

# **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-2022**

Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance

## **THE LEGISLATURE**

Hearing: Wednesday 27 October 2021

Answers to Questions on Notice



**DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES**  
Budget Estimates October 2021

21/58090

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**Responses to Questions on Notice**

**Question (Transcript page 7/8)**

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** Mr President, would it be possible to provide the Committee with a list of the capital projects that had been ticked off in the last three months of the past five financial years as to the timing of these projects—

**Response**

Money for capital works is allocated to the Parliament on a financial year basis. While major projects have payment milestones throughout the year, they usually finish towards the end of the financial year in line with to that funding cycle.

As a result of this funding methodology all major capital projects are approved as a part of the State Budget handed down in June. Minor capital works are approved at the start of the financial year. No major capital projects have been approved in the last three months of the past five financial years.

**Question (Transcript page 15/16)**

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** How much has the Hibbs consultancy cost

**Response**

Hibbs & Associates were engaged in July 2021 to provide advice and review Parliament's COVIDSafe plans for each of the sitting periods; September, October and November 2021. The total cost to date is \$67,200.

**Question (Transcript page 17)**

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** How much are we paying Elizabeth Broderick for her review of workplace culture and respect of women?

**Response**

The Department of Parliamentary Services on behalf of the Parliamentary Executive Group has engaged Elizabeth Broderick & Co to provide expert advice, through a comprehensive Review process, to the Parliament of NSW to ensure it is a workplace free from bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct. The Review is to be undertaken for a period of 7 months at a total cost of \$398,000.

**Question (Transcript page 17/18)**

Closed captioning contract:

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How long are you looking to contract for?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I ask what consultations have been involved in the process of adopting closed captioning? Is there some mechanism for MPs to be involved in the evaluation?

**Response:**

The initial contract period is for 12 months, with a formal performance review scheduled after the first two full months of sittings and estimates hearings in the first quarter of 2022. If the vendor has met or exceeded the KPIs in the contract during that period, DPS has the option to extend the contract to a total of 36 months at a discounted rate for the service for the remainder of the contract term. The contract also contains provisions for financial penalties if the vendor fails to meet the agreed KPIs.

As part of the change and communications plans for the project, now that we are close to the committee trial there will shortly be an email sent to members and staff about the trial. Following the conclusion of the committee trial there will be a further email update. Another update will be provided when captioning is live on the Parliament's public stream for committees. Each update will invite members and staff to contact the project team for additional information.

Formal consultation with members first began with a meeting of the LC members reference group on 9 September 2021 where automatic speech recognition (ASR) technology, for use primarily by Hansard, was first proposed as part of the audiovisual program of work. Subsequent to that meeting, DPS conducted further market research and discovered that human-produced captioning would be price competitive with the best ASR systems available. The project was re-scoped accordingly and rather than simply providing a Hansard-specific service, we will now be able to provide high-accuracy live captions for Parliament's broadcasts.

Since the Houses and Committees determine the rules for how the broadcast of proceedings are managed, consultation with members through the Procedure Committee as well as the LC Committees will be essential in order to achieve the necessary authorisation to include closed captioning on the Parliament's broadcasts.

**Question (Transcript page 24)**

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** Is there a breakdown on the renovation of the Speaker's courtyard and how much the ramp cost as opposed to the other—

**Response**

The following tables are the construction costs breakdown for the two ramps in the Speaker's Garden and Hospital Road. These cost include associated works around the ramps such as Speaker's courtyard and these figures are excluding GST. Both ramps were delivered within the budget allocation for the project.

<b>DESCRIPTION - THE SPEAKER'S GARDEN RAMP</b>	
General demolition	\$64,428.18
Concrete work	\$79,255.45
Atrium	\$43,989.09
Brass handrails and balustrades	\$67,460.91
Sandstone	\$42,207.27
Masonry work	\$6,446.36
Visual indicators	\$3,973.64
Security and data	\$15,066.36
Electrical	\$23,884.55
Hydraulic	\$15,591.82
Preliminaries and Margin	\$101,034.55
<b>Tendered Total</b>	<b>\$463,338.18</b>
variations	\$17,984.15
<b>New total</b>	<b>\$481,322.33</b>

Note: All figures excluding GST

<b>DESCRIPTION - HOSPITAL ROAD ACCESSIBLE RAMP</b>	
General Demolition	\$40,634.55
Concrete Work	\$181,401.82
Precast components	\$85,436.36
Brass handrails	\$191,663.64
Pebblecrete	\$48,471.82
Metal works	\$48,576.36
Visual indicators and expansion joints	\$15,240.91
Security and data	\$18,282.73
Electrical	\$36,605.45
Landscaping	\$22,850.00
Hydraulics	\$30,032.73
Preliminaries and Margin	\$155,166.36
<b>Tendered Total</b>	<b>\$874,362.73</b>
variations	\$107,050.47
<b>New total</b>	<b>\$981,413.20</b>

Note: All figures excluding GST

**Question (Transcript page 27)**

Closed Captioning

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Just on notice, is that going to be hard-coded into the video or is that going to be separately available?

**Response**

The closed captioning will be optional for viewers and not 'burned in' to the streams or recordings. Integration with Parliament on Demand will be explored on a technical level after the service has officially launched. Independently of the potential integration of caption data in Parliament on Demand and following the results of the survey distributed to members in October, additional functionality will be added to the system over the summer break to allow members to more easily navigate the system and find the content they are looking for, such as chapter markers in the video and Hansard-like tables of contents to quickly find particular speeches or debates.

## Question (Transcript page 29)

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG:** In terms of procurement—I know we have raised this before—can you give us an idea of the statistics of procurement of things like furniture in the Parliament over say the past three or four years and the proportion of local procurement versus things like the frosted glass door from San Francisco?

## Response

Wherever possible our capital works program aims to use Australian-Made products, in particular products sourced from New South Wales. DPS follows the NSW Procurement framework which encourages the issue of Australian-Made products. Additionally we direct Architects and Engineers to specify Australian-Made products wherever possible. Given the scale of the work, construction activity and contractual relationships with builders, mapping of the statistics of Australian-Made vs Non Australian-Made is not feasible at this time.

In the past 4 years, 87.5% of suppliers were NSW-based. 99.6% were Australian-based. It is part of Parliament's procurement policy to treat NSW-based suppliers preferentially to support NSW commerce.

- Of the NSW-based suppliers, we cannot guarantee that all were using products or services solely sourced in NSW.
- The figures above are based on the business addresses as recorded in SAP. It is not a guarantee that the NSW supplier is in fact a NSW originated company, only that their business address is in NSW

The following is an example of Australian-made products use in capital works projects over the last four years:

- New access ramps
  - Precast concrete walls , including stone aggregate from Coffs Harbour (NSW)
- Tower Block membrane replacement
  - Engineered screed (NSW)
  - Pipe supports (NSW)
  - Storm water pits and lids (NSW)
- Building and Ceiling Project / Accommodation
  - Air conditioning units - Fan coil (NSW)
  - Workplace sit to stand desks (NSW)
  - Furniture for new workspaces (NSW and VIC)
  - Carpet (NSW)
  - Members and ministers desks and credenzas (NSW)
- Security Upgrades
  - Turnstile (NSW)
  - Turnstile/traffic box copper sheet (Australia)
  - Turnstile structural steel (Australia)
  - Traffic box control panel (NSW)
- Other projects
  - Parliamentary Crest for Strangers Dining Room (VIC)
  - Bust of the late Honourable Virginia Chadwick AO, (VIC)

- Switchboards for the Main switchboards replacement project and new Diesel generators Project (NSW)

### Question (Transcript page 34)

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG:** If you could get the number of funded FTEs versus vacancies for the Library on notice, that would be handy.

### Response

As at November 2021, there are 15.5 funded Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions in the Parliamentary Library.

Of these, two FTE positions are currently vacant and in the process of being filled. A librarian position has become available due to a retirement. This position will be filled in early 2022 following the completion of the library review at the end of 2021. The position will be filled through a merit-based external recruitment process as it is a permanent role. A library assistant position will also be filled through an internal Expression of Interest (EOI) as soon as the new library structure has been implemented.

At the same time, two librarians are on secondment, one to the Digital Transformation team and the other at the Federal Parliamentary library in Canberra. Both these positions are currently filled by temporary staff.

As at November 2021, there are 6 funded FTEs in the Parliamentary Research Service, which is a part of the library. Of these, two are currently vacant. Both positions are being filled through current recruitment actions. These positions are available as a result of providing incumbent staff members with opportunities to act up in a senior role and a secondment opportunity.

There is an ongoing review of the Parliamentary Library which will be completed in December 2021. Under this review, no positions have been abolished. Since the review started in March 2021, the core principles have been:

- There will be a role for all the current staff of the Library and Research Service in the new organisational structure; and
- No-one will be financially disadvantaged by the Review.

In working towards a new structure that will modernise the operation of the library, a number of positions have been restructured in line with the recommendations from our external independent review of the library. In summary, the review process has found that Library and Research resources should be prioritised to deliver on the following:

- Increase research capacity, including more subject specialisation;
- Improve customer engagement, with more opportunities to deliver seminars and information sessions to members;
- Additional support services to Committees via a panel of experts; and
- Renewed focus on history and heritage, including on the upcoming Legislative Council Bicentenary celebrations.

Responses to Questions on Notice

**Answer to Question on Notice on page 13 of transcript regarding eReturns:**

**Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE:**

Could I just say on behalf of my party, The Greens, I commend and thank you and all the team—your team, Mark; your team, David; and the work of your office, too, Mr President. It has been an extraordinary 18 months and the professionalism and the diligence of everybody, all your teams, is recognised and appreciated by my party. Thank you very much. Perhaps to you first of all, Mr Blunt. The amount of work coming to your team from orders for papers under Standing Order 52 must be difficult to manage, but it must also be difficult to manage because we do not have a cooperative arrangement with the Government on how that information is passed through to the House. Can you let us know if there are any ongoing negotiations to make that a smoother flow of information?

**Response**

As part of the Parliament's Digital Transformation project, the Procedure Office is working with the Digital Transformation Applications Branch and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, on the development of an e>Returns system.

The e>Returns system is being developed to provide Parliament and government agencies an electronic system for the lodgement and receipt of returns to orders. Documents will be securely transferred to the Parliament through a new parliamentary portal that links to the Parliament's existing document storage databases.

It is anticipated that e>Returns will improve the accessibility of returns to orders and provide administrative efficiencies, while ensuring file security and appropriate document oversight are maintained.

It is acknowledge that in the context of the very significant numbers of orders for papers made, providing adequate space and document viewing opportunities has sometimes been difficult. Regretfully at certain peak times the Procedure Office has had to delay requests by members and their staff to view documents or limit the time available to them. It is sincerely hoped that e>Returns system will prove to be a long-term solution to this issue.

The e>Returns project is a key priority for the Procedure Office who are working with the Transformation Applications Branch and counterparts from the Department of Premier and Cabinet on an ongoing basis to complete the e>Returns platform as soon as practicable.