



Estimates Committee A

2006

Report No. 1 to the Legislative Assembly

Introduction

1. The Legislative Assembly, by Order of Appointment made on 21 April 2006, referred the proposed expenditure contained in the *Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2006* to Estimates Committee A for examination and report. The Bill provides for appropriation funding for the outputs and equity adjustment of the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service. In accordance with standing order 186(2), the committee is required to report on the Bill.
2. The committee conducted a public hearing on 11 July 2006 to take oral evidence from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. A verbatim transcript of the committee's hearing can be accessed online at: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Hansard/>
3. Prior to the public hearing, the committee put 20 questions on notice to the Speaker. Responses to all questions were received.
4. The committee has considered the estimates referred to it by using information contained in the:
 - Budget papers
 - answers to pre-hearing questions on notice
 - oral evidence taken at the hearing
 - documents tabled at the hearing
 - answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing
 - additional information given in relation to answers.
5. Answers to questions on notice and taken on notice at the hearing, together with minutes of the committee's meetings, are included in the additional information tabled with this report.

Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service

6. The Legislative Assembly of Queensland consists of 89 Members who carry out a range of legislative and constituency responsibilities. For example, participating in the enactment of legislation; debating Government policy and administration; serving on parliamentary committees; representing an electorate; and providing advice and assistance to electorate constituents.
7. The Parliamentary Service provides administrative and support services to the Assembly. The service also provides support services to other external clients under the Shared Services Initiative and actively promotes and educates the community about the role of the Parliament and the Parliamentary process.
8. The following table sets out details of the appropriation for 2006-07 compared to the previous financial year.

	2005-06 \$'000	2006-07 \$'000
Departmental Outputs	59,395	61,542
Equity Adjustment	(3,365)	(3,365)
Vote Total	56,030	58,177

Source: Speaker's Ministerial Portfolio Statement 2006-07, 4

9. The Parliament delivers the output *Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service*. Estimated expenditure for 2006-07 is \$63.123 million.¹ This will be predominantly funded by the output appropriation.
10. Capital expenditure budgeted for 2006-07 is \$2.598 million.²

¹ Speaker's Portfolio Statement 2006-07, 12.

² State Budget 2006-07, Capital Statement-Budget Paper No.3, 97.

Budget Highlights

11. Priorities highlighted in the Speaker's Portfolio Statement for 2006-07 include:

- undertaking a project to video broadcast Parliamentary proceedings over the Internet
- continuing the replacement program for major air conditioning infrastructure
- investigating and implementing water conservation strategies within the Parliamentary precinct
- replacing computer network infrastructure at Parliament House as scheduled
- implementing a single official record of parliamentary proceedings and debates through the integration of Hansard and the Votes and Proceedings
- continuing the safety improvement program on level 7 of the Annexe to incorporate the installation of handrails and emergency lighting upgrades
- investigating an initiative to provide electronic access to all tabled papers on the Parliament's website.

Issues raised at the public hearing

12. The following issues were canvassed with the Speaker at the public hearing on 11 July:

- furniture investigations
- silverware and crockery stocktakes
- provision of first aid kits
- emergency evacuations within the parliamentary precinct
- availability of facilities for media conferences
- water conservation measures
- parliamentary displays for visitors
- preservation and display of the O'Donovan Library collection
- Premier's portrait program and display locations of paintings
- promotion of catering services
- visits to electorate offices
- specialised training courses for electorate office staff

- new enterprise bargaining agreement for the Parliamentary Service
- commercialisation of the e-petitions system.

Recommendation

13. The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the *Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2006*, be agreed to without amendment.

Rachel Nolan MP
Chair
27 July 2006

Committee Members

Ms Rachel Nolan MP (Chair)
Mr Lawrence Springborg MP (Deputy Chair)
Mr Darryl Briskey MP
Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP
Mr Bob Quinn MP
Mr Phil Reeves MP
Mr Craig Wallace MP

Estimates Committee A

2006

Statement of Reservation

Lawrence Springborg MP, Leader of the Opposition

Lawrence Springborg MP

Leader of the Opposition

Leader of The Nationals



27 July 2006

Ms Rachel Nolan MP
Chair
Estimates Committee A
Parliament House
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Ms Nolan

I refer to the report of Estimates Committee A.

I would express the following general reservations in relation to the Estimates Committee Process that led to that Report.

- The whole Estimates Committee process does not enable the detailed scrutiny of the expenditures provided for in the Queensland Budget
- The inappropriate grouping of Departments for each Estimates Committee limits the capacity to pursue whole of government issues
- Insufficient time is devoted by each Committee to the performance of its allocated task of reviewing expenditures
- Insufficient time is devoted by each Estimates Committee to the consideration of Individual Ministerial Program Statements
- The limit on the Number of Questions on Notice able to be asked on each Ministerial Program Statement prevents the pursuit of important issues
- The receipt of replies to Questions on Notice less than 24 hours prior to the actual commencement of Committee hearings limits the capacity to understand the answers and research their failure to provide adequate answers to the questions posed
- The structured nature of Committee proceedings into blocks of questions from Government and Non Government Members which prevent Members being able to follow a line of questioning in a logical and consistent manner to finality
- The limiting of each block of questions to 20 to 30 minutes generally thus preventing detailed consideration of particular issues because of time constraints
- The break-up of time within particular Ministerial Program statements to particular areas of Departments or Agencies thus limiting consideration of particularly important elements of a particular Department or agency
- The capacity of Ministers to answer questions in such a manner as to avoid the issue being investigated

Address: Parliament House
Alice Street Brisbane
Queensland 4000 Australia

Telephone: (07) 3406 7997

Facsimile: (07) 3221 1496

Email: leader@opposition.qld.gov.au

Website: www.springborg.com

- The capacity of Ministers to be provocative, misleading or dissembling in answering questions with an inability of the questioner to challenge such action due to rulings that any challenge constitutes a further question.
- The inability of Estimates Committees to ask questions directly of senior public service administrators
- The use by Government Members of questions to Ministers that enable those Ministers to utilise the time of the Committee to make propaganda statements, grandstand and undertake media stunts instead of addressing issues in relation to proposed expenditures

Whilst noting the Report that has been prepared I would also express the following Specific Reservations in relation to that Report

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

- The failure of Mr Speaker to report to the Queensland Police Service the apparent theft of silverware from the Parliament
- The failure of Mr Speaker to ensure that adequate and up to date First Aid Kits are available throughout the precincts of Parliament
- The failure of Mr Speaker to ensure that appropriate emergency evacuation assembly points are available in the Parliamentary precinct
- The failure of Mr Speaker to ensure that appropriate water conservation measures are applied in the Parliamentary precinct

DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET AND ASSOCIATED AGENCIES

- The failure of the Premier to consult the Integrity Commissioner in relation to his introduction of legislation that legitimated lying to the Parliament by his Ministers and himself
- The failure of the Premier to ensure that Former Minister Nuttall consulted the Integrity Commissioner in relation to land dealings at Sippy Downs whilst Minister for Health
- The failure of the Premier to adequately justify the removal of accountability targets in relation to the operations of the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian
- The failure of the Premier to adequately explain the reasons why his Government and the Co-ordinator General failed to meet Capital works expenditure targets for 2005/06
- The failure of the Premier to adequately explain what Budget provisions were made for the proposed Southern Regional Water Pipeline
- The failure of the Premier to adequately explain what contracts have been let to date for the proposed Southern Regional Water Pipeline

- The failure of the Premier to adequately explain ownership of the water and the costs of supplying water for the Southern Regional Water Pipeline
- The failure of the Premier to adequately explain what the Service Delivery and Performance Commission had achieved in 2005/06 and to outline the costs and staff employment savings targeted to be achieved by the Service Delivery and Performance Commission in 2006/07
- The failure of the Premier to adequately explain what Budget provisions were made for the proposed Western Corridor Water Pipeline
- The failure of the Premier to adequately explain what contracts have been let to date for the proposed western Corridor Water Pipeline
- The failure of the Premier to adequately explain the decision of his government to build a dam at Traveston
- The failure of the Premier to explain what is the true anticipated cost per megalitre of water to be potentially generated by the Traveston Dam
- The failure of the Premier to adequately explain the impact of the construction of the proposed Traveston Dam in stages on surrounding areas including flood control and water release
- The failure of the Premier to adequately explain the time table for preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment in relation to the proposed Traveston Dam.

Yours faithfully

Original signature deleted.

~~LAWRENCE SPRINGBORG~~
Leader of the Opposition

KM/mh