurer stated—

*“I think the appropriate Minister to ask that of is the Minister for Primary Industries.”*

23 We note that the Minister considers Mr Nicholls came to him with a respected background as a journalist and that he considers Mr Nicholls to be well qualified for the position in which he is currently employed.

24 The Minister refused, however, to answer the following question from Mr Gibbs—

*“Are you aware that Mr Nicholls forged signatures and falsified documents in order to misappropriate \$3,800 in overtime payments from this former employer? Is Mr Nicholls eligible for overtime payments for work performed in your office? Does he have access to Government credit cards?”*

25 On advice from the Chairman of the Committee, Mr Gibbs asked the following question which also remained unanswered by the Minister—

*“What forms is Mr Nicholls required to sign to claim overtime payments in you office? What procedures are in place to protect public moneys by ensuring that Mr Nicholls’ expenditure has been actually signed by you as Minister? What steps are in place to verify the authenticity of signatures on overtime claim forms and credit card expenses and other expenses?”*

26 The Chairman of the Committee ruled the Minister did not have to answer the question, however we note the Minister’s following statement—

*“Mr Nicholls came to me with excellent references. He is employed at an AO 6 level.”*

Mr Gibbs continued—

*“... are you aware that Mr Nicholls was singled out for condemnation by the Australian Federal Police in a 1994 Senate report and has been found guilty of breaches of journalistic ethics?”*

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- 27 Again, the Minister refused to answer the question and on advice from the Chairman of the Committee, Mr Gibbs moved on to another line of questioning.
- 28 Mr Gibbs returned to the question of Mr Nicholls citing the comments by the Treasurer in Estimates Committee A.

Mr Gibbs asked—

*“In relation to Mr Nicholls, will you please provide a full list of all Government payments made to Mr Nicholls other than his base salary payments. This list should include overtime payments, meal allowances, entertainment expenses, telephone expenses, accommodation expenses, travel expenses and any other expense.”*

- 29 The question remained unanswered and after debate within the Committee on the appropriateness of the question, Mr Gibbs continued—

*“I refer you to the selection criteria covering the appointment of all Ministerial Staff. Point three states a candidate should possess a demonstrated professional integrity with respect to confidentiality. I therefor ask, how can a person charged with various offences including false pretences, impersonation and forgery—”*

After further debate within the Committee, Mr Gibbs continued—

*“How can you possibly defend a situation where a person who was forced to repay nearly \$4,000 in false overtime payments has possibly fulfilled the selection criteria?”*

- 30 The Committee adjourned to discuss the line of questioning and no other questions in relation to Mr Nicholls were asked by the Committee.
- 31 Opposition Committee members have grave concerns that Ministerial Staff would not seem to be accountable for their expenditure in the same way as public servants.
- 32 In this case, the discrepancy between rulings from the Chairman of Estimates Committee A and the Chairman of Estimates Committee E has meant that neither the Treasurer nor the Minister has been made accountable for Ministerial Staff members.
- 33 It is vital that the issue of Ministerial accountability for Ministerial Staff is clarified before the 1997/98 Estimates process.

**Hon. A McGrady, MLA**

**Hon. R Gibbs, MLA**

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## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

### ESTIMATES COMMITTEE E

#### Minutes of private meeting held on 12 September 1996

1. **PRIVATE MEETING:** The Committee met in a private session in room 5.04 of the Parliamentary Annexe at 8.05am.
2. **ATTENDANCE:** Messrs Elliott, McGrady, Malone and Palaszczuk. Also present were Mr Kinnear (Research Director) and Mr Timperley (Research Officer)
3. **APOLOGIES:** Mr Gibbs and Mr Radke.

4. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:** By leave of the Committee, the Research Director proceeded to the election of the Chairman.

Mr Elliott was nominated by Mr Malone, seconded by Mr McGrady.

There being no further nominations, Mr Elliott was declared elected.

5. **PROPOSED RELOCATION OF SCHEDULED COMMITTEE MEETING:** The Chairman raised the matter regarding the proposal that Estimates Committee's E scheduled meeting for Wednesday, 11 September 1996 in Room 5.04 of the Parliamentary Annexe be relocated to the residence of Mr Radke, to enable the committee to form a quorum.

During the committee discussion, Mr Palaszczuk referred to comments regarding this matter made by the Member for Mulgrave in the House on the evening of 11 September 1996. Mr Palaszczuk advised the Committee that he might further raise the matter in the Legislative Assembly this morning.

6. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:** The Chairman called for nominations for the position of Deputy Chairman.

Mr McGrady was nominated by Mr Palaszczuk, seconded by Mr Malone.

There being no further nominations, Mr McGrady was declared elected.

7. **SCHEDULE FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING:** A proposed schedule for the public hearing was circulated by the Chairman.

Resolved, that subject to a proposed amendment to sessional orders to be considered by the Legislative Assembly this morning, the following time parameters apply to the 24 September public hearing:—

**Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries And Forestry**

9.00am – 11.50am (2 hours 40 minutes of sitting time made up of 4 Opposition blocks of 20 minutes and 4 Government blocks of 20 minutes)

9.00am – 9.20am	20 mins	Opposition
9.20am – 9.40am	20 mins	Government
9.40am – 10.00am	20 mins	Opposition
10.00am – 10.20am	20 mins	Government
10.20am – 10.40am	20 mins	Opposition
10.40am – 10.50am	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
10.50am – 11.10am	20 mins	Government
11.10am – 11.30am	20 mins	Opposition
11.30am – 11.50am	20 mins	Government

**Minister for Natural Resources**

12.00pm – 3.50pm (2 hours 40 minutes of sitting time made up of 4 Opposition blocks of 20 minutes and 4 Government blocks of 20 minutes)

12.00pm – 12.20pm	20 mins	Opposition
12.20pm – 12.40pm	20 mins	Government
12.40pm – 1.00pm	20 mins	Opposition
1.00pm – 2.30 pm	LUNCH	
2.30pm – 2.50pm	20 mins	Government
2.50pm – 3.10pm	20 mins	Opposition
3.10pm – 3.30pm	20 mins	Government
3.30pm – 3.50pm	20 mins	Opposition
3.50pm – 4.10pm	20 mins	Government

**Minister for Mines and Energy**

4.30pm – 7.30pm (2 hours 40 minutes of sitting time made up of 4 Opposition blocks of 20 minutes and 4 Government blocks of 20 minutes)

4.30pm – 4.50pm	20 mins	Opposition
4.50pm – 5.10pm	20 mins	Government
5.10pm – 5.30pm	20 mins	Opposition
5.30pm – 5.50pm	20 mins	Government
5.50pm – 6.10pm	20 mins	Opposition
6.10pm – 6.30pm	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
6.30pm – 6.50pm	20 mins	Government
6.50pm – 7.10pm	20 mins	Opposition
7.10pm – 7.30pm	20 mins	Government

- 8. MEMBERS, OTHER THAN COMMITTEE E MEMBERS ASKING QUESTIONS:** Resolved, that leave be granted to non Committee E Members to ask questions during the public hearing.

Moved by Mr Malone, seconded by Mr Palaszczuk.

- 9. TIMINGS FOR QUESTIONS ON NOTICE:** Resolved, (1) that each Committee Member shall submit their questions on notice to the Research Director and on the approval of the Chairman they be submitted to the relevant Minister, and (2) that if the Chairman has concerns with questions on notice then he shall raise that concern with the Member before any decision is made regarding the submission of the question on notice to the Minister.

Moved by Mr McGrady, seconded by Mr Malone.

- 10. MINISTERIAL STATEMENT AT OUTSET OF EACH HEARING:** Resolved, that each Minister appearing before the Estimates Committee E public hearing be permitted to make an opening statement lasting a maximum of two minutes.

Moved by Mr Malone, seconded by Mr Palaszczuk.

- 11. TELEVISION COVERAGE OF HEARING:** Agreed, that televising of the public hearing be limited to file footage taping prior to the commencement of each Minister's hearing.

- 12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:** Agreed, that the next private meeting of the Committee be held on Friday 13 September at 1pm in the Conference Room on Level 15 of the Parliamentary Annexe.

- 13. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 8.45pm.

**CONFIRMED:**

**Tony Elliott  
Chairman  
13 September 1996**



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## Minutes of private meeting held on 13 September 1996

1. **PRIVATE MEETING:** The Committee met in a private session in the committee room on Level 15 of the Parliamentary Annexe at 1.15pm.
2. **ATTENDANCE:** Messrs Elliott, McGrady, Malone and Palaszczuk. Also present were Mr Kinnear (Research Director) and Mr Timperley (Research Officer)
3. **APOLOGIES:** Mr Gibbs and Mr Radke.
4. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 September 1996 (No.1) were confirmed.  
Moved by Mr Malone, seconded by Mr Palaszczuk.
5. **REVISED SCHEDULE FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING:** A revised schedule for the public hearing was circulated by the Chairman.

Resolved, that the following time parameters apply to the 24 September public hearing:—

### Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry

8.30am – 11.20am	(2 hours 40 minutes of sitting time made up of 4 Opposition blocks of 20 minutes and 4 Government blocks of 20 minutes)	
8.30am – 8.50am	20 mins	Opposition
8.50am – 9.10am	20 mins	Government
9.10am – 9.30am	20 mins	Opposition
9.30am – 9.50am	20 mins	Government
9.50am – 10.10am	20 mins	Opposition
10.10am – 10.20am	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
10.20am – 10.40am	20 mins	Government
10.40am – 11.00am	20 mins	Opposition
11.00am – 11.20am	20 mins	Government

### Minister for Natural Resources

11.30am – 3.40pm	(2 hours 40 minutes of sitting time made up of 4 Opposition blocks of 20 minutes and 4 Government blocks of 20 minutes)	
11.30am – 11.50am	20 mins	Opposition
11.50am – 12.10pm	20 mins	Government
12.10pm – 12.30pm	20 mins	Opposition
12.30pm – 2.00pm	LUNCH	
2.00pm – 2.20pm	20 mins	Government
2.20pm – 2.40pm	20 mins	Opposition

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2.40pm – 3.00pm	20 mins	Government
3.00pm – 3.20pm	20 mins	Opposition
3.20pm – 3.40pm	20 mins	Government

**Minister for Mines and Energy**

4.00pm – 7.00pm	(2 hours 40 minutes of sitting time made up of 4 Opposition blocks of 20 minutes and 4 Government blocks of 20 minutes)	
4.00pm – 4.20pm	20 mins	Opposition
4.20pm – 4.40pm	20 mins	Government
4.40pm – 5.00pm	20 mins	Opposition
5.00pm – 5.20pm	20 mins	Government
5.20pm – 5.40pm	20 mins	Opposition
5.40pm – 6.00pm	TEA/COFFEE BREAK	
6.00pm – 6.20pm	20 mins	Government
6.20pm – 6.40pm	20 mins	Opposition
6.40pm – 7.00pm	20 mins	Government

Moved by Mr McGrady, seconded by Mr Malone.

- 6. DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS:** Resolved, that each Member provide a list of departmental officials they wish to invite to the public hearing, and that the Research Director be authorised to include the list in correspondence with each relevant Minister.

Moved by Mr McGrady, seconded by Mr Malone.

- 7. TELEVISION COVERAGE OF HEARING:** Resolved, that Estimates Committee E be consistent on this issue with the majority of other estimates committees.

Moved by Mr McGrady, seconded by Mr Malone.

- 8. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE:** Resolved, that the Committee request in its letter to each Minister, in relation to the submission of questions on notice, that answers be provided, if possible, by 12noon on Friday, 20 September 1996.

Moved by Mr Palaszczuk, seconded by Mr Malone.

- 9. TIMEFRAME FOR PREPARATION OF THE REPORT:** The Committee discussed the time frame in which it would need to operate to enable a report to be finalised and tabled in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, 8 October 1996.

Agreed, that subsequent to the Committee's public hearing on Tuesday 24 September, the Committee shall meet on a day during the period, 30 September and 4 October, to discuss the draft report and at a subsequent time on that day adopt the report. Exact meeting day and time yet to be determined.

**10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:** Agreed, that the next private meeting of the Committee be held on Tuesday 24 September at 7.45am in Room B27 of Parliament House.

**11. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 2.00pm.

**CONFIRMED:**

**Tony Elliott**  
**Chairman**  
**24 September 1996**

**Minutes of private meeting held on 24 September 1996**

1. **PRIVATE MEETING:** The Committee met in a private session in room B.27 of Parliament House at 7.51am.
2. **ATTENDANCE:** Messrs Elliott, McGrady, Malone, Palaszczuk and Miss Simpson. Also present were Mr Kinnear (Research Director) and Mr Timperley (Research Officer)
3. **APOLOGIES:** Mr Gibbs.
4. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 September 1996 (No.2) were confirmed.  
Moved by Mr Malone, seconded by Mr McGrady.
5. **DEPARTMENTAL OFFICIALS:** Mr McGrady raised with the Committee concerns regarding the fact that certain departmental officials invited to the public hearing by the Committee would not be appearing.
6. **APPOINTMENT OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER:** Resolved, that the appointment, by the Leader of Government Business, of Miss Simpson to replace Mr Radke as a member of Estimates Committee E be accepted.  
Moved by Mr McGrady, seconded by Mr Malone.
7. **MEDIA COVERAGE OF HEARING:** Resolved, that television file footage be allowed to be filmed at the outset of each Minister's hearing and that audio coverage be allowed at all times.  
Moved by Miss Simpson, seconded by Mr Palaszczuk.
8. **QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AT PUBLIC HEARING:** Agreed, that answers to questions taken on notice at the public hearing be required to be provided to the Committee by 5pm on Wednesday, 25 September 1996.
9. **ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE REPORT:** Agreed, that on Tuesday, 1 October 1996 the Committee shall meet at 10.00am to discuss the draft report and 2.00pm to adopt the report.
10. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 8.15am.

**CONFIRMED:**

**Tony Elliott**  
**Chairman**  
**1 October 1996**

**Minutes of private meeting held on 24 September 1996**

1. **PRIVATE MEETING:** The Committee met in a private session in room B.27 of Parliament House at 10.56am.
2. **ATTENDANCE:** Messrs Gibbs, Elliott, McGrady, Malone, Palaszczuk and Miss Simpson. Also present were Mr Kinnear (Research Director) and Mr Timperley (Research Officer)
3. **MATTERS RAISED BY MR GIBBS IN THE PUBLIC HEARING:** The Chairman informed the Committee that he believed that questions of a personal nature in respect of an officer were not the business of an Estimates Committee.  
Agreed, that questioning of a personal nature in respect of an officer would not be further pursued at the public hearing.
4. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 11.00am.

**CONFIRMED:**

**Tony Elliott**  
**Chairman**  
**1 October 1996**

**Minutes of private meeting held on 24 September 1996**

1. **PRIVATE MEETING:** The Committee met in a private session in room B.27 of Parliament House at 12.38pm.
2. **ATTENDANCE:** Messrs Elliott, McGrady, Malone, Mulherin, Palaszcuk and Miss Simpson. Also present were Mr Kinnear (Research Director) and Mr Timperley (Research Officer)
3. **QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AT PUBLIC HEARING:** Resolved, that answers to questions taken on notice at the public hearing be required to be provided to the Committee by 5pm on Thursday, 26 September 1996.  
Moved by Mr Malone, seconded by Mr Palaszcuk.
4. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 12.38pm.

**CONFIRMED:**

**Tony Elliott**  
**Chairman**  
**1 October 1996**

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## Minutes of Public Hearing of Estimates Committee E held at 8.30am on 24 September 1996 in the Legislative Council Chamber, Parliament House, Brisbane

1. **MEETING:** The Committee met in public session at 8.30am with the Chairman, Mr Tony Elliott, MLA, presiding.
2. **STATEMENT BY CHAIRMAN:** The Chairman made an introductory statement concerning its consideration of the proposed expenditure contained in the *Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1996* for the areas set out in Sessional Orders.
3. **ATTENDANCE:** The following Members of the Committee were present—

Mr J A Elliott, MLA  
Hon. R J Gibbs, MLA  
Hon. A McGrady, MLA  
Mr G E Malone, MLA  
Mr H Palaszczuk, MLA  
Miss F Simpson, MLA

Also present—

Mr G Kinnear and Mr A Timperley

### 4. EXAMINATION OF PROPOSED EXPENDITURE

#### 4.1 Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry

In attendance was the Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry, the Honourable T Perrett, MLA, accompanied by the following officers—

Mr Roley Neiper, Director-General  
Mr Terry Johnson, Deputy Director-General  
Mr Warren Hoey, Executive Director (Agriculture)  
Mr John Skinner, Executive Director (Corporate Performance)  
Mr Stuart Sanderson, Acting Manager, Corporate Management Accounting  
Ms Christine Pedersen, Senior Policy Officer, Performance Management  
Ms Sue Wedgwood, Acting General Manager, Performance Management  
Mr Gary Bacon, Acting Executive Director (Forestry)  
Mr Kevin Dunn, Acting Executive Director, Animal And Plant Health Service  
Mr John Pollock, Acting Executive Director (Fisheries)  
Mr Peter Neville, Acting Executive Director (Policy And Legal Services)  
Mr John Moore, Senior Ministerial Policy Advisor  
Mr Peter White, Executive Director, Drought And Rural Development  
Mr John Childs, Executive Director, Research Information And Extension  
Mr Greg Shakhovskoy, General Manager, Human Resources

The Chairman declared the proposed expenditure for the Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry to be open for examination.

The question before the Committee was “that the proposed expenditure be agreed to”.

After a short introductory statement by the Minister, the Committee proceeded to the examination of witnesses.

*Suspension of Hearing—*

The hearing was suspended at 10.56am for a private meeting of the Committee

*Resumption of Hearing—*

The Hearing resumed at 11.00am.

At 11.20am, the Committee concluded its examination and the witnesses withdrew.

*Suspension of Hearing—*

The Hearing was suspended at 11.20am.

*Resumption of Hearing—*

The Hearing was resumed at 11.30am.

#### **4.2. Department of Natural Resources**

In attendance was the Minister for Natural Resources, the Honourable H Hobbs, MLA, accompanied by the following officers—

Mr Peter Bevin, Acting Director-General

Mr Jim Varghese, Deputy Director-General, Corporate Development & Services

Mr Peter Philipson, Acting Director, Business Services

Mr Bob McDonald, Acting Director, Internal Audit

Mr Rob Freeman, Executive Director, Land Administration

Mr Peter Noonan, Executive Director, Resource Management

Mr Neil Divett, Executive Director, Land Information

Mr Scott Spencer, Executive Director, Regional Infrastructure Development

Mr Bill Eastgate, Executive Director, Resource Sciences Centre

The Chairman declared the proposed expenditure of the Department of Natural Resources to be open for examination.

The question before the Committee was “that the proposed expenditure be agreed to”.

After a short introductory statement by the Minister, the Committee proceeded to the examination of witnesses.

During the examination, under the amendment to Sessional Orders, Mr T Mulherin, MLA, substituted for the Honourable R J Gibbs, MLA on the Committee.

Mr L Ardill, MLA, by leave, also asked questions.

*Suspension of Hearing—*

The hearing was suspended at 12.34pm.

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*Resumption of Hearing—*

The hearing was resumed at 2pm.

At 3.40pm the Committee concluded its examination and the witnesses withdrew.

*Suspension of Hearing—*

The hearing was suspended at 3.40pm.

*Resumption of Hearing—*

The hearing was resumed at 4pm.

**4.3 Department of Mines and Energy**

In attendance was the Minister for Mines and Energy, the Honourable T Gilmore, MLA, accompanied by the following officers—

**Queensland Transmission and Supply Corporation (QTSC)—**

Mr Keith Hilless, Chief Executive

Mr John Geldard, General Manager, Finance and Administration

Mr Ralph Craven, General Manager, Group Energy Trader

Mr Gordon Jardine, Chief Executive, Powerlink Queensland

Mr Keith Callaghan, Manager, Transmission Environment, Powerlink Queensland

**Queensland Generation Corporation, trading as AUSTA Electric—**

Mr Alan Gillespie, Chief Executive

Mr Ross Holden, Acting Manager, Finance and Administration

**Department of Mines and Energy—**

Dr R (Bob) Day, Director-General

Mr Ken Gluch, Acting Deputy Director-General

Mr Red O'Hara, Acting Director, Energy Monitoring and Regulation Division

Ms Mary Worthy, Acting Director, Administration Division

Dr Gerard Hoffmann, Acting Director, Geological Survey Division

Mr Russell Fisher, Acting Director, Resource Development Division

Mr Malcolm Daly, Acting Director, Environmental Compliance Division

Mr Bryan Coulter, Acting Director, Safety and Health Division

Mr Peter Dent, Director, Safety in Mines Testing and Research Station (SIMTARS)

Mr John Conoplia, Acting Manager, Strategic Planning Branch, Energy Planning Division

Mr Patrick Bell, Principal Policy Officer, Strategic Planning Branch, Energy Planning Division

Mr Peter Chard, Manager, Finance and Property Branch, Administration Division

Ms Karen Taylor, Principal Finance Officer, Finance and Property Branch, Administration Division

Mr John Bywater, Acting Manager, Planning and Technical Services Branch, Environmental Compliance Division

Mr Brian Lyne, Chief Inspector of Coal Mines

Mr John Fleming, Chief Gas Examiner

Mr David Johnson, Acting Manager, Royalty and Statistics Unit, Resource Development Division

The Chairman declared the proposed expenditure for the Department of Mines and Energy to be open for examination. The question before the Committee was “that the proposed expenditure be agreed to.”

After a short introductory statement by the Minister, the Committee proceeded to the examination of witnesses. During the examination, the following Members were granted leave to ask questions—

Mr N Roberts, MLA

Mr J Pearce, MLA

*Suspension of Hearing—*

The hearing was suspended at 5.47pm.

*Resumption of Hearing—*

The hearing was resumed at 6pm.

At 7pm, the Committee concluded its examination and the witnesses withdrew.

**5. Adjournment:** The Committee adjourned at 7pm.

**CONFIRMED:**

**Tony Elliott**

**Chairman**

**1 October 1996**

**Minutes of private meeting held on 1 October 1996**

1. **PRIVATE MEETING:** The Committee met in a private session in room 17.11 of the Parliamentary Annexe at 10.18am.
2. **ATTENDANCE:** Messrs Elliott, McGrady, Malone, Palaszczuk and Miss Simpson. Also present were Mr Kinnear (Research Director) and Mr Timperley (Research Officer)
3. **APOLOGIES:** Mr Gibbs.
4. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the 3 private meetings and the public hearing held on 24 September 1996 were confirmed.  
Moved by Mr Malone, seconded by Mr Palaszczuk.
5. **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AT PUBLIC HEARING:** Mr McGrady raised an issue regarding the adequacy of the answers to his questions taken on notice at the public hearing. Mr McGrady advised the Committee that he would further raise this matter in a statement of reservations to be attached to the report.
6. **DISCUSSION OF DRAFT REPORT:** The Committee discussed various aspects of the draft report including recommended changes and additions.
7. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING:** Agreed, that the next private meeting of the Committee be held at 2.30pm on Tuesday, 1 October.
8. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 11.01am.

**CONFIRMED:**

**Tony Elliott**  
**Chairman**  
**1 October 1996**

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## Minutes of private meeting held on 1 October 1996

1. **PRIVATE MEETING:** The Committee met in a private session in room 17.11 of the Parliamentary Annexe at 2.33pm.
2. **ATTENDANCE:** Messrs Elliott, McGrady, Malone, Palaszcuk and Miss Simpson. Also present were Mr Kinnear (Research Director) and Mr Timperley (Research Officer)
3. **APOLOGIES:** Mr Gibbs.
4. **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:** The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 October were confirmed.  
  
Moved by Miss Simpson, seconded by Mr McGrady.
5. **ADOPTION OF REPORT:** The Chairman read the report putting the question that each paragraph stand part of the report. Resolved, that the report, as adopted by the Committee be tabled on 8 October 1996.  
  
Moved by Mr Malone, seconded by Mr McGrady.
6. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Resolved, that the Additional Information Booklet be tabled on 8 October 1996.  
  
Moved by Mr McGrady, seconded by Mr Malone.
7. **TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING:** Resolved, that the transcript of the Committee's Public Hearing be tabled on 8 October 1996  
  
Moved by Mr Palaszcuk, seconded by Miss Simpson.
8. **COPY OF REPORT TO MINISTERS:** Resolved, that a copy of the report be sent to the relevant Ministers, examined by the Committee, under the cover of a letter from the Chairman.  
  
Moved by Miss Simpson, seconded by Mr Palaszcuk.
9. **MINUTES OF THIS MEETING:** Agreed, that the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of this meeting after consultation with Mr McGrady.
10. **VOTE OF THANKS TO THE CHAIRMAN:** Mr McGrady, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Chairman for the way in which he has performed in his capacity as Chairman of Estimates Committee E.
11. **ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 2.52pm.

**CONFIRMED:**

**Tony Elliott**  
**Chairman**  
**1 October 1996**