

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 3

Tuesday 25 October 2011

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

THE LEGISLATURE

The Committee met at 11.15 a.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. N. Maclaren-Jones (Chair)

The Hon. J. Ajaka
The Hon. N. Blair (Deputy-Chair)
The Hon. A. Fazio

The Hon. P. Primrose
The Hon. D. Shoebridge

PRESENT

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

Legislative Council of New South Wales

Mr David Blunt, *Clerk of the Parliaments*

Mr Robert Stefanic, *Executive Manager, Department of Parliamentary Services*

Mr Kim Smith, *Director of Finance, Department of Parliamentary Services*

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 would like to thank everyone for coming. I declare this hearing for the inquiry into the budget estimates 2011-2012 open to the public. I welcome the President and the accompanying officials to the hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Legislature.

Before we commence I will make some comments about procedural matters. In accordance with the Legislative Council guidelines for 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 any filming or photographs. In reporting the proceedings of this Committee you must take responsibility for what you publish and what you interpret or what interpretation you place on anything that has been said before the Committee. The guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available at the table at the front door. Any messages from attendants or attendees in the public gallery should be delivered through the Chamber or support staff or the Committee clerks.

I now remind the President and also the officers accompanying you that you are free to pass notes and refer directly to your advisers whilst at the table. As has been mentioned, the allocation of time is equally divided between the Opposition, the crossbench and the Government. Transcripts of the hearing will be available on the web as of tomorrow morning. The President, and also the House, has resolved that answers to questions on notice must be provided within 21 days. I remind everyone to please turn off their mobile phones. All witnesses from departments, statutory bodies or corporations will be sworn in prior to giving evidence. President, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn in, as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament. For all other witnesses, each of you will be asked in turn to state your full name, job title and agency and swear either an oath or an affirmation.

DAVID MICHAEL BLUNT, Clerk of the Parliaments and Clerk of the Legislative Council,

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

KIM RICHARD SMITH, Director of Finance, 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, I will begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Can you please detail the stage at which the recruitment action for the position of Parliamentary Budget Officer [PBO] had reached at the time the committee of inquiry into the PBO was established and what the cost to date for the recruitment action has been?

The PRESIDENT: The Parliamentary Budget Officer Act was assented to on November 2010 and commenced operation in full on 25 January 2011. The position description for the PBO role was completed and approved on 10 November 2010. Advertisements were published for the PBO position—I will just refer to it as PBO for ease—on 13 November 2010 with closing date on 26 November 2010. On 30 November 2010 Treasury's funding approval for the establishment of the PBO was received, which included a recurrent annual budget of \$3 million. Difficulties were faced by the Parliament in the initial recruitment actions for the position, which failed to produce an acceptable candidate in the first round. Advertisements generated only a small field of applicants, from which no suitable candidate could be selected.

The Presiding Officers at the time recommended appointing the former Auditor-General, Mr Tony Harris, as the Acting Parliamentary Budget Officer to ensure that the new Parliamentary Budget Office was up and running in time to perform its functions for the 2011 State election. On 21 January 2011 Watermark Search International was engaged to conduct an executive recruitment process at SES level 5, with remuneration in the range of \$231,951. As I am advised, the cost of the Watermark Search International recruitment services contract was \$57,000. I have been advised that a short list was prepared but that the previous Presiding Officers decided not to proceed with an appointment as the conclusion of that work by Watermark was quite close to the date of the general election.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Will you give an undertaking that after the library research section moves out of the space on level 6, which is being prepared for the Parliamentary Budget Office, that this space will be quarantined for future use by the Parliamentary Budget Office?

The PRESIDENT: The use of the space by the library is on a temporary basis. I am afraid I cannot give that guarantee, simply because until the outcome of the Joint Select Committee on the Parliamentary Budget Office finishes its work, I am not sure what the future level of operation, mode of operation will be for the PBO, whether that is the most appropriate space for it, or another part of the Parliament is more appropriate. The Speaker and I will consider that at the time.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: Mr President, can you advise when wi-fi for registered users will be extended to the whole of Parliament House?

The PRESIDENT: A very good question and I might have to ask the Executive Manager, Department of Parliamentary Services on that one.

Mr STEFANIC: Madam Chair, as members would be aware, wi-fi was introduced into both Chambers in the previous year. Plans are in place to extend wi-fi at least to meeting rooms and further on to the floors occupied by members. A submission has been made to Treasury for that expansion, but as yet we have had no response.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: Are there any future plans to have Outlook installed on Parliament House computers? If so, what is the time frame for the implementation?

The PRESIDENT: We are hoping to have some news on that issue in the very near future. Funding has been sought and a response from the Treasurer is imminent.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: Do you intend to submit a budget bid to allow the offices of members and their staff to be brought up to current occupational health and safety standards?

The PRESIDENT: I know that you lodged a maintenance of effort bid for that in the last round of bids at the end of 2010. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in achieving funding for that in the 2011-12 budget. I cannot give a guarantee that I will be seeking that funding in the next round, simply because I have not been briefed on what all the other capital requests of the three House departments are. I cannot guarantee that we will be pursuing that for 2012-13, but it will certainly be considered.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: Can you advise us of any proposals to update the multifunction units that are provided in members' offices? When will that occur?

Mr STEFANIC: The issue of members' printers has been ongoing for us in respect of a replacement program. The limited information technology capital budget that the Parliament has each year, which I might call the recurrent capital budget and which is a defined amount, is limited in terms of how much we can provide. Until now, because we are aware that a lot of members have been using their other allowances to acquire various printing devices to meet their needs, the level of priority of that has not been as high, but we recognise that the needs of some members are higher than those of others.

When printers are no longer serviceable we replace them on a case-by-case basis. We are currently doing some testing of some multifunction devices with a view to looking at replacement within the Legislative Council for all members' offices where possible. Once that testing is complete we will have a sense of cost and then we will be in a position to make a budget submission.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: Mr President, what actions are you and the Speaker taking to ensure that entries for the Parliament's three acquisitive art prizes—the Indigenous Art Prize, the Plein Air Painting Prize and the Plein Air Photography Prize—remain of a high standard?

The PRESIDENT: In the weeks that I have been the President I have been impressed with the Parliament's three art prizes. My Presiding Officer predecessors—the Hon. Amanda Fazio, the Hon. Peter Primrose and the Hon. Meredith Burgmann—have done the Parliament a great service by having those art prizes and by having them as acquisitive prizes. They contribute a fantastic legacy for the people of the State as works that have been given to us. Recently work has gone into making the Aboriginal Art Prize a quite valuable art prize—a strong relationship with the College of Fine Arts and the Campbelltown Arts Centre provides logistical and curatorial support plus commercial sponsorship—and it has made that very much a viable art prize of which we can all be proud.

As members would be aware, the Aboriginal Art Prize is currently on display in the Fountain Court. When the display is completed at the end of the month I will be speaking to my fellow Presiding Officer and officers of the Parliament about where the art prizes are at and whether we can do more to improve them in the future. The standard of entries has been of very high quality and we are very fortunate in that respect. Obviously, we want to continue to enhance those prizes in the tradition of previous Presiding Officers, who have served the Parliament well.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: Mr President, can you advise how much the purchase of your robe cost?

The PRESIDENT: I am delighted to inform the Committee that I use John Evans' old robe. There was zero cost.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: What resources have been allocated by the Department of Parliamentary Services for curating and preserving Parliament's art collection?

Mr STEFANIC: A staff member who is dedicated to the curatorial aspects of building, Mr Phil Goldsmith, is acting in the role. I am advised that there is a budget in the vicinity of approximately \$30,000 annually to manage the curatorial aspects.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: Will there be a budget to provide members' offices with new televisions? One of the complaints as a result of these budget estimates hearings is that members cannot see the broadcast on their old analogue televisions.

Mr STEFANIC: The television infrastructure at Parliament House incorporates both analogue and digital free-to-air television reception. Facilities is progressively replacing the analogue televisions with digital televisions when they break down. Consideration is currently being given to a capital program to replace all the televisions for members and Ministerial offices at a cost of approximately \$70,000.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: If I want a digital television I have to break my analogue one?

The PRESIDENT: I would not advise it.

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: But that seems to be the way things are going. If you want a new multi-function centre you sabotage your current one. Where have the embroidery panels that used to hang in this former staff dining room been located? What are the future intentions in regard to restoring those panels to public display?

The PRESIDENT: No, I cannot but it is a very good question. Having worked here for many years and having seen this room as the staff dining room I often used to admire it.

Mr STEFANIC: I am advised that it is currently being restored and when it returns we will seek an appropriate location.

CHAIR: Unfortunately the Opposition's time has expired.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Currently are there any plans to provide wireless access to the public in the public areas of Parliament House as is provided by many public buildings New South Wales?

Mr STEFANIC: The submission that I mentioned earlier planned to incorporate public areas for wi-fi access but when I mentioned an expansion it is not for free-to-air public access but it is for the use of members, members' staff, ministerial staff and people with parliamentary business. Because it is tied to the network it needs to remain secure. The intention is to expand the wi-fi to actually facilitate members' duties rather than simply provide a free-to-air system. At present there is not a plan to actually implement free access to wi-fi.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have there been any additional costs to date to the Parliament from the four-day sitting calendar?

The PRESIDENT: Good question. Any additional cost?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: There are several elements, obviously, across the three House departments. I cannot provide an answer in relation to the Department of the Legislative Assembly, as you would appreciate, because I am not given those figures. However, I would be unsurprised if the answer were that different from that of the Department of the Legislative Council. It estimates that across a full year it will cost about \$30,000 less to have the sitting calendar that we have. However, for the Department of Parliamentary Services the four-day sitting week provides some difficulties to Hansard, which occasionally needs to get in contractors to do transcripts of committees because of some scheduling issues. I think during the calendar year 2011 there has been a cost of \$5,300 so far.

The principal issue is catering, which involves a considerable cost from effectively having an extra sitting night where the Strangers Dining Room, the Members Dining Room, Café Quorum and room service are available to members. I think the estimate is \$62,000 for catering.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is that in addition to the \$30,000?

The PRESIDENT: No, the \$30,000 is a saving and the \$62,000 is a cost. I am unable to provide the saving—I presume, but I might be wrong—of the Department of the Legislative Assembly. My guess is that there are probably swings and roundabouts coming out approximately even. When I have a better sense of what

the sitting day calendar will be next year then I think I will have a word to Madam Speaker and see what she thinks. I will then talk to the various parties, the Whips, and see what their views are in terms of our catering needs for the coming year and see whether we can actually move it into not just an approximately cost-neutral position but into a position where we are actually getting a saving.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I assume the review will look at costs of broken sitting weeks where the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council have different sitting schedules in a week?

The PRESIDENT: I think the preference of certainly both the Government and the Opposition and, I understand, The Greens is that they would like a synchronised sitting week calendar in 2012. I have certainly passed on that message.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Looking forward for the balance of this financial year, what proportion of the committee budgets have been allocated to date? Do you see any pressures for the balance of the year?

Mr BLUNT: For probably 12 years or thereabouts the way the committee budgets have operated is that they are effectively pooled. There is one pool for committee budgets. Approximately half of the funding for the Department of the Legislative Council relates to committees and the other half to supporting the sittings of the House. That funding is pooled and the costs are brought in against that depending on the workload of various committees. We do not split up the budget so that each committee gets its own funding separately.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How is it going?

Mr BLUNT: After three months of the current financial year the Department of the Legislative Council is pretty much on track. We are just slightly over budget. We are pretty much on track. I guess one of the difficulties with the budget for an organisation such as the Department of the Legislative Council is that it is very difficult to predict the workload. We will provide professional expert assistance and support for whatever committees are established by the House and support whatever inquiries are adopted by the committees but we do not know from one day to another how many inquiries that will be.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Does being on track mean that the established committees and inquiries are expected to exhaust the pool by the end of the financial year or is there an amount available for additional inquiries to be held?

The PRESIDENT: Which ones do you have in mind?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That is for another hearing. Do we expect the pool to be extended with the current set of inquiries or will funding be made available for additional inquiries given that so much of the year is yet to run?

Mr BLUNT: We have not made any bids for supplementation at this stage. If another couple of select committees were established out of the blue, for instance, we would reserve the right to make supplementation bids such as we did a couple of years ago when the Select Committee on Recreational Fishing was established and had a heavy program of regional visits and hearings.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The budget papers suggest an 18 per cent reduction in capital expenditure from last year. What is the explanation for that?

Mr SMITH: As members know, the capital budget changes year to year and is subject to multiple-year projects. A number of projects in 2010-11 were single-year projects and they will not be carried forward to 2011-12 because they have been completed. The most notable exception to that general principle is the security and exit lighting project, which has carried over into the 2011-12 financial year. A minor capital works allocation of \$2.377 million with minor escalations is made each year. An amount of \$882,000 has been set aside in 2011-12 for the replacement of the broadcast system in the Legislative Council. An amount of \$250,000 has also been set aside for some additional work relating to electorate offices and minor additional major work for post-election accommodation in the Parliament House precinct. In total we have an \$8.6 million capital allocation for the current year. The projects that were run in the previous year, for example, the fit-out of the Macquarie Room, the other capital projects—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The cessation of those one-year projects?

Mr SMITH: Yes, they have been completed.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Did you say that the allocation for the broadcast system was \$882,000?

Mr SMITH: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Will that include work to enable the broadcasting of General Purpose Standing Committee hearings?

The PRESIDENT: That \$882,000 is an allocation for the replacement of the Chamber broadcast functions. The physical broadcasting system in the Chamber is being replaced, so it relates to proceedings there.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are there any plans to web stream General Purpose Standing Committee hearings such as this one?

Mr STEFANIC: We are currently scoping web streaming technology for the broadcast facilities in the Parliament—that is, the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council chambers, the Macquarie Room and the Jubilee Room.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is this hearing being streamed through that device in the corner to the intranet?

Mr STEFANIC: The Macquarie Room is not currently web streamed.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is the status of water recycling and solar panel use in Parliament House?

The Hon. AMANDA FAZIO: We fixed it up: it is excellent.

The PRESIDENT: The executive manager will confirm that.

Mr STEFANIC: I am advised that the detail is in the annual report. Because the question requires a detailed answer I will take it on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is the cost of the replacement of the glass on the eastern side of Parliament House and why is it being done?

The PRESIDENT: The parliamentary facilities team commenced the project earlier this year, so it is not in the current budget allocation; it is carried over. The work is designed to improve safety and security on the Hospital Road side of the Parliament House. One aspect of the work involves the installation of new glazing and steel frames in the large windows. The work commenced in July and is expected to be completed by February 2012. Donnelley Constructions Pty Ltd has been contracted to undertake the construction works. The cost of the glazing works is estimated at \$2.314 million including GST. The additional cost incurred for architects, engineers and project consultation is \$430,000. That is the scope of the work currently under way.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is the purpose of the work?

The PRESIDENT: Members are aware of the longstanding protocol that Presiding Officers do not discuss the Parliament's security operations in public. If further details are required the member is most welcome to approach me to discuss them. I take that view consistent with the view taken by previous Presiding Officers at estimates committee hearings.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I understand that during the recreational fishing inquiry Legislative Council staff undertook an outreach visit program to local secondary schools. Was that initiative viewed as a success and are there any plans to continue it in 2011-12?

The PRESIDENT: I thank the honourable member for the question and I congratulate the department for the work that it is doing in this area, which was commenced under my predecessor. The department is committed to improving access to information about the Legislative Council and its committees to enhance

community awareness of the role of the Legislative Council. Further to this, one of the projects undertaken by the Procedural Research and Training Unit of the Department of the Legislative Council has been to accompany committees on regional visits to conduct regional school outreach sessions. On those occasions that committees are compelled to use charter flight services and there is space available the unit will offer to present an information session at a local secondary school. These sessions are subject to the consent of the committee and are undertaken in consultation with the Parliamentary Education Section.

The outreach sessions are held in a location adjacent to or nearby the venue in which the relevant public hearing is being held. The sessions, which last for approximately two hours, comprise an overview of the State Parliament and its relationship to the community and the Government, a discussion of the role and function of the Legislative Council and its committees, an explanation of the inquiry process with particular reference to the current inquiry, an opportunity to view the proceedings of the hearing for 10 to 15 minutes, and a group workshop session with a view to students either undertaking a role play of the public hearing or developing a summary of their views and ideas to be formally forwarded to the committee. This initiative, as the honourable member has mentioned, was first undertaken last year at Batemans Bay and Griffith during the inquiry into recreational fishing. These sessions were well received by the students involved.

The procedural research and training unit is currently liaising with local schools with a view to coordinating four further information sessions, and they are as follows: On 31 October in Taree, as part of the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 inquiry into coal seam gas; on 2 November in Parkes, as part of the State Development Committee inquiry into economic and social development in central western New South Wales; on 4 November in Broken Hill, as part of the same inquiry of the State Development Committee; and on 16 November in Narrabri in relation to the coal seam gas inquiry. The initial response from schools has been positive, with confirmed interest already for both the Taree and Parkes sessions. It should be noted that making use of the spare seat capacity on the charter flight incurs no additional cost. Costs to undertake the information sessions are venue hire and accommodation, and any associated staffing costs in terms of running the sessions. I think it is a very worthwhile initiative for which I applaud the staff.

The Hon. CHARLIE LYNN: Is the twinning project in the budget papers and, if so, could you provide an overview of the twinning activities with the Solomon Islands and Bougainville during 2010-11 and advise what is planned for 2011-12?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, and I thank the honourable member for the question. I know he has a very strong interest in matters to do with Papua New Guinea. To answer the first part of the question, the amount of money that is available for the twinning project is in Budget Paper No. 3 on page 1-8 under Revenue, Grants and contributions. The amounts listed there are solely for the twinning project. I have to say that again I am extraordinarily proud of the work that the staff do on twinning. I think it was an excellent initiative, supported by the previous presiding officers, which I think brings a lot of credit on the New South Wales Parliament.

As part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's twinning program, we have partnership agreements, and therefore are twinned, with the parliament of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville—its chamber is the Bougainville House of Representatives—and the National Parliament of Solomon Islands. Funding is provided by AusAID through a three-year funding agreement, which commenced in April 2010. The funded activity is, "Strengthening parliamentary institutions in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville". The anticipated cost of the activity is \$1.17 million over three years, with \$844,356 provided through AusAID and the balance from the participating parliaments, largely in the form of staff time. The core of the activity is secondments and placements of staff between the parliaments.

Other elements of the activity include the establishment of a formal mentoring arrangement, technical and corporate support, collaboration on research and writing tasks, and the development of a framework to assist other parliaments that may be interested in learning from the experience of the twinned parliaments. Throughout 2010-11 a number of secondments, visits and placements of staff took place. In addition support was provided through formal training and mentoring arrangements. In July 2010 a delegation visited Bougainville to ceremonially acknowledge the partnership agreement between the parliaments, which included the Hon. Amanda Fazio as President, and to participate in a committee workshop for new members. Also during this time the twinning co-ordinator visited the Bougainville and Solomon Islands parliaments to plan activities for the coming year.

In September 2010 Mr Edwin Kenehata, Education Officer with the Bougainville House of Representatives, was seconded to the Legislative Assembly Procedure Office and the New South Wales Parliament Education and Community Relations Section. During October and November 2010 New South Wales Parliament Procedure Office staff were placed with the National Parliament of Solomon Islands to assist in establishing a procedure office. In addition, David Kusilifu, the director of committees of the Solomon Islands parliament, was seconded to the New South Wales Parliament Legislative Council Procedure Office.

In February 2011 the New South Wales Parliament hosted the Centre for Democratic Institutions' Effective Parliamentary Committee Inquiries course, a week-long intensive course aimed at parliamentary staff of the Asia-Pacific region and sponsored by the World Bank and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Three of the participants were from the National Parliament of Solomon Islands and three from the Bougainville House of Representatives, with one Bougainville participant sponsored from twinning project funds. Following this, six staff from Bougainville and the Solomon Islands stayed on to participate in a three-day program conducted by committee staff designed to build on the lessons learned the previous week. Participants were able to develop practical responses to the challenges they face as committee staff in their home parliaments.

Also in February 2011, the New South Wales Parliament hosted the Bougainville Public Accounts Committee Chair, the honourable Cosmas Sohia, who was returning to Bougainville from Victoria where he and other staff attended a week-long Public Accounts Committee Summer Residency Program funded from the twinning project. During Mr Sohia's time in Sydney he met with the current Auditor-General, Mr Peter Achterstraat, New South Wales Public Accounts Committee staff and former New South Wales Public Accounts Committee Chair, Paul McLeay.

In March 2011, four New South Wales Parliament staff travelled to Buka to observe a sitting of the Bougainville House of Representatives and assist staff with implementing procedure office enhancements, strengthening of the Public Accounts Committee and information technology needs. Also in March, selected New South Wales Parliament staff commenced an attachment to the National Parliament of the Solomon Islands to assist in the implementation of plans developed by David Kusilifu for the establishment of a procedure office. Mr John Taupongi was temporarily employed from March 2011 as a Twinning Project Research Officer to undertake research and writing tasks associated with the twinning project. Mr Taupongi is currently completing a Master of Laws degree with the University of New South Wales on an AusAID scholarship and is a former parliamentary officer of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands where he provided expert procedural and constitutional advice to the Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament.

In May 2011, Legislative Council Committee Director, Beverly Duffy, participated in a month-long attachment with the Bougainville House of Representatives Public Accounts Committee. The attachment coincided with the Public Accounts Committee's first ever public inquiry in Bougainville. A follow-up attachment occurred in August 2011 to assist with the committee's second inquiry. In addition, two staff from Bougainville House of Representatives, John Bosco and Joel Tukana, were attached to the Papua New Guinea National Parliament with a focus on information services—Hansard and library research. In June 2011, a study visit to the New South Wales Parliament was made by a Bougainville delegation, the Speaker, the honourable Andrew Miriki, and the Clerk, Mr Robert Tapi. The study visit was co-sponsored by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Education Trust Fund.

In the current financial year, these are some of the things we have planned. In July 2011, professional development courses for staff of the Bougainville House of Representatives in information technology and other relevant skills were provided by local training consultants. Further courses were provided in September 2011. In August 2011 Committee Director of the Legislative Council, Rachel Callinan, was attached to the Bougainville House of Representatives Public Accounts Committee for one month to assist with the committee's second public inquiry and to consolidate the experience and skills gained by the Public Accounts Committee staff during the May 2011 attachment of a New South Wales Parliament committee director.

In September 2011 a meeting took place with the Bougainville House of Representatives Director of Committees, Moses Havini, and the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea committee secretaries as part of ongoing development of a professional relationship between the two parliaments, with special emphasis on the National Public Accounts Committee and the Bougainville House of Representatives Public Accounts Committee. Twinning project support for this meeting recognises the important role of regional support for the Bougainville House of Representatives into the future.

In October 2011 a six-week secondment commenced of the Executive Officer of the Bougainville Parliament to the New South Wales Parliament Procedure offices—across both Houses—to provide exposure to the procedures and practices of the New South Wales Parliament and to develop context-appropriate procedural resources for the Bougainville House of Representatives. In November 2011, Edwin Kenehata, the Clerk Assistant—Procedure and Education Officer, Bougainville House of Representatives, will participate in the Australasian Parliamentary Educators Conference to be held in Brisbane. The activity will include one week with the New South Wales Parliament, the last sitting week of 2011, to consolidate recent developments in procedural support for the Bougainville House of Representatives.

During this financial year a local area network for the Bougainville House of Representatives building will be established on the recommendations contained in the report prepared by New South Wales Parliament Information Technology Business Systems Manager during the March 2011 placement of New South Wales Parliament staff with the Bougainville House of Representatives. The local area network will be funded by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's Education Trust Fund, and it will be installed and maintained by local information technology providers in Papua New Guinea and Bougainville. Support will be provided for the participation of Bougainville committee staff in training programs to be held in 2012, such as the Centre for Democratic Institutions Effective Parliamentary Committee Inquiries course and the Public Accounts Committee Summer Residency program. Placement of an experienced New South Wales Parliament procedure officer with the Bougainville House of Representatives, timed with a sitting of the Bougainville Parliament is proposed for early 2012, subject to sitting dates in Bougainville. The placement would enable assistance in the implementation of procedural resources developed during the October-November secondments of Bougainville procedure staff. Did I hear the bell?

CHAIR: Yes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I have quite a bit of detail about what is proposed in the Solomon Islands. I seek leave to have the balance of my answer incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Solomon Islands

In July 2011, the Presiding Officers and Clerks of the New South Wales Parliament visited the Solomon Islands to formally acknowledge the partnership arrangements between the two parliaments.

In July 2011 a placement of Lynlee Earles, New Zealand Parliament Hansard Manager was organised to support management of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands (NPSI) Hansard staff and assist with implementation of recommendations arising from the internal review of Hansard. NSW Parliament's Hansard system is different to that of the NPSI and a decision was therefore made to request assistance from the NZ Parliament.

During July and August 2011, the Deputy Clerk and Human Resources Manager, NPSI were seconded to the New South Wales Parliament to develop human resources systems and policies and to gain experience in corporate strategic planning to meet the ongoing needs of the NPSI.

In October 2011 Deborah Brown, Manager—Reference and Information Services, New South Wales Parliament commenced a one week placement with the NPSI to participate in an internal review of the NPSI Library. The review will provide focus and direction for the NPSI Library as it meets the needs of Members into the future.

In early 2012 a placement of an experienced New South Wales Parliament Procedure officer to work with new and existing staff in the NPSI Procedure Office to consolidate practices and systems implemented since the commencement of the Twinning project is proposed.

Support will be provided for the participation of NPSI Committee staff in training programs to be held in 2012, such as the Centre for Democratic Institutions Effective Parliamentary Committee Inquiries course. Dates will be subject to availability of relevant and suitable courses.

CHAIR: The time for this hearing has expired. I thank the President and other officers for their attendance today.

(The witnesses withdrew)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.
