



## People Of Parliament

### Elected Officers

Elected officers are Members of the Legislative Assembly who are elected by their fellow Members of Parliament to perform traditional parliamentary roles. They include:

- The Speaker
- The Whips

#### *The Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly*

Following a state election, a new Parliament meets. From the 93 elected Members of Parliament, one Member is elected by a secret ballot to become the Speaker of the Parliament. The Speaker is usually a Government Member, because the Government has a majority in the Legislative Assembly and therefore will win the ballot.

The Speaker is the chief presiding officer of the Parliament. That means that the Speaker is in charge of the proceedings in the Legislative Assembly when Parliament is sitting.

The Speaker ensures that all Members of Parliament obey the rules concerning how the business of the Legislative Assembly is conducted and how Members of Parliament behave in the Legislative Assembly Chamber. These rules are called Standing Rules and Orders.

One of the most demanding times for the Speaker in the Chamber is during Question Time. All Members of Parliament are present at this time and this is when the Government is questioned about their policies and actions. The proceedings can become very rowdy and the Speaker has to maintain order.

The Speaker is assisted by Deputy Speakers who preside over the House to allow the Speaker time to attend to their many other duties. These duties include: hosting special visitors and parliamentary delegations from other countries

at Parliament House, and representing the electorate as a Member of Parliament.

### Whip

The term 'whip' comes from an English hunting term 'whipper-in'. This title was given to the person responsible for whipping in the hunting hounds to stop them straying during a hunt. When first used in the English Parliament, it referred to the 'whipping in' of parliamentarians to vote a certain way so that a vote was carried on a certain matter.



*The Speaker's Chair in the Legislative Assembly Chamber.*



There are both Government and Opposition Whips and both have Deputy Whips. Whips are also called party (political party) managers.

The Whips' most important role is to make sure that when a vote is taken in the House, all their Members (ie. all Government Members or all Opposition Members) are present in the Legislative Chamber for the vote. The Whips make sure that their party Members know what is going to take place in the Chamber each day, they arrange for their Members to take part in debates and they supply lists of their party Members to be on parliamentary committees.

### **Permanent Officers**

The Queensland Parliament has a staff of non-political, permanent officers who are responsible for providing assistance and advice to the Speaker, the Chairman of Committees and all Members of Parliament as they carry out their parliamentary duties. They include:

- the Clerk of the Parliament
- the Deputy Clerk
- the Sergeant-at-Arms
- the Parliamentary Attendants
- the Parliamentary Librarian
- the Chief Hansard Reporter.



*Clerk of the Queensland Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie*

### **Clerk of the Parliament**

The Clerk of the Parliament is the highest ranking, permanent, non-political officer in the Parliament. As the principal officer of the Parliament, the Clerk's main role is to give expert advice and guidance to the Speaker and Members of Parliament on the rules and practices of the Parliament. The Clerk sits at the Assembly Table in the Legislative Assembly and is assisted by the Deputy Clerk and other officers of the Table Office.

The Clerk's other duties involve:

- being responsible for the safe-keeping of all the records and documents of the Parliament
- certifying all Bills passed by the Parliament and presenting them to the Governor for Royal Assent
- administering the Parliamentary Service.



*Deputy Clerk of the Queensland Parliament,  
Mr Michael Ries*

### **Deputy Clerk**

The Deputy Clerk is the second most senior officer after the Clerk of the Parliament and assists the Clerk at the Assembly Table during the sittings of the Legislative Assembly.

He is responsible for the Committee Office which provides invaluable assistance to the 10 parliamentary committees. The Committee Office is staffed by parliamentary officers.



*Sergeant-at-Arms of the Queensland Parliament,  
Mr Michael Watkin*

### **Sergeant-at-Arms**

As the bearer of the Mace, which is the symbol of the power and authority of the Speaker and Parliament, the Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for carrying out the orders and directions of the Speaker. He is sometimes known as the policeman of the Parliament.

At the commencement of a sitting day of Parliament, the Sergeant-at-Arms carrying the Mace leads the Speaker into the Chamber. The Mace is placed in brackets on the Assembly Table and remains there whilst the Parliament is sitting.

Other duties of the Sergeant-at-Arms include:

- announcing messengers from the Governor in the Chamber
- ringing of the bells to call Members to the Chamber for the commencement of a sitting day or a division (a formal vote).

The role of Sergeant-at-Arms dates back to 1415, when a Sergeant-at-Arms was introduced into the House of Commons in England, to assist the Speaker in keeping order in the House.

### **Parliamentary Attendants**

The role of the Attendants is to provide support in the operations of the Parliament. They perform many duties both inside the Chamber and out. These services include:

- providing a messenger service for the Members in the Chamber



*Parliamentary Attendants undertake many roles, including conducting tours of Parliament House.*

- conducting tours of Parliament House for both school students and the general public
- helping with the security of the buildings
- operating a courier and delivery service throughout the parliamentary complex.

### **Parliamentary Librarian**

The Parliamentary Librarian is head of the Parliamentary Library and is responsible for the maintenance and growth of the library and for providing high quality information services for Members of Parliament.

Library officers who are librarians and researchers provide services for the Members which include:

- researching and providing information on any issue or event that a Member of Parliament may request
- recording TV news and current affairs programs
- providing loans on books and access to research databases.

### **Chief Hansard Reporter**

Hansard is the name given to the official reports of the debates and proceedings of Parliament and its committees. The term Hansard refers to the written record of the Parliament and also the office whose staff produce that record.

Hansard is commonly regarded as taking its name from Thomas Hansard, who in the latter half of the 18th century wrote a newspaper column about the House of Commons titled 'The Journals of the House'. Later, he published reports, which

were reprints of newspaper reports covering the debates of the House of Commons. It was not until 1909 that the House of Commons first published its own reports of debates that were called 'the Official Report'.

In Queensland, because of allegedly unreliable newspaper reports, Hansard was established in 1864, only five years after separation from New South Wales. By 1878, the Queensland Parliament was the first in the world to have a daily official report of the debates without any form of Government censorship.

In the Queensland Parliament, Hansard is headed by a Chief Reporter who is assisted by other reporting officers of the Parliament. They provide accurate reports of the proceedings in the Chamber in a short period of time. The public can obtain copies of these proceedings on the Internet within two hours of the end of a day's sitting of Parliament.