

CHAPTER 2: PARLIAMENTARY DEPARTMENTS HEARING

2.1 Introduction

The Committee received evidence from the and Hon. Jenny Lindell, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the Hon. Robert Smith, President of the Legislative Council, on 8 May 2009. The Presiding Officers provided an overview of the Parliamentary Departments at the start of the hearing, assisted by Mr Ray Purdey, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly; Mr Wayne Tunnecliffe, Clerk of the Legislative Council; and Mr Stephen O’Kane, Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Services. The Committee thanks the Presiding Officers and accompanying officers for their attendance and assistance.

2.2 General comments

At the budget estimates hearing, the Committee raised various matters concerning the budget estimates for 2009-10 (see Volume Two for the transcript of proceedings). Transcripts of the budget estimates proceedings are also accessible on the Committee’s website at www.parliament.vic.gov.au/paec. Documents provided at the hearings of the budget estimates (see Section 2.8) are available on the Committee’s website. Written answers to questions on notice should be submitted to the Committee by 15 June 2009. These answers will be considered by the Committee for inclusion in a further report.

2.3 Key budget themes for 2009-10

In its questionnaire response, the Parliamentary Departments advised the Committee that the key themes in the *2009-10 State Budget* were:⁸

- maintaining operations;
- support services for Members of Parliament; and
- enhancement of infrastructure for services to Members of Parliament.

2.4 Key assumptions that have been used to develop the Department’s projections for 2009-10

The Parliamentary Departments identified the following three key assumptions upon which projections for 2009-10 were based:⁹

- no growth - maintenance of operations;
- adjustment to Members of Parliament’s budgets for CPI and changes in number of electors; and
- projects to maintain and enhance services delivered to Members of Parliament – *Heritage Asset Management Strategy* and Web Casting.

⁸ Parliamentary departments, *Response to the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee Budget Estimates Questionnaire*, April 2009, p.1

⁹ *ibid.*

2.5 Major Expenditure Policy Shifts in the 2009-10 Budget

The Parliamentary Departments advised the Committee that there have been no major expenditure policy shifts in 2009-10.¹⁰

2.6 Key matters raised at the budget estimates hearing

Key matters raised at the budget estimates hearing included the following (page references refer to the transcript in Volume Two, Section 2.1):

Funding and financial management issues

- reconciliation of the Parliamentary Departments' output budget for 2009-10 with the *Appropriation Bill* (pp.3-4); and
- administration of revenue generated through catering and function services provided by the Parliament catering division (pp.8-9).

System and infrastructure initiatives

- *Heritage Asset Management Strategy* (pp.8-9);
- Audio and video web casting of Parliament (pp.8-9 and pp.11-13);
- *Parliamentary Precinct Master Plan* (p.13);
- Legislative Council refurbishment (p.18);
- Parliamentary Precinct security measures (pp.13-15);
- electoral office security audits (pp.17-18); and
- provision of electorate offices (p.8).

Performance measures

- adjustments to the Parliamentary Services output targets: *Client satisfaction with the quality of information provided* and *Members, staff and officers satisfied or better with the services provided* (pp.4-6); and
- environmental savings in the Parliamentary Precinct, including water and energy usage (pp.16-17).

Staffing matters

- remuneration of Table Officers (p.4); and
- electorate officers' Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, including negotiations with electorate officers (p.4) and the introduction of a three per cent overtime allowance (pp.6-8).

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.7-8

Community engagement

- Parliament House Open Day and Melbourne Show (p.6); and
- community engagement and educational programs (pp.9-11).

2.7 Questions taken on notice at the budget estimates hearing

A number of questions were taken on notice by the Presiding Officers at the budget estimates hearing (see Appendix 2 - Questions on Notice, and the transcript in Volume Two) relating to:

- reconciliation of estimated expenditure;
- adjustments to Parliamentary Services output targets;
- *Parliamentary Client Satisfaction Survey* response rates;
- catering division revenue; and
- audio broadcasting of Parliamentary proceedings uptake statistics.

A written response by the Presiding Officers to the Committee on these questions is due by 15 June 2009 and will be considered for publication in a further report.

2.8 Documents tabled at the budget estimates hearing

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly provided an introductory slide presentation at the budget estimates hearing. The slides are available on the Committee's website.