

Questions on Notice

THE LEGISLATURE

1. Asset value

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: A good indicator is the written-down value of the assets on the books at the moment. What is it? Leave out any carrying value of this building, which should have been negative.

The PRESIDENT: We will take that on notice and we will come back to you.

The written down value of the Parliament's assets at the end of June 2019, excluding the Parliament of NSW building complex and the land it stands on, was \$84.501 million. This includes plant and equipment of \$26.133 million; collection assets \$48.835 million; and intangibles \$9.533 million.

2. Visitation

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Have you got any reading of the numbers and the amount of visitation that comes to this building—because it is also a big tourist attraction?

The PRESIDENT: Yes, huge. We have got those numbers. I can take that on notice but we keep a complete record. Can I indicate that the numbers are increasing, which is great news. What is even better news is that the students are increasing, especially with the new Education Centre.

The recorded visitor numbers for last Financial Year 2018-2019 is 314,950

3. Parliamentary budget models - comparative

I would draw the Committee's attention to an interesting paper that the Victorian Parliament produced on the independence of parliament budgets, which does an excellent comparison of a few models around the world

A number of these matters have been discussed in a paper that Mr President gave to a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association [CPA] conference around 12 months ago.

The PRESIDENT: I am happy to have the Clerk forward that paper to the Committee. It raises quite a number of these issues.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And that Victorian Parliament paper as well.

The PRESIDENT: We will send both.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you, Mr President. I know you have indicated that you will circulate the paper but given the success of the Victorian example, can you take on notice perhaps to summarise for us what are the mechanics and the procedures that enabled the Victorian legislature to come to that point?

The PRESIDENT: I will take it one step further. I am happy to take on notice the Victorian approach, the Commonwealth and an example like Canada. I think, from memory one of the Territory governments—

Mr BLUNT: The Australian Capital Territory.

The PRESIDENT: I am happy to give you the ACT approach. I am happy to do that, and I am happy to receive those examples.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you.

The Victorian Parliament does not have a process to independently set its budget. Information around how it achieved its current funding arrangements are not publicly available.

4. Staffing – Hansard

2%, if I can get it down to 0% I do not have to consider any of this.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: There is a specific proposal around redundancies. You have sought redundancies on a voluntary basis, I believe, from Hansard. Is that correct?

The PRESIDENT: Correct. Maybe if I give you the figures. In 2013 there were 22 full-time staff for Hansard, in 2014 there were 20, in 2015 there were 18, in 2016 it remained at 18, in 2017 there were 17, in 2018 there were 16 and in 2019 it has remained at 16. But at the same time you will see an overwhelming increase of part-time staff. From 2013 it was one, now this year it is four. You will see an overwhelming increase from regular casual staff from two to four. You will see temporary part-time staff from zero to seven.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: Do you have a full-time equivalent [FTE] for that drop, or what is the FTE equivalent?

From 2013 to September 2019, the FTE count of ongoing Hansard staff went from 22 to 20.32. However, the addition of six temporary part-time staff in 2019-20 increased the FTE count to 24.64. DPS will seek funding from Treasury to convert those temporary positions into ongoing positions from 2020-21.

5. Salary dispute special constables

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Mr President, I am conscious of the time. We only have 20 minutes left. I have three miscellaneous questions to ask. One, I hear that there is a salary dispute with special constables. Is that correct? If so, has it been resolved?

The PRESIDENT: The special constables do not come under the jurisdiction of the DPS, the LC or the LA. They come under the jurisdiction of the Police cluster and, of course, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. You need to ask that question of the police Minister.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: If there is a dispute, how would it affect us?

The PRESIDENT: Again, I cannot get involved in the dispute. I am happy to take the question on notice. I will flick it to the police Minister and have him come back.

Parliament is aware of the current dispute between PSA and NSW Police Force. We value the work of the Special constables greatly, but pay and conditions are a matter for NSW Police Force. We are confident that the safety and security of members, staff and visitors will not be compromised by or during any industrial action

6. Closed circuit cctv

Mr WEBB: The *Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) and Security Access Control Systems (NSW Parliament House) Policy* is available on the intranet. I am happy to forward a copy to the Committee.

The NSW Parliament House Closed Circuit Television Security Access Control Systems Policy found on the Parliament's [intranet](#)

7. Efficiency dividends & the cumulative impact

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There are a couple of numbers that would be useful. One is in real terms what is the current cumulative impact in this year's budget of the efficiency dividends since they have been implemented?

The PRESIDENT: I will take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And what is that as a percentage of that part of the budget that is subject to efficiency?

The PRESIDENT: I will take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Could we also get the cumulative cost of the efficiency dividends? Because of course that first efficiency dividend has now been paid for 13 times in a row. I will find those three figures very useful.

The PRESIDENT: We will take that on notice. My figures went back to 2013 but we will go back to day one.

Savings in the form of efficiency dividends have been applied to the Parliament since 2004/05. For 2004/05 to 2006/07 they were called global budget savings. The total amount applied to Parliament from 2004/05 through to 2021-22 (efficiency dividends have already been levied for the next two financial years) amounts to \$12.448 million. The cumulative cost of these savings over this period amounts to \$113.84 million.

In addition to this the Parliament has been subject to other savings schemes including program savings amounting to \$553,000 (2012/13 and 2013/14) and labour cap savings totalling \$1.438 million (2012/13 to 2015/16). The cumulative amount of these two savings schemes was \$6.354 million.

8. Committee papers process

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In terms of committee papers, the process at the moment if we have a committee with a large number of submissions is that we get them provided to us in tranches, largely as zip files. They are then downloaded at our end, either put onto an iPad or printed out. I assume it is laborious for the committee staff in distributing it and laborious for my staff and myself in downloading and allocating it. Surely there is a more efficient way of distributing committee submissions among members. Either we have a shared drive or the like. What has been done there?

The PRESIDENT: Mr Shoebridge, the ultimate situation—we have been talking about this but again it comes down to funding—it would be good if each and every MLC is given an iPad by the LC and that iPad shares a drive and the committees are able to download into that iPad whatever they use. It could be done in an appropriate way where it can be accessed. There are a number of programs that allow that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am sure there are sophisticated document management systems that would do this simply and with much less time for everybody.

The PRESIDENT: We will have a look at that. We will take it on notice.

Mr BLUNT: This would be the sort of thing that we would love to work on and develop in consultation with members and our colleagues in DPS—

The PRESIDENT: Which takes it back to the budget.

Mr BLUNT: —if we were able to reinvest the savings that we make in other areas.

The PRESIDENT: We will take these on notice because we are going to run out of time.

Parliament is in the process of modernising the systems that manage parliamentary information and support members in doing their jobs. We have sought capital funding from Treasury for the last three years for this project, known as PIMS (Parliamentary Information Management System) but this has not been provided. Parliament has therefore had to fund PIMS work by allocating a proportion of our limited minor works capital funding for which it has to compete with other essential maintenance, repair and asset replacement work. While the idea outlined in the question is a valuable one, other more essential PIMS development (including tabled papers, house papers and votes/minutes information management) has come first, some of which is currently in progress this financial year. We anticipate implementing a solution to providing committee submissions to members more seamlessly within the next one to two years.

9. *WiFi*

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Wi-fi. I do not know how many times it drops out. Then each time it drops out you have to press your consent or your agreement. Surely we could register the devices of members and staff so that we are given a grant of consent and we do not have to keep doing it. It would save a lot of time and would get rid of a lot of frustration with the wi-fi.

The PRESIDENT: We will take it on notice. You will see some very pleasing results in two months' time.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Cool, because when I turn up at home it just automatically logs on and when I turn up at Parliament I get consent delays.

The PRESIDENT: Mr Shoebridge, I am in exactly the same position you are in. I know exactly what you are talking about.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So it is going to be fixed? Is that what I understand?

Mr WEBB: It is. We are working on it.

The PRESIDENT: We are working on it. Give us two months. But we will give you a more detailed answer on notice.

As part of a project to upgrade WiFi services within Parliament and to extend this service to electorate offices, IT Services is deploying a feature that provides for certificate based connectivity. Certificate based connectivity automates the connection to the Wi-fi and avoids the need for members and staff to grant consent to terms and conditions each time they attach. To be eligible to access this new feature, you must have an email account on the Parliamentary email system with a mobile device that has been enabled with access to their Parliamentary email account. All others accessing WiFi services will continue to be classified as "guests" and be required to agree to the required terms and conditions each time they attach. It is expected that this new service will be enabled across the entire WiFi network within Parliament by November 2019.

10. *Catering diversity (vegan options & egg options)*

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are there proposals to have more vegan options in the cafeteria? Can we be sure that the eggs that are served are free-range eggs in the cafeteria and in all parliamentary catering?

The PRESIDENT: I meet with the catering staff, I meet with the chef, I meet with Lee on a number of occasions. That is being considered. I will take the question on notice and I will give you another opportunity to remind me to talk to him about it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: This is not my question but I have had a member ask, "You can boil eggs, you can poach eggs. Why are there never any scrambled eggs?"

The PRESIDENT: I have had the same question put to me. I will take that on notice and get back to you. Maybe unscrambling the egg is the problem.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I don't know if we can unscramble that egg.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: While we are on food, usually there is bacon. Can there be non-bacon as well?

The PRESIDENT: In what?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: That goes back to the vegan question that I had.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: In the hamburgers.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Mr President, the last time I saw a kangaroo steak here was a real long time ago and I expect to be seeing that again.

The PRESIDENT: I will take that on notice as well.

The weekly menu in Café Quorum always contains one vegetarian or vegan option, and the soups are often vegan. If the vegetarian option contains an animal product (e.g. cheese), it can be made vegan on request. There is also capacity for the kitchen to cater for a request by staff for a vegan meal. In addition to hot meals, vegan options available at all times in the cafe include salads, sushi, hot chips and soy milk for hot drinks. There is also fresh fruit and packaged protein balls for snacks.

As with Café Quorum, there is always a vegetarian or vegan option on the Strangers and Members Dining menu and vegan requests can be accommodated. While not always advertised on the menu, there is vegan sorbet available as a dessert option.

All our eggs come locally from free roaming cage-free chickens.

11. Waste and moving to zero waste

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I knew I shouldn't have taken the lid off this particular issue. Can I also ask about waste and moving to a zero waste approach for our cafeteria and for staff particularly in terms of drink receptacles, drink containers?

The PRESIDENT: Sorry, I thought you said weight.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is linked to weight because it is about calories.

The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN: Not your weight, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: That is what I got a bit upset about.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is linked to both weight and waste but are there plans afoot to reduce the waste, reduce the packaging and go to zero?

The PRESIDENT: I have got a couple of pages on this because I was anticipating it. But can I indicate that I will take a lot of it on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I am happy for that.

Dates of BioPak implementation August 2018 in café Quorum, then rolling out through the rest of Catering spaces.

Parliamentary Catering began the process of the removal of single use plastics in all catering spaces in the 2018-19 financial year, whilst maintaining minimum disruption to services and the quality and range of options on offer to members and staff. This approach is in line with community expectations and also in line with what other parliaments around Australia are in the process of achieving.

Parliamentary Catering is 100% committed to the removal of non-biodegradable and single use plastics. In fact in August 2018, Café Quorum commenced a major transformation with the removal of most plastic and non-biodegradable items. This transformation included the following changes:

Straws: replacement with paper straws

- *Food packaging:* replacement with compostable plastic packaging
- *Coffee cups:* replacement with non-waxed compostable paper cups
- *Coffee lids:* replacement with compostable plastic lids
- *Plates:* birch or hard cardboard compostable plates
- *Cutlery:* birch compostable cutlery.

Parliamentary Catering has continued to work with our supplier BioPak to source the new products and replace any leftover plastic/non-biodegradable stock we currently have to minimise waste and costs. These even include compostable bin liners.

Working together with the facilities branch, we have engaged BioPak to provide compostable waste bins for a complete point to point recycling and environmental waste management system that truly sets a standard not seen before in the Parliament. Following a successful trial in selected locations throughout the building we have recently expanded the service to include the parliament's commercial kitchens on Levels 6 and 7.

With further regard to waste reduction as of this year, with assistance of the President's Office, we are in the process of engaging the Exodus Foundation, founded By Reverend Bill Cruise to ascertain whether our café Quorum left overs can be utilised by them in their food outlets, such as part of their mobile night food van services.