

# THE LEGISLATURE

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## OVERVIEW

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Budget 2001-02 \$m</i>	<i>Budget 2002-03 \$m</i>	<i>Variation %</i>
<b>The Legislature</b>			
Total Expenses .....	<b>85.8</b>	<b>97.7</b>	<b>13.8</b>
Asset Acquisitions .....	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>-7.6</b>

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 \$77.2 million in 1997-98 to an estimated \$92.9 million in 2001-02. The increase is mainly attributable to increases in public sector salary costs together with higher telecommunications and electorate office rental costs.

The 2001-02 financial year represents the first complete year for the new Members' entitlement system which was determined by the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal in December 2000 and subsequently reviewed with effect from 1 July 2001. This new system requires additional accountability for Members while providing flexibility through the creation of a Logistic Support Allocation (LSA). The LSA provides each Member with a global allocation to meet the cost of carrying out their parliamentary duties. Any unexpended LSA is able to be carried forward to subsequent financial years within the 4 year parliamentary term.

A significant trend has been an increase in the number of parliamentary committees and committee inquiries over the past five years, particularly in the Legislative Council. Apart from direct operational costs, these additional committees also impact on corporate support services and associated costs.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

The Legislature is committed to expanding its use of information technology and e-commerce to improve services and productivity. In particular, Members' network connections from their electorate and/or home offices are being targeted to improve response times and access to information.

The key focus for the Parliament in 2002-03 will be the 22 March 2003 general election and the associated administrative and procedural tasks.

Upgrading of Parliament House security arrangements are also planned in response to events in 2001-02, together with upgrading IT network security through establishment of a standard operating environment and security audits of network access controls.

## **2002-03 BUDGET**

### **Total Expenses**

Total expenses in 2002-03 are estimated at \$97.7 million, an increase of 13.8 percent over the 2001-02 Budget.

This increase reflects additional costs associated with members' entitlement use, Legislative Council parliamentary committees and support services, public sector salary increases and upgrading of Parliament House security arrangements. An amount of \$76.5 million will be expended to directly support the functions of the Upper and Lower Houses and Members in their parliamentary and constituency duties with \$21.2 million allocated for support and ancillary operations.

## **Asset Acquisitions**

Total asset acquisitions in 2002-03 are estimated at \$3.2 million, a reduction of \$0.26 million compared to the 2001-02 budget. This funding has been provided to undertake the following projects:

- ◆ IT works-in-progress (\$1.1 million) relating to Members' business systems (\$0.1 million), Parliament business systems (\$0.2million), communications and infrastructure (\$0.6 million) and upgrading the financial information system (\$0.3 million);
- ◆ upgrading of the Parliament House security system (\$0.3 million);
- ◆ fit-out of electorate offices for Members of the Legislative Assembly (\$0.6 million);
- ◆ Parliament IT support systems and community information system (\$0.4 million);
- ◆ replacement of obsolete equipment in Parliament House and Legislative Assembly electorate offices (\$0.4 million); and
- ◆ other minor works including communication systems and theatrette projection equipment (\$0.2 million).