

## Departments of the Parliament

### PAEC 2022-23 Estimates Hearing - Response to Questions Taken on Notice

#### Question 1

*Budget paper 3 at page 129 details the investments that are being made into that: \$3 million for 2022–23 and \$600 000 for 2023–24. The line item states ‘protective security upgrades and service enhancements.’ I was just hoping, following on from your presentation as well, you would be able to take us through exactly what that money is being spent on.*

#### Response

Page 129 of Budget Paper No. 3 is for Asset Initiatives. The Protective Security Upgrades and Service Enhancements include measures to maintain and upgrade the physical security in place at Parliament House and electorate offices. These measures include:

- i. Expansion and upgrades to existing CCTV systems.
- ii. Additional and upgraded visitor screening and prohibited item detection technologies.
- iii. More efficient systems to manage access control.
- iv. Improvements to pedestrian management, fencing and alarm systems.

#### Question 2

- a) *DPS headcount has grown by 27 per cent in the budget and by 102 per cent since 2014–15. I was wanting to know what the major areas are of headcount growth—so the specific skill set, I guess, and positions.*
- b) *What costs outside salaries have grown the most in DPS since 2014-15?*
- c) *When was the last review of the mix of contractor versus employee, particularly for IT?*

#### Response 2

- a) The majority of staffing increases have occurred in the following areas:
  - i. security and IT staff in direct response to changing needs and expanding demand.
  - ii. broadcasting service which was a relatively new service in 2014-15 and has since expanded to provide broadcasting of committee hearings, regional sitting etc.
  - iii. major building projects requiring project and construction management related staff.
  - iv. work health and safety with a focus on continual improvement and management of risk.
  - v. new business units such as Member Services.
- b) The following non-salary expenses have grown the most since 2014-15:
  - i. \$0.9m estimated increase in security guards’ expense when comparing 2014-15 actual expense of \$0.6m to 2021-22 estimated expense of \$1.5m.
  - ii. Commercial rent growth and changed standards have driven a \$2.2m increase in electorate office rents when comparing 2014-15 actual expense of \$5.3m to 2021-22 estimated expense of \$7.6m. Rent costs are expected to continue to increase as more offices are relocated and brought into compliance with current standards.
  - iii. The Independent Remuneration Tribunal’s most recent determination has shifted the cost of preventative maintenance and equipment servicing expenses at electorate offices from the Electorate Office and Communications budget to the Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS). The impact of this is estimated at \$0.8m which has been budgeted in 2021-22 and will be reviewed for future years at the end of the next financial year.

- iv. Electorate office relocations and refurbishment cost were \$1m in 2014-15. These works are now being capitalised with a relocation and refurbishment project budget of \$5.9m in 2021-22 (relocation projects include security overlays).
  - v. Parliament's capital works actual expenditure in 2014-15 was \$19.3m. The capital works budget for 2021-22 (excluding electorate office relocation and refurbishment projects noted above) is \$35.1m. This includes stage 12 and 13 of Parliament House Stone Façade Restoration project and the Parliament House East Wing Refurbishment project.
  - vi. \$4.9m estimated increase in depreciation expense (buildings, plant & equipment, leasehold improvements, and intangible assets) when comparing 2014-15 actual expense of \$13.8m to 2021-22 estimated expense of \$18.7m.
- c) IT continuously assesses the composition of its workforce to meet current and future demands. DPS currently does not have contractors working in its IT team. The preference is to generally only rely on contractors when the tasks are of a specialist nature or for short periods during recruitment activities. Examples of such circumstances include:
- i. where a narrow expertise does not warrant a permanent member of staff or where the service is required on an ad-hoc basis
  - ii. short term technical specialist for a project or specific one-off activity
  - iii. to fill in gaps between recruitment (e.g. following a staff departure)
  - iv. where roles have not been able to be filled following multiple recruitment processes.

### Question 3

***How many EOs now have CCTV? What has that cost to roll that out to all the electorate offices?***

### Response 3

111 electorate offices have been upgraded with a new security overlay, which includes CCTV. These were done either as a standalone upgrade or as part of planned relocations and refurbishments. The total cost equates to approximately \$5m.

### Question 4

***This is sensitive, and you may also say it is DPC. But in terms of personal protective security for MPs (personal protection for a period of time due to threats), has there been anyone require that other than ministers or the Leader of the Opposition, for example, and is that something that would be provided by Parliament if it was deemed necessary?***

### Response 4

Personal protective security is provided to key officeholders by Victoria Police (not Parliament).

Security for Members' homes is currently overseen by DPC, although some security has been provided at Members' private residential locations in direct response to increased and credible threats related to their roles as MPs.

## Question 5

***Would changing the constitution to remove that doubt about Members capacity to be able to fully participate in Parliament, voting in Particular, would essentially require the government to introduce legislation?***

### Response 5

At the very least, legislation would be required. It is possible that a referendum of Victorian voters would also be needed. Sections 32 and 40 of the *Constitution Act 1975* set out the quorum requirements for the Council and Assembly respectively and say that questions (decisions) must be taken by a majority of Members 'present and voting'.

Sections 32 and 40 are entrenched by way of a referendum. This means that those sections can't be amended by legislation alone. Following a bill to change those provisions, the change must be agreed by way of a referendum of Victorian voters. It may be open to the Parliament to amend another section that doesn't trigger a referendum to provide for remote voting, but it would need to be done in such a way that does not create legal uncertainty about what s 32 and 40 mean.