

THE LEGISLATURE

OVERVIEW

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Budget 2003-04 \$m</i>	<i>Budget 2004-05 \$m</i>	<i>Variation %</i>
The Legislature			
Total Expenses	101.7	103.8	2.1
Asset Acquisitions	2.7	2.2	-15.3

The Legislature comprises 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 94 Legislative Assembly electorate offices (Murray Darling has two offices) throughout the State.

EXPENDITURE TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The Legislature's expenditure over the last five years has increased as a consequence of a number of factors including changes to Members' entitlements and provision of a wide area computer network to each of the 94 Legislative Assembly electorate offices throughout the State.

The need to enhance physical and information technology security both within the Parliament and electorate offices has also impacted on expenditure trends.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

A review of the Parliament's corporate goals and strategies incorporating Results and Services Plans in accordance with the Government's new budgeting arrangements are scheduled for the reporting year.

Particular areas of operations targeted for attention include the Parliament's procurement practices, Members' entitlements, implementation of Risk Management and Business Continuity Plans together with preparations for the adoption of International Accounting Standards which come into effect on 1 July 2005.

Innovative use of information technology to provide information to the public at large, Members of Parliament and other government agencies remains a high priority. Further enhancements are scheduled in 2004-05 through internet webcasts, Hansard video streaming and the Parliament's website.

The recent upgrading of the Parliament's Financial Management Information System is also expected to improve service delivery, particularly in the human resources/payroll area, through the availability of electronic pay advices, electronic superannuation fund reporting and salary sacrifice for parliamentary staff.

2004-05 BUDGET

Total Expenses

Estimated total expenses in 2004-05 are \$103.8 million, an increase of 2.1 percent over the 2003-04 Budget. This increase includes \$0.6 million for additional Legislative Assembly and Joint Committees established or reappointed following the March 2003 General Election.

Asset Acquisitions

Total asset acquisitions in 2004-05 are estimated at \$2.2 million. This funding will be used to fit-out Members' electorate offices (\$0.9 million), maintaining and upgrading the Parliament's information technology systems (\$0.7 million) and minor works (\$0.6 million).