

WEDNESDAY, 16 JULY 2014

ESTIMATES—COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY—LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES

Estimate Committee Members

Hon. FS Simpson (Chair)
Mrs YM D'Ath
Hon. TS Mulherin
Hon. TJ Nicholls
Mr CW Pitt
Hon. JW Seeney
Mr RA Stevens

Members in Attendance

Mr BC Young
Mr SV Cox
Mr PJ Dowling
Mrs EA Cunningham
Dr MA Robinson
Mrs JR Miller
Mrs DC Scott

In Attendance

Mr N Laurie, Clerk of the Parliament
Mr M Ries, Deputy Clerk
Mr M Hickey, Director of Corporate and House Services

Committee met at 8.58 am



CHAIR: Good morning. I declare the public meeting of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly now open. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting today. On behalf of the committee, I welcome to this CLA hearing all members of parliament and the public. At this hearing all members of parliament are able to ask questions of the CLA and the Clerk about the parliament's expenditure and related operations.

As Speaker, I am the chair of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, the CLA—a largely non-voting position. There are equal numbers of government and non-government members on the committee. The other members of the committee are: Mr Tim Nicholls MP, Treasurer and Minister for Trade, as the Premier's delegate; Ms Yvette D'Ath MP, the member for Redcliffe, as Ms Annastacia Palaszczuk's delegate; Mr Jeff Seeney MP, the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning; Mr Tim Mulherin MP, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition; Mr Ray Stevens MP, Leader of the House and Assistant Minister to the Premier on e-government; and

Mr Curtis Pitt MP, the Manager of Opposition Business. We are also joined at the table by the Clerk of the Parliament, Neil Laurie; the Deputy Clerk, Michael Ries; and the Manager of Corporate Services, Michael Hickey.

I am delighted to table a Speaker's report for members to provide an overview of the last 12 months in my role as Speaker and the direction for this current financial year, 2014-15. I have been focused on keeping parliament positioned for the people, on providing continuous improvement in what we do and how we do it and on growing substantial relationships.

Intentionally positioning the Queensland parliament to engage with the people of Queensland has been achieved in part through education, invitation and thought leadership to prompt deeper conversations about why democracy matters. The 2014 Lowy Institute poll found that just 42 per cent of young Australians aged between 18 and 29 believe that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government. That is a concern but not surprising when you consider that what people do not understand they do not value and what people do not value they do not protect or promote. There are more details in the report, which I trust you will take a few moments to read.

In relation to media coverage for today's hearing, the committee has resolved to allow television coverage and still photography until the end of the chair's opening statement, after which time the media may use the parliament's in-house feed provided. The committee has also agreed to the live broadcast of the hearing via the Parliamentary Service's website and to receivers throughout the parliamentary precinct.

At this meeting the committee will take questions from any member of the Legislative Assembly in relation to the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2014 for the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service. The proceedings today are lawful proceedings subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. As such, I remind all visitors that any person admitted to this hearing may be excluded in accordance with standing order 208. I ask that mobile phones or pages be either switched off or switched to silent mode.

I now declare the expenditure for the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Can members wishing to ask questions come forward to the microphone and state their name for Hansard. Once members have finished asking questions, can they please move back to the gallery to allow other members to come forward.

I remind the media that, in terms of the resolution of the committee, they are to refrain from taking photographs now as that is the end of my statement. I call the member for Redlands.

Mr Dowling: Good morning Madam Speaker and members of the committee. The CLA has had an oversight role with respect to the parliamentary committee system since the reforms of 2011. What have been the outcomes in terms of engagement with stakeholders and recommendations accepted by the government in this 54th parliament?

CHAIR: I am going to ask the Clerk to respond in terms of how the implementation of these recommendations has proceeded. I call the Clerk.

Mr Laurie: As a gauge of the level of consultation undertaken during 2013-14, portfolio committees have received and considered 2,183 written submissions for their inquiries. Over this period committees also examined at their hearings and briefings a total of 654 public servants and similar officers, 303 representatives of peak bodies, 188 representatives of other groups and 128 individual members of the community.

Overall figures for the current parliament are 4,760 written submissions received, with committees examining a total of 1,209 public servants, 540 peak body representatives, 451 representatives of other bodies and 234 individual members of the community. The number of bills examined by committees was 85 in 2013-14 and 83 in the period from May 2012 to June 2013. That is a total of 168 bills for the current parliament. The number of bills for each of these two separate periods is an increase of around 40 per cent on the 57 bills examined by committees in 2011-12.

In 2013-14, portfolio committees made 442 recommendations other than that the bills be passed. They have to formally recommend whether or not a bill be passed. They have made 442 additional recommendations. There were 124 for legislative amendment and 318 other recommendations. They may be things related to such as implementation or other related issues.

The figures for the period between May 2012 and June 2013 were 521 recommendations other than that the bill be passed—176 for legislative amendment and 345 other recommendations. For 2013-14, of the bills referred to portfolio committees that have been finalised, a total of 198 recommendations were made for legislative amendment or other amendment. Of those 198 recommendations, a total of 127 or 64 per cent were accepted by government. That is, 64 per cent of the recommendations were actually accepted and affected the bill somehow. Some 97 of those were recommendations for legislative amendment. Of these 43 or 44 per cent were accepted. Of the 101 other recommendations, 84 or 83 per cent were accepted by government.

By way of comparison, of the bills referred to the portfolio committees from May 2012 to June 2013 that had been finalised in that period, a total of 221 recommendations were made for legislative amendment or other. Of those 221 recommendations a total of 130 or 62 per cent were accepted by government. Of the 130 recommendations for legislative amendments, 62 or 47 per cent were accepted. Of the 91 other recommendations, 76 or 83 per cent were accepted by government.

I think that these figures demonstrate that the recommendations by portfolio committees are being taken on board by government and there are responses to these recommendations that are, in the main, positive.

Mr Cox: As a first term MP, I was wondering whether the operation of the committee system has had an impact on the length of time spent on debate in the assembly?

CHAIR: As that relates to statistics kept on the amount of debate time, I will ask the Clerk to answer that question.

Mr Laurie: Since the inception of the portfolio committee system in August 2011, the average number of hours in a sitting day has been 11.1 in 2011, 10.34 in 2012, 11.02 in 2013 and 11.05 in 2014 so far. These average hours in a sitting day are less than the immediate three years prior of 11.44 in 2008, 12.18 in 2009 and 12.03 in 2010.

However, it needs to be acknowledged that since the introduction of the new committee system in August 2011, the House has not sat on Wednesday mornings of sitting weeks. They have been dedicated to committee business. This would have also contributed to the reduced sitting hours. I emphasise that we are talking about quantitative hours in this answer. We are not actually talking about the quality of debate that has been affected.

Mrs Cunningham: Page 2 of the CLA's SDS talks about variations in service area staffing levels that are operationally appropriate to the Parliamentary Service and staff. I am sure you would agree that job security is something that is important, not only for the families of the people working here but also for the peace of mind of the people working here. Is there any intention to alter substantially the number of positions at the parliament? Can those people who have full-time jobs feel secure in those jobs or is there an intention for increased casualisation?

CHAIR: As the Clerk is the CEO of the Parliamentary Service, I will ask the Clerk to answer that question.

Mr Laurie: I think the short answer to that, Mrs Cunningham, is yes, from my perspective anyway. We did go through a period, along with the rest of government, when there were cuts to the Parliamentary Service. That was about two years ago. We have been through that. We implemented whatever we were going to do in a quick way back then and then moved on. The assurance that I gave the staff was that we would deal with those matters quickly and move on as far as possible. Certainly we have had no other sort of separations during the year. I think there will always be some scope for variations in work areas and some movement around, but there is no intention for any wholesale VERs or anything of that nature.

Mrs Miller: My question is to the Clerk. I refer to the SDS page 2 which relates to supporting the business needs of the parliament. I draw the Clerk's attention specifically to the Criminal Law Amendment (Public Interest Declarations) Amendment Bill 2013. This bill was introduced on Wednesday, 16 October 2013 with a seven minute speech from the Attorney-General. Then there was a 42 minute debate and subsequent division over the urgency motion that accompanied that bill. Then there was a second reading debate on Thursday, 17 October, which started at midnight and went for two hours and seven minutes.

Can the Clerk provide an estimate on the cost of these activities for a law that was ultimately ruled invalid by the Court of Appeal? By the costs I mean, the costs of the Table Office staff, the costs of attendants, the cost of the overtime for parliamentary staff as well as the cost of security, particularly in relation to that bill?

Mr Laurie: Not off hand, I cannot.

Mrs Miller: I am happy for that to be taken on notice?

CHAIR: I will allow the Clerk to respond.

Mr Laurie: I could go through the exercise of working out how much an hour it costs us to sit, but, to be honest with you, most of those figures are difficult to determine, in any event. For example, the people who work in the Table Office, at the table and some of the attendants are full-time staff so they are on full-time wages. Very few of them get overtime. The deal is that when the House sits the House sits and those people are there.

I am happy enough to provide a notional figure as to how much it costs for every hour of sitting of the House or something of that nature. I do not know if that is actually going to address your question because they are fairly arbitrary type figures.

Mrs Miller: I am happy for there to be a cost estimate, through you, Madam Speaker, particularly in relation to that bill.

Mr Laurie: I am certainly happy enough to provide a global figure on the operation of those areas that you are talking about and how many hours a week we sit. I emphasise that I do not want it in anyway to be misleading. For example, I spend a lot of time on things outside of the sittings of the House. Just because we sit extra on a particular bill does not necessarily mean it is costing the state anything.

Mrs Miller: I am aware.

CHAIR: We will move onto the next question.

Mr Young: Is there any evidence that the internet broadcast of committee meetings are being accessed by the general public?

CHAIR: Thank you very much for that question, member for Keppel. Before I ask for the specific statistics from the Clerk, I point out that I think this has been one of the areas of tremendous achievement of our Parliamentary Service staff. We need to acknowledge the work that they have done, even yesterday with the public hearings and the demand to have access to online hearings through the website and also external broadcast. There has been quite an uptake in this. It is quite an exciting way of opening up the parliament and opening up our parliamentary committees and their hearings to be accessible as possible. I ask the Clerk if he can provide the specific figures.

Mr Laurie: In the 2013-14 year, a large number of our clients accessed either the live broadcasts or the archived copies of the broadcasts. In total, both of those were accessed 82,824 times. The breakup of those hits on the website is as follows: live chamber broadcasts—this is the broadcasting of the Legislative Assembly itself—35,449; archived chamber broadcasts, 10,827; live audio chamber broadcasts—this is the audio only—5,224; committee live broadcasts, 23,986; and committee archived broadcasts, 7,338. As Madam Speaker alluded to just yesterday when we had the estimates process, I am going off memory here but I think it was both the health committee and the legal committee, because they were being done through a different feed, where there were about 400 to 500 concurrent users looking at those and we had to increase capacity to allow more people to access that yesterday.

CHAIR: Member for Cleveland?

Dr Robinson: My question to Madam Speaker refers to page 2 of the SDS of the Parliamentary Services, which states that one of the major goals is to promote the institution of parliament and raise community awareness and understanding of its important role and functions. Madam Speaker, on various occasions you have referred to the work that you have been doing in community engagement about parliamentary democracy and civics. Can you inform us what kinds of activities have been undertaken?

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Cleveland. I would be delighted to discuss what we are doing in that space and to acknowledge, also, the outstanding work of our community engagement and our Parliamentary Services staff. In cooperation with the community engagement staff, the Office of Speaker has launched a series of signature events and initiatives to seek to open up the parliament as much as possible to everyday Queenslanders. At the function for the Queensland Inspiring Women Speaker's Awards, women from throughout Queensland came in, hosted by their local members of parliament and nominated by members of parliament from across the political spectrum. It was a sell-out event. We have had two of those now. We could double the numbers if we had the space. Unfortunately, our function rooms are not that functional. It has been very successful. In the

next month we will be having future leaders' lunches with young students also brought in by their members. We have some facilitation costs in setting those up, with the audiovisual. As I mentioned, the function rooms are not that functional. There are a lot of blind spots. The beauty is that it is about members of the public having access to the parliament. There are all the engagement tools with the youth parliaments that are run with community engagement, which are outstanding. They move throughout the regions. In addition, there are the seniors' concerts and the parliamentary oration, which we launched in the last 12 months. Our inaugural oration was with Sir Leo Hielscher, who has made an outstanding contribution to our state and to the economic history of our state. He was our inaugural speaker. We hosted that here in this chamber. We have also had a twilight toast in Heritage Week to recognise the heritage of this building. We opened it up and had people coming in to listen to guest speakers. We have had a series of those sorts of functions, which are very much about asking how we open this place up and make it as affordable and accessible as possible for people, in cooperation with our members of parliament, because as we know people do love to come here.

I have mentioned the Lowy Institute poll. It is quite disturbing when you consider, if less than 50 per cent of young people in Australia think democracy is the best system, what do they think the alternatives are? We have to have that discussion with people. We have entered into a series of leadership dialogues with young people and taken the opportunity to develop new civic resources, asking how we engage better with another generation. Through leadership dialogues and 'why democracy matters' dinners with young people, there has been tremendous insight and feedback and positive ideas about how they want to contribute. We have launched some videos with those young people able to contribute and speak. I think it is looking at all ways of understanding that democracy is not about delegated responsibility; it is about shared leadership. We all have a responsibility, as members of parliament, not only to promote democracy but also to make it more accessible through access to the parliament and access throughout the regions, understanding that civic engagement requires everyone's involvement to make a democracy work.

There are a lot of great tools and a lot of great work being done here through the parliament. I thank the members who have participated in those particular signature events and who are coming forward with great new ideas as we develop new civic resources for members to use with their students. People do want to be engaged and involved, but we need to make sure that they know how they can do that. Member for Woodridge?

Mrs Scott: Thank you. I understand the need for sensitivity regarding security. Without seeking information that would impinge on security arrangements, will the committee provide details of the security improvements to be carried out within the precinct in 2014-15, along with the total forecast expenditure? You might also comment on how this expenditure compares with previous years. What are the plans for expenditure on audiovisual improvements and are they related to security measures?

CHAIR: I thank the member for Woodridge. I will shortly ask the Clerk in regard to some of the global figures with the security upgrades. I appreciate that all members of parliament want this place to be as safe as possible. It is a balancing act between having safety and also ensuring that we continue to make it as accessible as possible. As a parliament, we have been fortunate over many years to have had a situation where generally things have been looked after and kept safe. However, as you know, in 2012 I launched an independent security review, in cooperation with Parliamentary Services. There were a number of recommendations in those reports. Yes, there are sensitive issues, but they are being dealt with. I want to thank the CLA and Parliamentary Services as we are seeing those recommendations rolling out. You will notice that new speed stiles are being installed, which will soon become operational.

I will make this comment, before handing to the Clerk: we are fortunate that we have not seen the sort of incidents that have occurred in some other parliaments in Australia and other jurisdictions. Last year we did have a break-in into the Parliamentary Annexe. That is on the public record. Those weaknesses have now been fixed, as they should be. I am aware that the New South Wales parliament spent a substantial amount of money on upgrades. We are fortunate we have not had to spend as much as they have had to, but the money that is being spent here in this parliament is well spent, because I cannot think of anything that is more important than ensuring that members of parliament are safe, their families are safe, the people who visit here are safe and we can know that the parliament can operate without threat or fear of coercion or violence. That is what the people's House is ultimately about, that is, keeping it safe for all who come here. I will now ask the Clerk to please provide some details about some of the elements that we can share publicly, because there will be those things that have to be addressed but because of the nature of security will not be

necessary drilled down. Quite a comprehensive independent report has driven these particular upgrades. I will ask the Clerk to answer.

Mr Laurie: Member for Woodridge, I will be very vague about the specific items, if you like, but I will give you global costs. In 2012-13, there were upgrades to various security access controls. We are talking about an extension of the swipe card, proximity readers and things of that nature. There was an upgrade of some internal cameras and things of that nature. That totalled about \$39,171 in the 2012-13 year. In the 2013-14 year, there were some matters installed which included the new screen in the Legislative Assembly chamber. It also included some extra duress alarms in certain locations throughout the precinct and general, what I would call, access arrangements to various places, whether it be new locks or new locking mechanisms or new access codes, et cetera. The speed stiles have been installed but are not yet operational in the Annexe entry. They will be operational shortly. All those various changes totalled about \$214,458 in the 2013-14 year.

In terms of the upcoming budget, we have some further proximity card matters that are under consideration. General security on the outside, for which we are talking about \$60,000, I will not detail for security reasons. The largest expenditure in upcoming years is a replacement of the existing CCTV cameras on the outside of the building, which will be quite a substantial expense, but it will be rolled out over a number of years. That is both a replacement and an enhancement. Many of the cameras that we have on the external of the building are over 10 years old and are due for replacement anyway. They will be replaced, but they will also be upgraded to a higher standard camera. That will be the most substantial expenditure, but it will be rolled out over a number of years. It was probably a cost that we would have had to incur anyway, when those cameras came up for replacement.

CHAIR: Member for Thuringowa?

Mr Cox: Madam Speaker, you may have already touched on this in answer to a previous question, but as a member of parliament from a regional area, Townsville, and in regards to raising community awareness of the parliament, do the Parliamentary Services have any plans specifically for how you will do this in regional centres? You did touch on it a little before, but maybe you could elaborate a little?

CHAIR: I am more than happy to respond to that question, as there are some ongoing programs with enhancements in this area. I think one of the exciting things has been the development of the regional youth parliaments. A number of years ago, this parliament used to go into the regions as a totality. That was quite an amazing exercise. I think it served its purpose for the time. Now what is occurring is that regional youth parliaments are occurring throughout Queensland. We have one in Rockhampton coming up. That is going to be in the locality not far away from the member for Keppel's electorate, with young people coming in from the schools there to participate in that regional youth parliament. They are fantastic. I see how young people step up to the plate. They have an opportunity to have a hands-on experience, but also can get into the question of why. It is not just about the what and the procedures; it is about why these things are important. They will debate issues of importance to them. As they get up and they do that, you can see that the practical opportunity to be involved in these forms of engagement in the regions is terrific.

I am also aware, as other members would be, that one of the challenges with Queensland being so large is that it is costly for a lot of students to visit the parliament. Our welcome mat is always there, but it is costly for them to come here. Therefore, I think taking these regional youth parliaments into our regions is a great initiative and I commend our parliamentary staff for how they facilitate that. We have some excellent educational resources here in our staff. I know from the feedback from teachers, as they go out and engage with upskilling and professional development with the teachers in the regions and deliver these programs, that has been very well received.

Member for Keppel? I hope you will be coming along with your students to the Rockhampton youth parliament?

Mr Young: Most definitely. Whilst on the subject of students entering the parliament, we often see students being briefed in the foyer. My question is this: what is the rationale behind that? Do you find that beneficial?

CHAIR: This is a great initiative that was put forward by Parliamentary Services staff in regard to the new setup with the chairs and the presentation there with the videos ahead of time. While it would be lovely to have a dedicated space, I think it has been a very practical way of adapting this building. I have noticed not only students having their briefings in that area; a lot of people who come through for tours also will take the opportunity of listening to some of the material there and the pre-

briefings from our staff. The number of visits through this place is quite extraordinary and the Clerk might have some specific figures about the level of access. We have seen that, with the engagement tools and using those pre-briefings in that area, it has really added more value to the visit. As I have mentioned, it is not just about the what; it is about the why of democracy. We have this glorious building as well and there is an opportunity to also showcase one of the heritage buildings of this state. Those videos cover everything in respect to some of the key milestones in our democratic history. It is a wonderful way of giving people some greater insights into how our system works and some of the historic events that have occurred in this place.

Mr Laurie: Madam Speaker, you wanted some numbers. In 2013-14, there were 428 school tours with 10,972 students. In terms of the number of other tours, there were 536 tours—we are talking predominantly public tours here—with 5,035 visitors. It might be surprising to know that also in terms of people coming onto the precinct there were 679 functions held on the precinct with 26,027 attendees at those functions. In terms of the parliamentary education activities that occur here on site, there were 78 activities with 2,655 attendees.

CHAIR: I call the member for Redlands.

Mr Dowling: Madam Speaker, I understand that the Parliamentary Library is working on a project to digitise the *Hansard* record. Can you provide any details on this particular project?

CHAIR: I would be delighted to. Before we pass on to the greater detail of this, I think it is worthy to shout out the achievements of *Hansard* in this place because as a more developed democratic state we can take these things for granted. We have neighbours in the Pacific who struggle to have a *Hansard* record, a *Daily Hansard* record, and we have *Hansard* proofs within hours of question time. We have a high regard for the quality of our *Hansard*. It turns 150 years old this year. That is one of the oldest *Hansard* services in the world and that is a great achievement for this state. They achieve a very high level of accuracy. They are probably a little kind to us sometimes when they have to make sure the grammar flows—such as when members are in the heat of their discussions and think they are saying certain things and the grammar needs to be perhaps kindly edited. It is an outstanding service that has served our state well. We will shortly be celebrating that 150 year anniversary at a formal function and you will all be invited. We will send out the invites.

It is one of the great institutional functions that we have here that supports our parliament. People often do not think about these things externally, but you have to have a record of proceedings, you have to have records of speeches. These are not only historic but of current importance. It is one of the best services around and one of the oldest services around.

Mr Clerk, with regard to the digitisation of that *Hansard* record, I know that in the early days there was not that record, so there has been a process going through of trying to ensure that we have the old records updated and available online. That has been worked on progressively. I will ask the Clerk to update us in regard to where that project is at. It means that the ancient records of this place will therefore be more accessible in the most modern way through this digitisation project, and that is being launched progressively.

Mr Laurie: Since 1990, all of our parliamentary proceedings have been captured and made available in digital form. The digitisation of the retrospective or old *Hansard* has been a focus for a number of years. It has been expedited more recently in preparation for the 150th year celebration of *Hansard* in August this year. In 2009 the Library in collaboration with the Parliamentary Reporting Services began digitising reports of the Queensland parliamentary proceedings that were first published in the *Moreton Bay Courier* from 1860 to 1863. Completion of that project coincided with the parliament's 150th anniversary. In the same period, the University of Queensland sponsored a project to digitise Queensland *Hansard* from 1980 to 1990.

Since 2012-13, the Library has progressively digitised and published the remaining retrospective volumes of Queensland *Hansard* series from 1864 to 1979. This involves 282 volumes with an estimated 250,000 pages. It is anticipated that the complete digitised *Hansard* will be available via the internet site to coincide with the celebrations of the 150th anniversary which will be held in August 2014.

Madam Speaker mentioned that Queensland *Hansard* is one of the oldest in the world. Our research indicates that the Queensland *Hansard* is in fact the second oldest in the world after that of Nova Scotia. We actually had an official *Hansard* well before the House of Commons or any other place, except for Nova Scotia. The Library has an ongoing program of digitising valuable and heavily used retrospective publications. After we have finished the *Hansard*, we will finish our other core

parliamentary collections, such as the *Votes and Proceedings*. Our long-term goal is to eventually have everything digitised.

CHAIR: I will go to the member for Bundamba and then the member for Gladstone.

Mrs Miller: My question is to the Clerk. I refer to page 5 of the SDS which is about expense measures. I have noticed, and many other MPs and staff have noticed, quite a number of vehicles in the car parks that are from contractors. Could you advise us whether or not some functions of the parliament have been opened to contestability—for example, electricity, security, plumbing? Given your comments about security and the fact that the parliament obviously has to be careful about security, I was wondering if you could tell us specifically about, for example, the shower heads being replaced in the parliament. Did that go out to contestability, and what security processes were in place for any people who came into the parliament from outside who replaced those shower heads?

Mr Laurie: I should start by saying to the member for Bundamba that, yes, we do have outside contractors who come in to do a range of matters. We have a core staff of our own people, and by 'our own' I also include in that some people who are on contract to us from DPW. However, we also supplement that as the need arises with outside contractors. You would appreciate that there are some things that are far more cost efficient to have somebody from outside do and there are some things that require special skills. For example, in the next little while, there will be the cleaning of the outside of the annexe building which will involve some external high-rise work and we do not have the people with the skills to do that internally so we will contract that out. That will include sometimes things like plumbing.

When it comes to plumbing or anything involving external contractors, there is a process that we go through for giving those people access. That includes in the main where contractors are working in areas of the building that are otherwise private areas—like offices, bedrooms or anything of that nature—they are generally accompanied at all times by security officers of our own security.

Mrs Miller: Just as a supplementary, was the replacement of the shower heads undertaken by plumbers from Public Works or was that undertaken by a private firm?

Mr Laurie: I understand it was a private contractor. I should have mentioned before that contractors are also photo IDed and they are escorted. I think the shower head replacement was done by private contractors.

Mrs Miller: Is the replacement of shower heads a particular skill that the plumbers of Public Works do not have?

Mr Laurie: I can ask the Manager of Property Services how many plumbers we have here from DPW; I am not too sure. Generally, if we are doing a rollout of something like that, it is obviously often times more cost effective just to get it done by an outside contractor. I have been told that we have no plumbers on contract here from DPW.

Mrs Miller: So there are no plumbers—

Mr Laurie: No plumbers.

Mrs Miller: On staff here?

Mr Laurie: I can tell you who we have now at present in terms of onsite trade staff who are engaged via DPW. We have one polisher who is mainly a foreman position, and we have two carpenters, two electricians and one refrigeration mechanic. When it comes to things like plumbing, we would get somebody external in. I dare say it would be cheaper for us to get that through a private sector contractor than it would be through DPW.

CHAIR: We will move to the member for Gladstone.

Mrs Cunningham: Can I just say that I also need to commend Hansard. They do a wonderful job, and I would certainly hope that Hansard in its current form will be retained. I would also like to put on the record—and I cannot speak for anyone else because that would be inappropriate—my personal thanks for IT, corporate services, travel, infrastructure services, whatever they are called, Hansard, catering. Everybody who works in this precinct does an amazing job in terms of providing services, and I also mention the manner in which they provide services and the environment that is created by the staff. I think it is important that we acknowledge that—so thank you, everybody.

There is a proposal to upgrade IT services et cetera including computers in the electorate offices. I would have to say—and I have said it publicly in the parliament—that I feel as an Independent that the CLA acts more for the major parties than it does for the minor parties and the Independents. In terms of the changes to capabilities in our electorate offices in particular, will things

like the CMS and the electoral rolls be retained? I know that the political parties have their own recordkeeping on their constituents, but those of us who are not in major parties use those facilities a lot. Is there any intention of the CLA to further disadvantage the Independents?

CHAIR: Member for Gladstone, before giving you an update in regard to what will happen with the CMS, I would like to respond and say that there is an awareness with members of the CLA about this issue of the CMS, the constituent management system, the database based on the electoral roll, for those who do not have access to some of the systems that, say, the major parties purchase through their parties. This service has been provided historically and a lot of members still depend on it. Even some members of the major parties would prefer to use CMS, but they do have the option of their respective systems—which I think is Feedback for the LNP and Electrac for the ALP. I cannot speak for any other systems that may be out there.

I do know that the old CMS had corrupted. We were finding situations where, because of some of the lack of functionality or problems with updating, errors were creeping in that were of no fault of the staff here. Instead, the errors were because of the clunkiness and the inadequacy of that existing system, and there have been concerns about how to keep it one up to date.

However, I will say from a personal point of view—and I cannot speak for the other members on this—that I believe all members need to have access to an electronic roll. What the format of that is and how that is delivered is something that needs to be considered in terms of how to do that in a way that still meets the needs of all members of parliament. I think it is a tool that members of parliament have a right to have so that they can contact and access their constituents. It must be kept up to date in a way that has integrity, and that was a huge issue with CMS.

I also know that there are a number of parliamentarians who have systems independent of CMS or Feedback and Electrac in regard to their own data management. For myself personally, we have used the Access databank for a number of years that was provided by parliament—it still is—and we have modified it to use it as a constituent management system ourselves because we did not actually think the others had that functionality. In regard to what the parliament is doing to look for an alternative to CMS that can suit the needs of those who are not members of major parties, I would like to ask the Clerk to give us an update in regard to that because I think it is a very valid concern and I understand the needs of all members of parliament to have access to that as a tool in their electorates.

Mr Laurie: In October 2013 the Parliamentary Service briefed the CLA regarding the management of electorate office and constituent data via the CMS. That briefing canvassed a number of issues including the future of the existing constituent management system, which is used in some electorate offices as a tool for constituent data.

The briefing noted that a consultant engaged by the Parliamentary Service to examine information technology infrastructure had recommended that the Parliamentary Service no longer provide or maintain a CMS. I stress that just because a consultant makes a recommendation to us does not mean that we implement it. ITS management had advised, however, that the current version of CMS is essentially the same design as it was when it was first developed in 2002-03 and, because it is not a web based application, the current system requires complete redevelopment in order to extend its useful life beyond 2014. ITS management also noted that the extent to which a redevelopment is warranted and cost-effective depends upon current and future usage.

After some discussion the committee agreed that before making any decisions there would be consultation. Committee members that were party members would advise their respective party rooms, I would seek the views of the cross-benchers around the CMS and I would also investigate whether there were any viable commercial products that we could perhaps purchase, rather than develop something ourselves.

In February 2014 the CLA was provided with additional information regarding the consultation with the cross-benchers, the commercial alternatives and other options to replace the CMS. The CLA asked for the Parliamentary Service, via ITS, to develop a particular option for further consideration; namely, that ITS develop a simple test system that would allow members to continue to receive the Electoral Commission data—the rolls—and host a new simple system for members to review and download the roll electronically. The system would produce data that could be reused by members and EO staff in products such as Microsoft Excel or Access or download for use in a commercially purchased records management system or CRM system paid for members. ITS is due to demonstrate this system to the CLA at its next scheduled meeting in August. At that time I suppose

we will see what the system looks like from a member's perspective and what, if any, additional matters could be implemented.

I have already had an early look at the system that is being developed by ITS. I can understand it, so it is easy to use. It captures the data from the ECQ. It allows members to search that data by defined parameters—addresses or suburbs or ages; all sorts of things of that nature—and it allows Excel spreadsheets, such as addresses and so on, to be sorted from it. We are going to test the system in front of the members in August, but there is an intention to give members a system whereby they can use that data.

Mr Young: Previously we talked about the digitisation of *Hansard*. I understand that there is some work by the library in formulating a database for former members. Can we receive an update on that?

CHAIR: This is a chance to also acknowledge our library services and the work they have been doing. As we know, they do a fantastic job with research, but it is making that information as accessible as possible. I will shortly pass to the Clerk. Before I do that, I think the library service is something members hold very dearly. They know that it is a service that provides a lot of very considered research.

There has been a lot of work done over a number of years with regard to making the online resources as accessible as possible. I think they deserve, like *Hansard*, recognition. As the member for Gladstone acknowledged earlier, there are many parts to the Parliamentary Service and the staff that provide outstanding support, but the library have been doing some really innovative work. I call the Clerk.

Mr Laurie: Madam Speaker, this is probably a good example of some of the cross-collaborative work that we do in the Parliamentary Service. The Remember database was recently updated to include profiles on all former members of both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. The database was a joint project. It was developed in-house by the information management services. The library managed the collection, digitisation and publication of the historical profile of each member and the Parliamentary Reporting Service undertook a significant portion of the data entry of the databases when they were not doing other work.

The library sourced information for each member, primarily from biographical notes written by Duncan Waterson in his publications and biographical profiles written for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Over time the library had also collected some additional hard-copy data on each member, and this was incorporated into the Remember database as the entries were completed.

The database is continually updated with new information. For example, the library is currently undertaking an ancillary project in support of the commemoration of the World War I centenary to identify and publish the war service history of former members. Current and former members are encouraged to contact the library to provide historical profile information. I would really put a bit of a call out there to former members or the families of former members to look at the material that is on the database and to contact us if there is anything that should be on there.

Mrs Scott: I am seeking an update on the very long running parliamentary stonework restoration program, which we sometimes hear into the night, and also the internal painting program for 2014-15 and beyond. Are these programs expected to disrupt any of the operations of the parliament? How can we look at reducing that impact?

CHAIR: We will get a specific update with regard to the allocations and the progress, but I think we all would love to see the stonework finished. It is an ancient building, and it has been an ongoing task to not only restore but also protect it. They did a great job when they built it, but old buildings need significant maintenance and the stonework is not cheap. It has been a process we are all well aware of because of the physical presence of the workers here with their special skills but also, as you have alluded to, the noise that goes on at various times of the day and night. The work is hopefully going to be expedited, but I will let the Clerk update you with regard to the progress on the stonework and the internal painting, because there have been some significant improvements.

Mr Laurie: I started in the Parliamentary Service in July 1993. It was around about the same time as the stonework started here. It is my hope that the stonework is finished before I leave!

CHAIR: It is like a cathedral being built.

Mr Laurie: It is like a cathedral! It has been going now for 21 years or thereabouts. It commenced in 1993-94 and was originally scheduled for completion in 2013-14. It was scheduled for completion last year; however, because of the many variables associated with the work, it has taken

longer than originally anticipated. Some of those variables included taking the workers off site to fix other historic buildings, such as courthouses, at various times.

Since its commencement the program has been funded jointly by the parliament and the department of public works. Historically the parliament contributed \$100,000 per annum and DPW contributed about \$700,000. However, since 2009-10 the parliament has progressively increased its contribution to \$400,000 because we want to accelerate it. We want to get it out of the way. As at June 2013, based upon current levels of funding, it has been estimated that the works will be completed in four years at a cost of approximately \$5 million.

Whilst we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, if you like, some of the more significant work that has to be done will be pretty disruptive, unfortunately. In particular is the centre tower, where the Victoria stained glass window is. That will be a significant item which could take anywhere up to 21 months. That is likely to be highly disruptive to the Speaker's Green as well. So that will take some time. We also have the George Street wing, Speaker's Green side, to finish. And of course after the building itself is done we have to replace the perimeter fencing, which is in a pretty bad state of repair in places.

However, the CLA determined in 2014 that the parliament will contribute \$1.1 million to progress completion, comprising \$100,000 carried forward from last year, its normal \$400,000 funding and \$600,000 transferred from the electorate office relocation program. Being an election year, it was thought best to transfer that money across to the stonework. It is hoped that DPW will also continue to make its provision towards the program, resulting in a total of \$1.8 million in the year. We think this will shorten the completion time frame by approximately six to 12 months. So the CLA has basically taken a deliberate decision to put more money in to try to get this work finished sooner.

In terms of the internal painting, the project commenced in 2010-11 with \$294,000 per annum allocated over three years. As at 30 June 2014 the status is as follows. In 2010-11, seven rooms were painted. In 2011-12, 15 rooms and two corridors were painted. In 2012-13, 41 rooms, 15 corridors and 17 lobbies were painted. In 2013-14, two rooms, one corridor, the cellar and two strongrooms were painted. Approximately \$332,000 will be carried forward into the 2014-15 year to complete rooms such as the media room, the billiard room, the Deputy Premier's office, the red chamber, the green chamber and the main centre staircase.

In relation to the painting, I should just mention that there is a synergy between the painting and the stonework. We do not want to paint internally until we have finished the external stonework. Some of the problems with the existing paintwork is the moisture that is getting through the stonework in the old, unrepaired areas. For example, we will not paint the centre staircase until we actually finish the main turret. There is no use painting it before we do the stonework because the moisture will intrude. Usually, the painting will follow the stonework. One of the reasons we have not finished the painting is that we are waiting on the stonework.

Mr Dowling: I note that through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association the Queensland parliament is twinned with the parliament of Papua New Guinea. What initiatives are being undertaken with regard to that arrangement?

CHAIR: This is one of the ongoing international programs of not just friendship but also practical support to our neighbours. The exciting part of our twinning relationship with Papua New Guinea through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is that these are our neighbours. These are our friends. We have shared history. How much more shared history can you have than Papua New Guinea actually barracking for our State of Origin team?

They are an amazing country, but they have also had terrific challenges. There is a great opportunity for us as a Queensland parliament, through this twinning relationship, to really look at how we support each other, particularly as we have that shared history and our parliament has the resources of staff and members who, through their friendship and practical advice, can provide tremendous assistance. There is great opportunity.

Last year we signed a memorandum of agreement with the Papua New Guinea parliament on behalf of the Queensland parliament. I was fortunate to travel to Port Moresby and, with Speaker Zurenuoc of the Papua New Guinea parliament, to sign that memorandum between our two parliaments. The work had been happening already, but that formalised that relationship. It is very humbling when you see how much respect and regard they have for that relationship, for that friendship and also for that practical support.

We did have assistance through foreign aid with some of those programs, because it is about institutional strengthening. Parliamentary staff have also had significant involvement with regard to providing some assessment of needs and works on which they can provide some expert advice and opinion to the PNG parliament. This is a collaborative thing. It is not about us coming in and telling people how to do things; it is about the needs they have and how we as friends can put some real substance behind that alliance.

I will shortly be travelling with some other members of this parliament back to PNG. We particularly have been working with the committee structure and looking at how we can help support them. Rob Hansen has been assigned to be a liaison officer for our parliament. Rob is doing a great job in that space, because it is about direct relationship. The committees up there have entered into projects to look at how they support their members of parliament with better reports and scrutiny of legislation.

That is a wonderful relationship, and I am proud that this parliament and our members from across the political divide—across the various entities—can do something to support our neighbours. They enrich us as well, by providing greater insight into how the PNG parliament meets the needs of their very diverse country. They have 800 language groups. We think we have issues with distance, but they have some huge challenges. There is a lot we can do together.

I think that brings us to a close. While the time has expired, I know that the members of the CLA and members of parliament want to express our thanks to you, Mr Clerk, to the Deputy Clerk and to all senior and diverse members of our Parliamentary Service who provide wonderful support to us as members. It is really for the belief of what the Queensland parliament is about. For the people of Queensland that you serve through your work, we thank you. This draws this estimates process now to a close.

Committee adjourned at 10.01 am