

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 3

Monday 19 August 2013

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

THE LEGISLATURE

The Committee met at 12.15 p.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. N. Maclaren-Jones (Chair)

The Hon. N. Blair (Deputy Chair)
The Hon. P. Green
Dr J. Kaye

Mr S. MacDonald
The Hon. P. T. Primrose
The Hon. A. Searle

PRESENT

The Hon. Don Harwin, *President of the Legislative Council of New South Wales*

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:

**Budget Estimates secretariat
Room 812
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

CHAIR: I declare the hearing for the inquiry into budget estimates 2013-2014 open to the public. I welcome President Harwin and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Legislature. In accordance with the Legislative Council guidelines for the broadcasting of proceedings, only Committee members and witnesses may be filmed or recorded. People in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of filming or photographs. In reporting the proceedings of this Committee, you must take responsibility for what you publish and what interpretation you place on anything that is before the Committee. The guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available at the table by the front door. I note that today's hearing is open to the public and is being webcast live via the Parliament's website.

Any messages from advisers or members of staff seated in the public gallery should be delivered through the Chamber and support staff or Committee clerks. I remind the President and accompanying officers that you are free to pass notes and refer directly to the advisers seated behind you. Transcripts of the hearings will be available on the parliamentary website as of tomorrow morning. The House has resolved that answers to questions on notice must be provided within 21 days. All witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations will be sworn in prior to giving evidence. Mr President, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn in as you have already sworn an oath to the office as a member of Parliament.

DAVID BLUNT, Clerk of the Parliaments, Department of the Legislative Council,

ROBERT STEFANIC, Executive Manager, Department of Parliamentary Services, and

JOHN GREGOR, Director, Financial Services Branch, Department of Parliamentary Services, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: I declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Legislature open for examination. As there is no provision for the President to make an opening statement before the Committee commences questioning, we will begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Mr President, would you please outline the criteria you use to decide whether to give your consent to a member's request to use the Chamber for an activity such as a Youth Parliament?

The PRESIDENT: I thank you for your question, Mr Primrose. The Legislative Council Chamber obviously has deep significance to the history of the State. Its role is that of a parliamentary Chamber and it has been in continuous use as a parliamentary Chamber since 1856. In recent years it has been the practice under my presidency and previous presidencies for it to be used on non-sitting days for a program of school talks in which primary and secondary schools receive talks from Chamber support staff on the role of the Legislative Council. Typically, three to four schools book the Chamber on each non-sitting day during school terms. On those days, members of the public are also able to enter the Chamber and view it from the President's Gallery. On occasions, community groups such as Probus are able to book talks from our Chamber support staff. That longstanding practice has been continued.

In addition to these, there are a range of continuing programs run by the Education and Community Relations section of the Department of Parliamentary Services. The use of the Chamber for these activities is subject to the Presiding Officer's approval each year as part of the education activities they conduct, as is the case in a number of other parliaments. Beyond that, my view is that the Chamber's use should be limited. In that particular role I take a view more like the Presiding Officers in the Australian Parliament, who take a very restrictive view. Under some previous Presiding Officers the Chamber has been used, for example, for university events, member-hosted activities and so on. I do not support a wide use of the Chamber, nor is it the case in most parliaments around Australia.

Being allowed on the floor of the Chamber is a privilege and, obviously, it is one that is usually reserved for elected members and parliamentary officers. When approaches have been made by members for use of the Chamber for major events I have generally either discouraged the approach or declined any formal application received. My presumption is, and it is a consistent policy that I adopt, that other than the Parliament's education programs no other activities will be approved. While exceptional cases may perhaps be made, which I would consider, my preference is to restrict the use of the Chamber on non-sitting days and I will continue to do that. The key thing that all members need to understand is that it is a consistent policy. It is always applied that way.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: May I ask through the President to the Clerk of the Parliaments, would you elaborate on your suggestion for a Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards?

Mr BLUNT: I take it you are referring to the paper that I delivered last month to the Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference and circulated to members subsequently?

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Yes.

Mr BLUNT: I am glad that the paper has elicited some interest and seems to have taken some hold.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: It has elicited a great deal of interest.

Mr BLUNT: Essentially, the idea is not a new one. My interest in the area particularly stemmed from my work as Clerk to the Legislative Council Privileges Committee during the last Parliament. In its review of the members' code of conduct the Privileges Committee referred to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards model and identified it as something requiring further consideration in the future. I hope the paper

I gave will contribute to that further consideration. When I started my research in the area in detail earlier this year I discovered that Bruce McClintock, back in 2005 in his review of the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act, had in fact recommended that such a body be appointed in New South Wales. He based that recommendation on two facts.

Firstly, he saw a need for a body to be able to properly investigate that small range of matters where the Independent Commission Against Corruption's jurisdiction is restricted because of parliamentary privilege. Secondly, he referred to the frequency with which complaints of a minor, sometimes trivial, nature about the conduct of members are made. He referred to the particular vulnerability of members to those sorts of complaints, and called for the appointment of such a person to enable those sorts of complaints to be dealt with in a speedy and effective manner. Effectively, the research that I conducted and the paper that I gave backs up both of those findings and recommendations as still being valid and worthwhile.

The paper focuses on the model that operates in the United Kingdom House of Commons. The model there has developed to the extent that now formal recognition is given to some effective and speedy mechanisms for the resolution of less serious complaints about members, such as rectifying inadvertent non-compliance with pecuniary interest requirement provisions, the reimbursement of inadvertent or one-off entitlement mistakes and the making of public apologies. It seems to me that there is a sensible set of reasons for considering the appointment of such a person, and that it could provide for a mature and speedy resolution of these sorts of matters.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Have there been thefts from parliamentary catering in the recent past? If so, are you able to provide any details?

The PRESIDENT: I will have to ask the Executive Manager of the Department of Parliamentary Services [DPS] to answer that.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I am happy for that.

Mr STEFANIC: In terms of thefts, are you referring to—

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: The stealing of goods.

Mr STEFANIC: The stealing of goods. There have been no reported cases of any thefts of items. What there have been are some misunderstandings in terms of appropriate use of parliamentary resources, and those matters have been addressed.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Can you elaborate on what you mean by "inappropriate use of parliamentary resources"?

Mr STEFANIC: Some instances where, I guess, staff have perhaps not been properly across the policies that guide the use of resources. In those instances where we identified that staff were not using them in the first instance we have reminded them of the policy and where necessary we have taken investigative and disciplinary action.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Is this generally, or in the catering area?

Mr STEFANIC: The same policy applies generally across the Department of Parliamentary Services but that is certainly so in the case of catering.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: When will wi-fi for registered devices be expanded to all areas of Parliament House?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am happy to report that earlier this month wi-fi coverage of Parliament House was upgraded to include all the public and common areas of the building, including all of level 7, the library, the cafe, the theatrette on level 6 and all meeting rooms on levels 7 to 12. The new service is called ph_express. Ph_express is provided as a free public wi-fi service on a trial basis until the end of 2013. There is no password required. However, when a device connects a page containing conditions will appear. The same filtering will be applied as applies elsewhere on the parliamentary network. Restrictions will also be applied for YouTube and similar multimedia downloads that may absorb higher levels of bandwidth. The trial will also

enable IT Services to gather feedback and other information, such as bandwidth usage, prior to making recommendations regarding ongoing free public wi-fi at Parliament House.

Additional improvements to wireless access are also in progress. A separate wi-fi service called ph_members is under development and is due to be launched by December this year. This will be a secure network for members and senior officers. It will require users to enter their network login details but access will not be subject to the restrictions in place on ph_express. So that is December this year. IT Services has also costed the option of extending wireless internet access to the rest of Parliament House. We are currently assessing competing priorities for minor works projects in the Parliament's budget for this financial year, but I can assure you that that project obviously features strongly in our considerations.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Why was the provision of open wi-fi in meeting rooms given a higher priority than in other areas of the building?

The PRESIDENT: I think that is simply consistent with the fact that meeting rooms are used for committee hearings, just as this room obviously is and other areas of the Parliament. It was consistent with that policy.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Can you advise us when the contract for the auditing of members' expenditure of the logistical support allowances will be reviewed and whether or not the current system would be maintained?

The PRESIDENT: The current system that we have at the moment in relation to the auditing of entitlements was adopted as part of a move to the self-assessment scheme, which I believe took place while the Hon. Peter Primrose was President. That is correct?

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: On the one hand, while we have a self-assessment regime for the logistic support allowance, it is obviously very important that we have an internal audit system as well to go hand in hand with that. Whether we in fact continue to have the same sort of auditing regime in an internal audit of entitlements really is a decision about whether you continue to have self-assessment. At the moment there are no plans to move away from self-assessment. There does not seem to be a lot of dissatisfaction among members that I detect with self-assessment as a system. Moreover the internal audit process is not ringing alarm bells in terms of the way the system is operating. It is certainly a matter that needs to be kept under constant review, but at the moment there are no plans to change it. In terms of the internal audit, Deloitte basically has had the contract. We have recently renewed that for an additional year while we are considering other matters to do with internal auditing.

CHAIR: The time for questions from the Opposition has expired. We will move to questions from the crossbench, commencing with the Hon. Paul Green.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Mr President, has there been any physical research or investigation into the viability of creating an on-site childcare facility for children of parliamentary staff?

The PRESIDENT: I am not sure if that was under the term of President Burgmann or President Primrose. I am informed it was under the Hon. Amanda Fazio's presidency. Obviously it preceded my term. I am informed it was a fairly extensive examination and it was decided it was not appropriate to proceed. The Executive Manager will go into the details.

Mr STEFANIC: Some years ago—off the top of my head, I think it was five years ago—there was a scoping study done specifically with the aim of establishing on the rooftop garden on level 9 a childcare facility. My understanding is that the study examined the viability of the service in terms of actual likely use. Because of the cost involved and the indicated use, no further action was taken.

Mr BLUNT: I would add that in the absence of a childcare centre on-site, the New South Wales Parliament has a sponsorship arrangement with the Nanbaree Child Centre which is located near Wynyard. The New South Wales public sector has an arrangement with that provider. Through the provision of that sponsorship arrangement, staff and indeed members as well can have priority access to that service.

The PRESIDENT: I believe the Executive Manager also has some useful information on that.

Mr STEFANIC: I am advised that at around the time of the scoping study, there were only about five to eight people who indicated that they would use that service.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: President, can you please advise when you propose to roll out the alterations to staff rest rooms and toilets to allow for wheelchair access?

The PRESIDENT: Good question. There is work going on in relation to that. I will invite the Executive Manager to fill you in.

Mr STEFANIC: Parliament remains committed to improving accessibility features at Parliament House for members, staff and visitors. As the Parliament building was built in the 1800s and the accommodation block was built subsequently in the 1980s, they were built prior to the introduction of the Building Code of Australia and standards for disability access were less than they are now. As with many heritage buildings, we are tasked with the challenge of maintaining its original historic elements while undertaking alterations that provide for dignified access for all occupants.

In terms of accessible toilets, the Facilities branch is working to address the issue of accessible toilets for staff and will be constructing new access toilets on level 9 as part of the capital works for the level 9 corporate accommodation project. Full access toilets currently are available on level 7 in two locations. Inspections of the existing staff toilets on level 11 also have been undertaken by the Facilities branch to examine the possibility of upgrading the toilets to current Building Code of Australia accessibility standards. Due to the limited space of the existing toilet, major modifications to the infrastructure would be required to construct accessible toilets. It is estimated that the cost of such a project would be in excess of \$250,000. The Facilities branch is reviewing the feasibility of the project along with more cost-effective alternatives.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: President, there was a reference in the "Naked Eye" column two weeks ago to the State of Origin posters in the Strangers Dining Room and that they remained in place during the State of Origin series. The article noted that you were away and could not be contacted for comment. Was the story accurate? Do you have any comment on it?

The PRESIDENT: The story was not accurate.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: So you support the Blues?

The PRESIDENT: I certainly support the Blues. An attempt was made to ring me pretty much on deadline and it went to print without my response, but I am sure all members sitting round the table have had that experience before. It was not of any real consequence, but I would just briefly correct the record on a few things. The story states that I requested the removal of the six floor-to-ceiling State of Origin posters, which were installed for a parliamentary Friends of Rugby League function to launch the 2013 State of Origin campaign. It states that I "requested caterers to take down the posters only to be informed it was the Premier's direct request they remain up until the end of the series." Untrue.

I was actually at the function as a member of the friendship group and I thought the posters were great, adding to the atmosphere. I heard the Premier make the request at firsthand that they stay up. Second, the article states I "requested the caterers to do a survey of MPs to see what they thought." Again, untrue. The friendship group event was on 29 May 2013 and the Origin series did not end until 18 July 2013. The posters, or stickers as some people refer to them, altered the appearance and outlook from the Strangers function room to the Domain. They covered 50 per cent of the windows.

In order to confirm that it would be possible to facilitate the Premier's request, it was important that Parliamentary Catering contact all 29 function organisers and hosts of planned events during the seven-week period to ascertain if they had any objections. I assume this is the survey referred to in the article. I am happy to report that no objections were received from any of the function organisers and hosts. Function revenue is critical to support the core operation of Parliamentary Catering. The revenue value of those events totalled almost \$243,000. If we had lost that revenue and repeat business it would obviously affect our budgetary position requiring cutbacks to services elsewhere, and that is something I am sure all members would not want to see. I hope that clears up the matter.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Will they be staying up until the end of State of Origin?

CHAIR: As time has expired for questions from the Hon. Paul Green, I will move to questions from Dr John Kaye.

Dr JOHN KAYE: I refer to the level 9 corporation accommodation project you mentioned earlier. Does that incorporate committee rooms?

The PRESIDENT: No.

Dr JOHN KAYE: Is there a separate project to build committee rooms on level 9?

The PRESIDENT: No. The level 9 corporation accommodation block is simply to deal with the longstanding problem we have of office space in the building. Dr John Kaye may have been here at the time the Legislative Council had offices in Macquarie Street and all the committee staff were at Macquarie Street. We were able to bring them back in—what year?

Mr BLUNT: It was about three years ago.

The PRESIDENT: Yes, and the Legislative Assembly also had its committee staff out of the building and they were only brought back last year. The Department of Parliamentary Services staff in particular and some other parts of the staff of other departments do not have the proper space allocated to them that one would expect under the normal public service guidelines, so the building is largely dealing with office accommodation problems. At the moment also the Government party room is being occupied by committee staff. Government parties are meeting in a hearing room, so space is at an absolute premium because it is actually about reducing the annual cost of rent to the Parliament and, in fact, eliminating it entirely.

Dr JOHN KAYE: What is the cost of the proposed project?

The PRESIDENT: The budget allocation for the project is \$5.798 million.

Dr JOHN KAYE: When was that budget allocation first made?

The PRESIDENT: It was first made in the 2012-13 budget.

Dr JOHN KAYE: Is it the same amount in the 2012-13 budget? Has there been a change in the projected costings as well?

The PRESIDENT: No, there has been no change to the projected costings.

Dr JOHN KAYE: Is there development approval for it yet?

The PRESIDENT: We have had that since September 2012.

Dr JOHN KAYE: When is construction expected to begin?

The PRESIDENT: Construction is planned to commence in November 2013 with a 12-month time frame for completion.

Dr JOHN KAYE: Have the contracts been let for the project?

The PRESIDENT: No.

Dr JOHN KAYE: Have contracts been called for yet?

The PRESIDENT: No.

Dr JOHN KAYE: When do you expect to do that?

The PRESIDENT: I will let the Executive Manager answer that question.

Mr STEFANIC: The tender documentation is currently being finalised. I would anticipate sometime in the next four weeks we would be letting out a tender for the construction.

Dr JOHN KAYE: I refer to restructuring of what I think is called the Building Infrastructure Service Division.

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Dr JOHN KAYE: I might get divisions and departments mixed up. Is it correct that in the existing structure under the Assistant Manager Engineering there are currently classifications of clerical officer, communications technician, three fitters operators, two technicians, three plant operators, a painter, a plumber and a mechanical fitter who will be replaced under this proposed restructure by four individuals who are across all of those trades? Is that the current plan?

The PRESIDENT: I might start the answer and then let the Executive Manager conclude it. A number of sophisticated building systems have been installed within Parliament House over the past decade, including digital controls for the air-conditioning system and central plant, uninterrupted power supply and emergency power back-up system, high definition broadcast system for the Chambers and committee hearing rooms, computer-based monitoring and control for emergency and exit lighting, sustainable energy systems and long-life lighting products, and a computer-controlled security access and control system. Those systems have helped to improve and enhance the working environment for members and staff, yet they also require specialised maintenance and management to ensure effective and ongoing operation.

Consequently, specialised maintenance contracts have been necessary to maintain these high-technology systems which in some cases replace the original electrical and mechanical systems. Contractors have, therefore, been used for a long time. However, the previous model for the engineering unit has not changed since 1986, 27 years ago. A review of the existing structure of this work group was necessary to establish whether the current model and technical roles are appropriate to better meet the needs of maintaining the Parliament's various building systems. The review had its origins in 2009 when GHD Consulting was engaged to conduct a broad review of the Facilities operations. The new model for infrastructure maintenance was developed during the course of the 2012-13 financial year.

The new structure will mean that staff will have relevant skillsets and be able to deliver services more efficiently across the various systems. The new structure follows best practice examples set by other modern facilities management operations and the need for improvements, such as, a more flexible maintenance plan with the capacity to monitor and respond to current and future building systems, a renewed emphasis on effectively meeting current standards for building system maintenance, new career progression opportunities for staff, and improvements to overall customer service through the delivery of well-maintained systems and measures to assist the Parliament in meeting the required NSW Treasury budget savings.

Dr JOHN KAYE: If may be so bold as to interrupt you—

The PRESIDENT: I am about to give you what you want. Under the new structure, 15 positions will be deleted, including five positions that have been vacant for many years. Seven new positions will be established, resulting in a net reduction of three positions only. Comprehensive consultation has been undertaken with staff and representatives from the Public Service Association, and this will continue until the new structure is fully established. All staff will have the opportunity to apply for new positions through internal recruitment processes, which are currently underway.

CHAIR: Time has expired. Any additional questions may be sent to the Committee. I will now move to questions from the Government.

The Hon. NIALL BLAIR: Mr President, does the Spring Ball come at a cost to the budget of the Parliament?

The PRESIDENT: In two years the Spring Ball has raised nearly \$150,000 for charities in New South Wales, with no cost to Parliament's budget. The success of the event is to the enormous credit of our colleague the Hon. Melinda Pavey, who suggested that our Parliament undertake such an annual event, modelled on the mid-winter ball mounted in the Federal Parliament by the Press Gallery. From the outset, Melinda secured the

enthusiastic support of the Hon. Helen Westwood, MLC, ensuring that the organisation of the ball was a cross-party effort. One of Helen's particular contributions has been securing a number of entertainers for the ball, including, at one stage, her celebrated brother. Melinda and Helen also marshalled key parliamentary staff and the president of the Press Gallery. They have been and remain the key driving forces behind the ball, soon to be held for a third consecutive year, and deserve recognition for their vision and their efforts.

From scratch the organising committee had to develop a successful template for the logistics involved in pulling together such an event and I am pleased to say that each year the ball has been carefully planned and run to a tight budget to ensure it is cost neutral to the Parliament. Costs are minimised wherever possible with catering, entertainment and administration met by the funds raised through ticket sales to members, staff and members of the Press Gallery. Additional costs are generally covered by in-kind sponsorship from businesses in New South Wales, and these have included elements such as entertainment provided by community groups, additional beverages provided by wine and hospitality companies and the printing of programs.

Ms Ann Lewis in the office of the Hon. Melinda Pavey has been outstanding in her management of the Spring Ball on behalf of the committee. Each year she has worked tirelessly on the arrangements and has ensured that the ball has been cost neutral to the Parliament and has generated the maximum contributions possible to the nominated charities. The Director of Parliamentary Catering, Mr Philip Freeman, has also made a major contribution. Phil has played an important role in ensuring that the ball has been delivered on a tight budget and importantly, with minimal disruption to the ordinary day-to-day operations of the Parliament. It should be remembered that the Spring Ball takes place on the evening of a sitting day, so this is quite an achievement. Phil has also been instrumental in the design and presentation of the event—a key element of its success.

The Spring Ball has quickly been established as a highly anticipated event on the parliamentary calendar and has proved an effective and important vehicle for the Parliament's philanthropic ambitions. The event typically features 300 guests who are treated to a night of networking, entertainment and fine dining. Important to its success has been the involvement of members from all sides of politics, including the crossbench, but particularly the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition who have been fully supportive of the event and generous with their time and have well and truly entered the spirit of the occasion. The participation of the Press Gallery has also ensured that the ball has been without controversy but, rather, focused on the purpose of raising funds for charity. Each of the successive Press Gallery presidents has been actively involved in the organising of the ball.

In 2011 the Spring Ball raised \$60,000 for our charity partners, including the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Camp Kookaburra, Royal Far West, the Schizophrenia Research Institute and Shine for Kids. Last year, a further \$85,000 was raised for the Bush Children's Education Foundation, Can Assist, Making a Difference, Noah's Ark Toy Library for Children with Special Needs and Alzheimer's Australia New South Wales. Many of these charities were specifically selected by the organising committee because they are smaller organisations that do not have a high public profile or a significant revenue stream from an established fundraising network or presence. However, each one makes an important contribution to the community.

One of last year's charities, Make a Difference, for example, assists children affected by the mental illness of a parent or family member. I would encourage members to read the Hon. Melinda Pavey's adjournment speech in our House last year about the impact Make a Difference had on the life of a four-year-old girl in south-west Sydney whose mother presents with such mental health issues as bipolar and obsessive compulsive disorders. Overall, the event has and will continue to be an important fundraising initiative for the Parliament. It has proven a fantastic vehicle through which to build relationships which may benefit the Parliament but most importantly, it has been a practical way of demonstrating the support we as individuals have for some very worthy causes.

CHAIR: You have already commented on wi-fi availability in Parliament House. Are you satisfied with the service being provided to members by IT Services?

The PRESIDENT: In a members' survey in 2010, a number of concerns were identified with the Parliament's IT Services. It would be, in fact, fair to say that at the time very few members were satisfied with the effectiveness of IT support administered by the Parliament. While funding and other operational constraints affecting services remain today, I wish to place on the record some of the very worthwhile improvements that have been made since May 2011 under the stewardship of Rob Stefanic, Simon Chalmers, Neil Dammerel and the team at IT Services. One of the greatest sources of dissatisfaction identified in the 2010 survey was with

GroupWise. I am pleased to be able to say that a business case was developed by IT Services on migration to Microsoft Outlook and Windows 7 and submitted to Treasury in mid-2011. In November of that year, capital funding was provided by Treasury. Members will appreciate that this activity has represented the most fundamental change to the Parliament's network since the mid-1990s, when it was first established.

The scope of work has included the replacement of GroupWise with Outlook and Exchange 2010; the replacement of Windows XP with Windows 7; the replacement of the Office 2007 suite with Office 2010; the replacement of Novell eDirectory with Microsoft Active Directory, being the means of controlling user log-ins to the network and access to network resources, including printers, shared drives and applications; the reconfiguration of all parliamentary Blackberry devices to receive email from Microsoft Exchange instead of GroupWise; for remote access users, replacement of the Novell Netapp web portal with a new Citrix remote desktop solution; and the creation of 98 new virtual servers. I am happy to report that the migration was completed on time in March 2013.

Another issue raised by members has been access to parliamentary information on a broader range of mobile devices, particularly iPhones and iPads. While there are significant security risks and operational issues to be considered, over the past year the IT Services team has made the following new services available to members: access to the parliamentary email calendar and contacts for iPhones, iPads and Android devices, using Microsoft ActiveSync technology; new telecommunications rates and plans in relation to mobile data communications, including iPhones, negotiated in conjunction with NSW Procurement; and a simpler, expanded wi-fi network at Parliament House, as I have detailed earlier.

Additional services to support members' use of mobile devices are also planned. This includes a secure, managed solution for mobile devices based on Citrix technology which will not only improve the security of email, calendar and contacts information stored on mobile devices but will also enable documents to be shared and synchronised across a number of computers and mobile devices. I have outlined the details of the expansion of the wireless internet.

Finally, in their survey responses, members also requested that web streaming in Apple-compatible format and from Committee hearing rooms be made available and that Skype be allowed on the parliamentary network. I am again happy to report that as from earlier this month web streaming from the Parliament's website has been made available in both Windows and Apple-compatible formats. Streaming is also available from committee hearing rooms and this year, for the first time in New South Wales, budget estimates hearings are being streamed as well.

Skype is being packaged for use on parliamentary computers and will be available by October this year. The installation of Skype on individual computers will be on request, sent to the Parliament's IT Service Desk. To protect the security of parliamentary information, obviously some capabilities will need to be blocked but almost all the standard Skype features will be enabled. These improvements to the IT services administered in Parliament represent a wide-ranging response to issues raised by members and a significant improvement of the service provided. The migration to Outlook, in particular, was a mammoth logistical undertaking that the IT Services team worked on for many months and delivered with remarkably few problems. I am delighted to have this opportunity to formally acknowledge and applaud the efforts of the whole IT Services team.

Mr SCOT MacDONALD: My question relates to Parliament's Twinning project. AusAID has recently had to review a lot of its funding commitments because of changed priorities. Has this affected funding for the Twinning project?

The PRESIDENT: The original AusAID budget—which was for a three-year program—has now been fully expended. The contribution of the Parliament of New South Wales to that time, in addition to the funds from AusAID, was modest but it was important and included the salaries of officers undertaking attachments in the two parliaments with which we are twinned. We have been successful in receiving funding under the 2012-13 round of the Pacific Public Sector Linkages program, which covers the period May 2013 to June 2015. There was a small gap between the two because, due to external factors, AusAID postponed the start of all activities approved in the 2012-13 round until July 2013. Accordingly, the new phase of the Twinning project commences on 1 July 2013 and will be fully funded until August 2015, with a completion date of June 2016.

CHAIR: I have one more question that relates to the rationale behind organising the "Twenty-five: Stories from Australia's First Parliament" exhibition. What did it cost the Parliament?

The PRESIDENT: In mid-2012 I initiated an exhibition to commemorate the 225th anniversary of the establishment of the colony of New South Wales in 1788, with the enthusiastic support of the Speaker. The key objectives of the exhibition were to meet goals in the Parliament's strategic plan relating to improving the visitor experience in Parliament and raising the profile of the Parliament's role and history. By displaying rare and precious items from the Parliament's archives and art collection the exhibition provided an engaging opportunity for the community to learn more about the Parliament and its role in the development of New South Wales.

Parliament has a rich collection of historically important artworks and artefacts and I am keen to continue to find new and creative ways to showcase these items to the community, particularly during periods when the Parliament receives large numbers of visitors, such as the summer school holidays. The exhibition, "Twenty-five: Stories from Australia's first Parliament", was held in the Parliament's Fountain Court from mid-January until the end of March 2013. It was well received by the general public, school groups, members of Parliament, former members and parliamentary staff.

Importantly, the exhibition was cost neutral to the Parliament. Sponsorship was secured to cover all costs of the exhibition. These costs included the engagement of a professional designer, Carola Salazar, from Five Spaces Design, catering costs for the launch, some of the conservation work and production of the brochure and accompanying booklet. As this exhibition would not have been possible without their generous support, I would like to acknowledge the Sydney and the New South Wales business chambers, the exhibition's principal sponsors, which contributed \$25,000, Thiess, which provided \$10,000 for production of the book about the exhibition, and Macquarie Bank, which contributed \$5,000.

Through the mounting of the exhibition the Parliament also established valuable relationships with other exhibiting institutions and archives in the Sydney metropolitan area. I would like to acknowledge the work of parliamentary staff for delivering the exhibition in such a short time frame and with limited resources, particularly Jeannie Douglass, Manager of Education and Community Relations, Nicola Forbes, Manager of Records and Archives, Gareth Griffith, Manager of the Parliamentary Research Service, and Brian Lindsay, my Chief of Staff. Almost six months later I am still approached by members telling me how much they enjoyed the exhibition and appreciate the work that went into it. I am hopeful the exhibition will be the first of many that the Parliament mounts to share its own collection and history.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. It being just after 1.00 p.m. unfortunately time has expired for questions for this hearing. On behalf of the Committee I thank the President and his officers for appearing today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.
