

4.3.1 THE LEGISLATURE

OVERVIEW

Agency	Forecast 1997-98	Estimate 1998-99	Variation
	\$m	\$m	%
The Legislature			
Total Expenses	75.9	78.5	3.4
Asset Acquisitions	2.2	4.2	91.0
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Expenditure Trends and Recent Developments

Parliament's expenditure trends over the past five years have been mostly influenced by the provision of services to Members, sitting of Parliament and Parliament's decision to provide references to an increasing number of Committees. The community is now demanding more from Members. Increases in Members' direct staffing costs, increased telecommunication costs through the use of mobile telephones and the establishment of the wide area computer network are absorbing a greater proportion of the overall recurrent budget allocation.

Major asset acquisitions since 1993-94 primarily relate to information technology projects as part of the Parliament's IT strategic plan. This has involved the establishment of both a local area and wide area network infrastructure linking all electorate offices to Parliament House information systems and corporate databases. During this period, Members' computer systems have also been upgraded to facilitate access to the Parliamentary Network and the latest releases of current software applications.

Apart from computer projects, Parliament has provided funding each year for the fit-out of Legislative Assembly electorate offices. These offices are often required to relocate at the expiration of their leases to provide constituents with improved access to Members.

Strategic Directions

The NSW Parliament, referred to as the Legislature, comprises the Legislative Assembly, Legislative Council and support services, together with ninety eight Legislative Assembly electorate offices throughout the State.

The Legislature's major clients are the Members of the NSW Parliament and the organisation is geared almost entirely around service provision to these clients. Consequently, expenditure is predominantly governed by the level and type of service to be provided to this major client group.

The corporate strategies adopted by Parliament to deliver these diverse services are organised under six specific corporate goals which are documented in the strategic plans and in the annual reports of the House departments and joint services.

1998-99 Budget

Total Expenses

Funding is provided to the Legislature to service the needs of Members of Parliament in performing their legislative and constituency duties. Total expenses for the budget year 1998-99 is projected to be \$78.5 million.

In order to improve the management of the Legislature's budget, during 1998-99, several initiatives are planned, including -

- re-engineering of corporate work practices to complement the new Management Information System;
- pursue options for contracting out non-core activities;
- rationalisation of computer software distribution to remote electorate offices;
- streamlining of IT help desk services to provide improvements to customer service delivery;
- address occupational and safety concerns in the Library Clippings Service area; and
- allocation of resources and services to support the March 1999 General Election.

Asset Acquisitions

Funding of \$4.2 million has been allocated for Parliament's 1998-99 asset acquisition program with \$2.67 million to be applied to IT projects including projects associated with the Year 2000 compliance (\$1 million). An amount of \$1.53 million is to be spent on minor works (includes annual provisions).

A major IT project to be undertaken is the implementation of a fully integrated Management Information System as part of the business systems funding of \$1.9 million. Funding of \$400,000 has also been allocated for the replacement of Members' computers and printers. An amount of \$120,000 has been earmarked for the development of a Management Information Policy with the purchase of help desk software.

From the minor works allocation of \$1.53 million, an amount of \$450,000 has been allocated for the fit-out of the Legislative Assembly electorate offices as part of an ongoing program when Members find it necessary to relocate their offices on expiry of leases or impending redistribution of Members' offices. Funding of \$800,000 has also been provided for replacement of Members' photocopiers facsimile machines. Remaining funding of \$280,000 has been allocated across various Parliamentary programs for replacement of obsolete office equipment.