

THE LEGISLATURE

OVERVIEW

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Budget 2000-01 \$m</i>	<i>Budget 2001-02 \$m</i>	<i>Variation %</i>
The Legislature			
Total Expenses	81.6	85.8	5.1
Asset Acquisitions	4.1	3.4	- 16.9

The Legislature is comprised of two Houses, the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. Both Houses are directly elected by the people of New South Wales and together form one arm of the system of responsible government.

The functions of Parliament are wide ranging and include the making of laws, control of State finances, oversight and scrutiny of Executive Government operations and the provision of a forum to discuss matters of concern or importance to the public.

The Legislative Council, Legislative Assembly and Joint House Departments provide procedural, administrative and support services to assist Members in the performance of their parliamentary and constituency duties, both at Parliament House and in the ninety three Legislative Assembly electorate offices throughout the State.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Legislature's expenditure trends reflect the sittings of Parliament and the provision of services to Members. Total expenses have increased from \$75.5 million in 1996-97 to an estimated \$82.9 million in 2000-01. The increase is mainly attributable to increases in salary costs together with higher telecommunication and electorate office rental costs. The Legislature has increased the use of technology to deliver services by expanding Parliament's Internet site which provides access to Hansard, House business papers and Parliamentary Committee reports, and allows the on-line receipt of Committee Inquiry submissions from the public.

The Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal released its new Determination and Report on Members' additional allowances and entitlements on 4 December 2000. The Determination came into effect on 31 December 2000 and has provided increased flexibility for Members in the use of their non-salary entitlements through the establishment of a Logistic Support Allocation. All Members' Logistic Support Allocation expenditure and country based Members' Sydney Allowances will be audited annually by the Auditor-General's Office.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The Legislature's primary focus will be on improving procedural and corporate business processes to support Members in their Parliamentary and constituency duties. This will involve increased use of technology to expand information available on the Parliament's Internet website and use of e-commerce in accounting and administrative business processes.

In 2001-02, the Legislature will undertake an evaluation of processes and services that can be enhanced for Members and support areas through the use of current technology. In addition, a review and assessment of the Government's public sector reform and service delivery initiatives will be carried out to determine their suitability and relevance for implementation within the Parliament.

2001-02 BUDGET

Total Expenses

Total expenses in 2001-02 are estimated to be \$85.8 million. \$67.4 million will be expended to directly support the functions of the Upper and Lower Houses and Members in their Parliamentary and constituency duties. \$18.4 million has been budgeted for support and ancillary operations.

Asset Acquisitions

Funding of \$3.4 million in 2001-02 has been provided to:

- ◆ Replace facsimile machines in electorate offices (\$0.3 million).
- ◆ Upgrade Parliament's management information system (\$0.3 million).
- ◆ Upgrade and replace electorate office furniture (\$0.8 million).

- ◆ Upgrade computer hardware for Members of the Legislative Council (\$0.3 million) and Members of the Legislative Assembly (\$0.4 million).
- ◆ Upgrade Parliament's business systems, communications systems and infrastructure (\$0.9 million).
- ◆ Fit out electorate offices for Members of the Legislative Assembly and for other minor works (\$0.4 million).