

QUESTION 1:

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I wanted to turn now to committees. I was wondering about the budget of each committee. Does each committee have a limited budget? Who's responsible for managing that? What sort of oversight exists for the budget of each committee?

DAVID BLUNT: Yes, I'd be happy to answer that, Mr Rath. We have a somewhat unique set of administrative arrangements for the provision of support to committees here in the New South Wales Legislative Council and I think it is a system that works particularly well. I do think we're national leaders in this field. I think the quality of support that's provided to our committees is really second to none. There is a budget for committee operations across all of our committees and the committee secretariat supports all committees. At any point in time, officers in the committee office may be supporting not just one but often two different committees at the same time, often two different inquiries at once and sometimes more than that. We would not have been able to support the extraordinary workload of Legislative Council committees over recent years if we had operated on the basis of a siloed approach with a separate secretariat for each committee; that would require something like 15 separate secretariats and 15 separate budgets. So the budget is a whole and the secretariat operates as a whole.

It is important to note that the additional workload of committees throughout the last term of Parliament resulted in a number of budget bids being made to Treasury. Those budget bids were supported and the committee budget was supplemented and we were able to employ additional staff to support committees. If you'd like further information as to the exact numbers of staff members in the committee office and the exact dollar figures for the committee budget for this financial year, I'd be more than happy to provide that information on notice or later during the hearing today.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Yes, that would be good, on notice. I think what might be good—and I'm happy to put some questions on notice some supplementary questions for you—is the increase over time in the committee load for the Parliament—for the Legislative Council—in terms of the numbers of staff, the increase in budget, the increase in the number of committees and numbers of inquiries that have existed, maybe since 2010. I assume that if you looked at it over time you'd probably see quite a sharp increase in the number of inquiries in the amount of committee work over the last 12 or 13 years. It would be good to get some data on that so that we can look at that increase and we can all be mindful as well of the increased work on the very diligent committee staff that we work with. Anything that you can provide on that would be very helpful—on notice, of course.

DAVID BLUNT: Thank you

RESPONSE:

The budget for the Committee Office for this financial year is \$5,802,000.

There are currently 35 established positions in the Committee Office. This consists of:

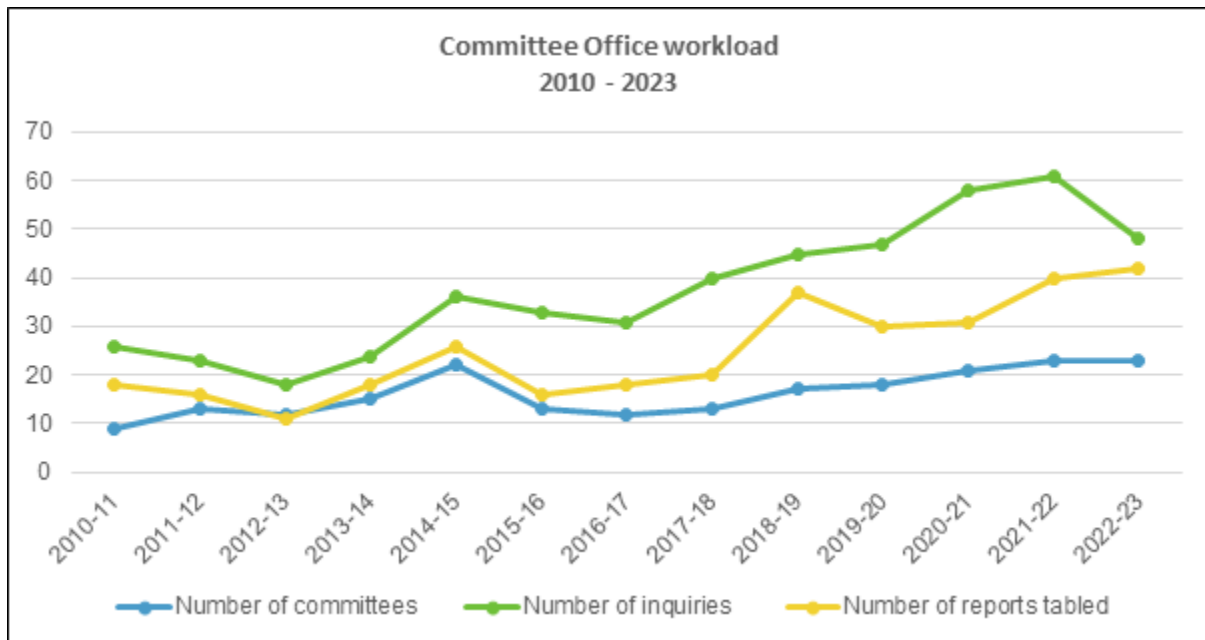
- 1 Clerk Assistant position (currently being job shared)
- 6 Directors
- 16 Principal Council Officers (inquiry managers)
- 5 Senior Council Officers
- 2 Council Officers
- 5 Administration Officers.

Committee staff generally work across multiple inquiries, and are not attached to specific committees. This often means that Directors are leading anywhere between 3-6 inquiries on average, at any given time, and Principal Council Officers are managing 1-2 inquiries too.

As can be seen in the table and graph on the next pages, the workload in the Committee Office has increased since 2010, most notably since the 56th Parliament (2015-2019). In particular:

- the number of committees being supported by the Committee Office has at least doubled since 2010. For example, in 2010-11 there were only 9 committees, consisting of 8 standing committees and 1 select committee, whereas in 2021-22 and 2022-23, there were 23 committees.
- the number of inquiries being supported has also increased over the last decade. As can be seen in the table, in 2021-22 staff supported 61 inquiries, whereas in 2010-11 there were 26 inquiries. Even in 2022-2023, which included an election period, the number of inquiries supported was 48, whereas in 2018-2019, also an election year, the number of inquiries was 45.
- the number of reports being tabled has also increased over time. For example, in 2022-23 the number of reports tabled was 42, whereas in 2010-11 there were 18 reports tabled.

To meet higher workload levels, the Committee Office received a funding boost of \$1.31M in the 2022/2023 budget, which was during the previous Parliament. This allowed the employment of an additional Director and 4 additional Principal Council Officers, and to continue the funding of the Senior Council Officer grade 7/8 positions which received initial funding in the 2012/2022 budget. The adoption of these additional positions has undoubtedly been essential to meeting the increasing volume of committee inquiries, and it is hoped that this funding will be secured permanently moving forward.



QUESTION 2:

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr President, I'm going to start by asking if you could please outline the budget for your office, specifically, the total budget for the operation of your office, the total budget for your travel, the total catering budget for your office and the discretionary budget for your office. If you need to take those on notice, I'm happy to—

The PRESIDENT: I will take that on notice, but I am very happy to provide all that.

RESPONSE:

In 2022/23 the allocated budget for the Office of the President was \$917,600. This includes salary costs for staff members and office operating expenses.

QUESTION 3:

The Hon. WES FANG: Everybody travelled business class. Are you able to provide, on notice, the cost of the trip and the accommodation?

The PRESIDENT: Yes. We're very happy to. I can't give it to you right now, and the reason why is because the CPA actually provide a rebate for a portion of that trip and a portion of the costs. So what we'll do is we'll come back to you happily on notice and provide all that information.

RESPONSE:

The overall known cost of attendance at the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in Accra, Ghana is \$12,377.05*

Cost breakdown:

- Flights: To be determined*

Item	The Hon. Ben Franklin	Mr William Coates	Mr David Blunt
Accommodation	\$2,885.36	\$2,564.77	\$2,564.77
Conference registration	-	\$917.43	\$1,529.05
Diplomatic passport	\$510.91	-	-
Travel visa	\$65.26	\$65.26	\$65.26
Travel SIM card	\$62.99	\$62.99	-
Travel vaccinations and medical expenses	\$368.00	\$600.00	\$115.00**
Total	\$3,892.52	\$4,210.45	\$4,274.08

* CPA headquarters will reimburse a portion of the flights. Until those reimbursements are finalised it is not possible to provide a definitive cost of flights or total costs.

** Mr Blunt required fewer vaccinations for this trip due to vaccinations obtained prior to due to private travel and the Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference in Honiara earlier this year.

QUESTION 4:

The Hon. WES FANG: I believe it was, yes.

The PRESIDENT: As a part of that, I caught up with the mayor, Mathew Dickerson, for a brief coffee. I think they are the only two, excluding the Northern Rivers, that I've done. But I will—

The Hon. WES FANG: That's my understanding as well.

The PRESIDENT: I'll come back to you if that's not the case.

RESPONSE:

N/A

QUESTION 5A:

The Hon. WES FANG: You're very good at communicating that, and I thank you for that. Mr Webb, there was an unspecified security event that occurred within the President's office. How was this reported to you?

MARK WEBB: I would think I would let you talk to that specifically.

The Hon. WES FANG: Actually, I'm asking you, Mr Webb, as to how it was—

The PRESIDENT: I told him about it, is the short answer.

MARK WEBB: The information about that particular issue was communicated to me by the President. I don't have specifics in terms of dates and times et cetera here.

The Hon. WES FANG: Can you provide those on notice, by any chance?

MARK WEBB: Probably not, in that it was verbal. I don't have a record of it. I will, on notice, though, go back and check my records.

RESPONSE:

President Franklin provided verbal updates to Mark Webb.

QUESTION 5B:

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you know if a security review was conducted and who conducted it?

MARK WEBB: I'm not aware of the details of any review that was done. I can take on notice whether I can find any records of that, but in this moment right now I'm not aware of the details of that.

The PRESIDENT: I think the easiest thing is to take it on notice.

RESPONSE:

DPS Security conducted a security audit of the President's Office including the staff areas.

The President's team worked directly with DPS Security as is routine for all members when assessing access permissions for their office suites.

QUESTION 5C:

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr President, from my recall, you said that security conducted a security review. Do you know what was involved in that review?

The PRESIDENT: Obviously, we'll take that on notice. I don't have those details in front of me at the moment, but I certainly remember that there were members of the security division of the Parliament in the office providing us with advice about things that they recommended should happen. But I'm happy to take this line of questioning on notice.

RESPONSE:

A security review was conducted of the President's Office including the staff areas by DPS Security. This review included identifying who had access to the President's office and suite, areas of egress and ingress as well as options and recommendations going forward.

QUESTION 6:

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Can I ask you another question about another gender issue? I understand that, with regard to the Parliament staff information management system, there are options available for staff titles—a form of address—and that's like the Mr or the Ms, for example. I presume there's a Mrs and others. What is the option for people who don't identify as a man or woman?

MARK WEBB: That is an excellent question that I might have to take on notice. Obviously, there is the capacity to not have any title there, but, in terms of gender-neutral titles, I cannot think of one, so I might have to take that on notice. I would say that we are in the process of starting the work on replacing that information management system. It is 25 years old and it is highly possible that, when it was first built, it perhaps did not take into account some of these kinds of issues. I wouldn't be surprised to find out that we didn't have an appropriate option, but it is one of the requirements, if you like, that we are putting together for the replacement of the system, which we've started working on this year.

As you say, that system—often called an ERP or enterprise resource planning tool—SAP, is a core system that underpins the entire way we manage staff in the organisation. The system is incredibly out of date and needs to be replaced. We are starting that process this year, and that is one of the requirements that we would put in. I will take that on notice, but I suspect the answer is going to be that we don't have adequate representation for people in that category. We should, so we definitely will.

RESPONSE:

The non-gendered title – Mx was implemented as a customisation to our current SAP platform as a direct response to an individual requirement as a manual change.

The non-gendered title - Mx was made available in SAP from September 2023. Work to include it in our onboarding tool (HROnboard) is underway.

DPS will undertake consultation through the LGBTIQ+ Taskforce (an initiative resulting from the Broderick review) to identify any further options that should be made available in our systems. Further consultation will occur via the employee support network Pride@Parliament and with the Parliament Friends of LGBTIQ+.

QUESTION 7:

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: I was going to ask you about this because there was some chatter at some point in time—I don't know; it feels like a month ago—when the implication was that staff were being outsourced to the cost of FTEs internally. That's not correct?

MARK WEBB: No, no. It's been quite the opposite.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: Have you got any figures on that, Mark?

MARK WEBB: I don't have them with me, but I can get them on notice for you.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: Great.

MARK WEBB: We actually took on more permanent staff.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: I would like to correct that. If it's a misconception, I'd like to correct it with my colleagues.

MARK WEBB: Yes, of course.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: If we can get it to do comparisons.

MARK WEBB: Happy to do that. I'm pleased to say that the catering staff situation, and more generally the industry, seems to be a lot better now than it was, say, a year and a half ago. But as a result of us not being able to get agency staff, in one way you could look at it that we took it on risk—we assumed that we would have a certain amount of business and that we would be able to keep a full-time staff busy. So far, that's worked out okay. So, no, it's been quite the opposite. We certainly haven't been bringing in agency staff at the expense of existing full-time people at all.

In catering—and maybe this is where some of that perception comes from—there is turnover in the catering area. People do move on to other jobs. In the period when somebody leaves and we are looking to recruit somebody else in, of course we do bring in sometimes an agency person to fill in. That could be feeding it. As you would imagine, there is a fair bit of turnover in the catering industry—people studying and are in catering, and then they finish their studies. If they've just done a law degree, they don't necessarily want to keep going with the catering business—which I don't understand, but fair enough. There could be some of that coming through, but I will get some numbers on notice and put it through to you.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: Overall, in terms of economic viability and sustainability, we're on track to things looking up?

MARK WEBB: Yes, things are looking a lot better now. Obviously, we've opened the restaurant up to members of the public through the day and on sitting nights as well. Because mostly members were dining in the evening, there were times when the Strangers' Restaurant would have only a couple in it, but now we're getting members of the public coming in, that's really helped with the restaurant viability.

RESPONSE:

Over the past several decades Parliamentary catering has had a mixed model approach to staff employment, with the majority of kitchen and front of House staff employed by the Parliament, supplemented by agency staff for busier periods, particularly during sittings and for large functions.

Over the past two years Parliamentary catering has increased the number of staff employed by the Parliament. We currently have a total of 27 staff (headcount) across the kitchens, front of House and office administration, up from 21 staff (headcount) in 2020. In 2021 Catering employed 4 additional staff in the kitchens, and one front of House staff, formerly filled by agency staff. In 2023 Catering also engaged an additional administrative officer to assist with the management of member and external hosted events. As a result of these changes, we have reduced our reliance on agency staff. We do continue to bring in a small number of agency staff during those busier sitting periods and for large functions. This change was a direct result of COVID, and no longer being able to attract agency staff to provide the high-quality services to members, staff and visitors. These arrangements are working well, and are expected to continue.

Parliamentary catering only receives a small budget allocation from Treasury, with the majority of staffing and operational costs covered by the revenue raised from our various outlets including the cafes, restaurants and function venues. The overall objective of Parliamentary catering is to be a cost neutral service, not relying on the Legislature's budget to cover these costs, as has been the case in past years. In the pre-COVID financial year, 2018/19 the Parliament achieved cost neutrality for the first time in many decades. There is reason to be optimistic that we will achieve this cost neutral position over the next several years, as we recover from the impacts of COVID, cost of living increases and so forth.

The primary focus of Catering is to provide priority, high quality services to members and staff, particularly during busy sitting periods and during committee activities. Catering also actively promotes our services to the public and private sector for corporate functions and conferences. The recently upgraded AV facilities across the Parliament, including the catering venues has provided an additional incentive for members, staff and others in hosting events. The Catering team are always looking to innovate, improve and expand our services, including the extremely popular Friday High Teas and opening Strangers' Restaurant to the public. The Catering team welcomes feedback on our services from members, staff and the community.

QUESTION 8:

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I have two questions, Mr President. The first one, through you, is to Mr Blunt, if I may. One of the most valuable documents that is put out every sitting day, as far as I can tell, is the President's program. By my estimation it goes to about half of all members and their offices. A number of people say to me, "What's that? Can I have a look, so I know when I'm due to jump?" I was just wondering whether you would consider having a look at whether it's appropriate to allow all members to receive a copy of that document? There may be reasons why not, but I just ask you to consider that.

RESPONSE:

On Tuesday, 31 November 2023, the Hon. Ben Franklin, President of the Legislative Council made the following announcement to the House regarding the dissemination of the President's Program:

Some members will have noticed that today you have received, for the first time, an electronic copy of the President's Program. After an excellent suggestion at my recent budget estimates hearing, I have requested that the Office of the Clerk distribute the President's Program to all members of the House every sitting day, starting today. Previously, the President's Program was distributed only to selected members of the House.

QUESTION 9:

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: Mark, can I ask a follow-up question? In terms of the proportionality, you had an uplift in demand. Have you got any comparisons with the uplift in demand hours versus FTE uplift?

MARK WEBB: I don't have that in front of me, but I could put that together.

RESPONSE:

The table below compares the sitting and committee hours (hours of transcription required) with the headcount and FTE of Hansard since 2010.

As shown, the number of sitting hours fluctuate but have remained consistently between 721 and 762 hours from 2018. However, the Hansard committee transcription workload has steadily increased since 2010, with a total increase of 131% when comparing 2010 with 2022.

From 2010 to 2022, Hansard staffing numbers have increased by 47.8% headcount and 48.5% FTE.

Year	Sitting hours	Committee hours	Total hours transcribed	Head count	FTE	Explanation
2010	852	339	1,191	23	21	Hansard staffing levels remained constant until 2019
2011*	935	186	1,121	23	21	
2012	948	318	1,266	23	21	
2013	947	346	1,293	23	21	
2014	764	348	1,112	23	21	
2015*	704	297	1,001	23	21	
2016	886	410	1,296	23	21	
2017	861	359	1,220	23	21	
2018	721	535	1,256	23	20	
2019*	723	414	1,137	29	24	Increase in staff numbers in response to Weir Review. [†]
2020	774	652	1,426	33	30	
2021	763	748	1,511	37	32.6	
2022	762	786	1,548	35	31.2	Changes to headcount and FTE are a result of corrections to the establishment sheet. No positions were lost.

2023* (to 31 October)	526	410	804	35	32.6	Change in FTE is due to the increase in FTE of staff on fractional contract arrangements.
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* indicates election year

† Following an anonymous complaint by a staff member to SafeWork NSW in 2019 about the increasing workload, an external consultant, Workplace Education Investigation Review (WEIR) Consulting, was engaged to conduct a review of Hansard work practices and fatigue management. DPS and Hansard management acted on the WEIR report recommendations by hiring additional staff through a successful PTA to Treasury and developing the Hansard Fatigue Management Plan.

The PTA approved by Treasury in 2023 included funding to increase the FTE of Hansard staff on fractional contract arrangements (.72/80/90%) to assist Hansard with the increasing committee workload.

QUESTION 10:

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL: Following on from that, I suppose the line of discussion and looking at what other parliaments are doing and the issue of fatigue management more broadly, it strikes me that one of the best things we could do to address fatigue management would be to not have people here until 1.00 a.m. You are obviously acknowledging the work that's been done and the improvements that have been done in terms of having the hard adjournment in place.

Are you aware of any other parliaments or work that is been done whereby there is a hard adjournment that is earlier, or an alternative to a hard adjournment, such that Hansard staff—indeed all staff—as opposed to going home and having dinner and then continuing work until 1.00 a.m. could in fact actually go home and have dinner, and just have a break?

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL: Following on from that, I suppose the line of discussion and looking at what other parliaments are doing and the issue of fatigue management more broadly, it strikes me that one of the best things we could do to address fatigue management would be to not have people here until 1.00 a.m. You are obviously acknowledging the work that's been done and the improvements that have been done in terms of having the hard adjournment in place. Are you aware of any other parliaments or work that is been done whereby there is a hard adjournment that is earlier, or an alternative to a hard adjournment, such that Hansard staff—indeed all staff—as opposed to going home and having dinner and then continuing work until 1.00 a.m. could in fact actually go home and have dinner, and just have a break?

DAVID BLUNT: If I could just add to the answers already given, it's a really important set of questions that you are asking. I know the series of questions is focused on Hansard, but issues of fatigue management apply to all the parliamentary staff, all of your staff, and indeed to all of you.

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL: Yes.

DAVID BLUNT: And there have been questions at previous budget estimates hearings to the Legislature which have gone to issues around members' work health and safety when Parliament sits very late. I would be more than happy to take on notice, if you wanted me to, a piece of work to gather information about the current rhythms of sitting times in parliaments across Australia and New Zealand, of course, the Federal Parliament—both the House of Reps and the Senate—and the ACT Assembly. But particularly the House of Reps and Senate have moved to sitting arrangements where they do finish at a much earlier time than we do. It doesn't stop end-of-sitting-period all-night sittings, and some horrendously long sittings at times at the end of a session. But, nevertheless, for most of the sitting year those two Houses are rising by 7.00 p.m. or 8.00 p.m. as I understand. If you would like me to, I would be very happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL: I would love you to.

RESPONSE:

Hansard hours: sitting days

NSW Hansard staff are classified as sessional staff required to work additional and late hours during Sitting and Budget Estimates weeks. Hansard is required to publish the full transcript online within three hours of the Houses rising each sitting night to provide the timeliest access to transcripts to Members. Three hours is the fastest publishing turnaround that Hansard can deliver based on the time needed to transcribe, edit, and publish a speech.

As Hansard publishes progressively throughout the day, once the Houses have risen, staff progressively finish their work day with the earliest typically leaving at 11PM, and the latest typically leaving at 1AM. Staff progressively start work the following day in the order they finished the evening prior, to ensure that each staff member receives a similar break.

Since the introduction of the Hansard Fatigue Management Action Plan in 2020 (see below for details), staff hours have been effectively managed and reported fatigue levels have reduced.

Comparison of House adjournments and Hansard hours across Australian Parliaments

The requirement for Hansard to publish within three hours of the Houses rising is standard across all Australian Parliaments, and so the adjournment times of the Houses is the primary determining factor for the finishing time of Hansard staff. The table below provides a comparison of the adjournment times of each jurisdiction and the impact on Hansard hours.

Smaller Parliaments adjourn earlier, and so staff work fewer hours and are able to go home earlier, while the Federal and Victorian Parliaments have a larger number of staff which enables Hansard to publish the transcript to deadline, limit the need for cutting off transcription, and manage staff fatigue by operating in shifts.

With the exception of South Australia, Australian Hansards will cut off transcription when necessary as a method of managing staff fatigue. Cut off times apply in instances when sitting goes beyond adjournment time. Any remaining transcription is completed the following morning before work on the next sitting day commences.

In NSW, the practice of cutting off transcription to ensure staff are provided with adequate breaks has been in place since 2019 as an ad hoc, discretionary practice that has been supported by the Presiding Officers on the occasions where it has been necessary.

To ensure consistency across both Houses, Hansard will cut transcription of the Assembly to align with the adjournment of the Council.

The transcription cut off times listed in the table below are the times that Hansard is published to, *not* the time that Hansard staff finish work. When transcription services are cut off, the standard practice across Australian Hansards is to retain a skeleton staff for the duration of the sitting to monitor operations and prepare materials for transcription to be completed the following day.

House	Standard sitting times	Are those sitting times routinely varied, and if so how?	Has the sitting pattern recently changed, in particular to move to more 'family friendly' sitting times?
NZ	Tue: 2:00 pm – 10:00 pm (dinner 6:00 – 7:30 pm) Wed: 2:00 pm – 10:00 pm (dinner 6:00 – 7:30 pm)	Rarely, perhaps once or twice a year, by urgency. More often the House sits early from 9:00	The House previously experimented with a one-hour dinner break on Tuesdays and Wednesdays so that the House could adjourn at 5pm on Thursday, but it was abandoned

	<p>Thur: 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm</p> <p>The House routinely sits 28 weeks a year.</p>	<p>am – 1:00 pm, perhaps a dozen times a year.</p>	<p>in this Parliament. In the new Parliament, to enable regional members to leave early on a Thursday, there is no limit on the number of proxy votes that can be cast after 5pm on a Thursday.</p>
Senate	<p>Mon: 10:00 am – 8:00 pm + 30 minute adj debate</p> <p>Tue: 12:00 pm noon – 7.30 pm plus open-ended adj debate (approx. 2 hours)</p> <p>Wed: 9:00 am – 7.30 pm + 30 minute adj debate</p> <p>Thursday: 9:00 am – 5.30 pm + 30 minute adj debate</p> <p>The Senate also occasionally sits Friday 9:30 am – 4:00 pm</p> <p>The Senate does not suspend for meal breaks</p> <p>The Senate is scheduled to sit 14 sitting weeks, plus 4 scheduled estimates weeks in 2024. Estimates are from 9:00 am – 11:00 pm.</p>	<p>Adjournment times are not always followed. For example, the House has sat past 4:00 am twice in the past year.</p>	<p>In response to the review of parliamentary workplaces, scheduled adjournment times are earlier than in recent parliaments. The Senate now starts earlier on Wed and Thur, and abolished the Monday dinner break in order to adjourn earlier on Monday (8.30 instead of 10.30). Another response sees divisions that are called after 6.30pm (or 4.30 on Thursdays) deferred to the next day, in theory allowing senators to depart earlier unless directly involved in proceedings.</p>
HoR	<p>Mon: 10:00 am – 8:00 pm</p> <p>Tue: 12:00 noon - 8:00 pm</p> <p>Wed: 9:00 am – 8:00 pm</p> <p>Thur: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm</p> <p>The HoR does not suspend for meal breaks</p>	<p>On approximately 10% of sitting days this year, the House has sat beyond the stipulated time for adjournment.</p>	<p>The House has set 8 pm as the latest time for adjournment since 2016, and no changes have been made to adjournment times this parliament (since July 2022).</p> <p>However, amendments were made to the standing orders (on 30.3.2023) to provide for deferred quorums and divisions (unless on motion moved by minister) from 6.30 pm until adjournment, on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. These changes were introduced as a "family friendly" measure, and in response to the Jenkins Report.</p>
Qld	<p>Tue: 9:30 am – 7:30 pm (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm)</p>	<p>Different arrangements on</p>	<p>The current sitting pattern was introduced in 2018. Previously the</p>

	<p>Wed: 9:30 am – 7:30 pm (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>Thur: 9:30 am – 7:30 pm (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm)</p>	<p>budget weeks (4 day sitting week, with extended hours on Thur and Fri).</p>	<p>House routinely sat to 9 or 10 pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, sometimes later.</p> <p>From 2012-2018 the House did not sit Wed mornings, to allow committee business to be conducted. This was changed in 2018. As a result, committees now routinely meet on Mondays, which is not popular with regional members.</p>
NSW LA	<p>Tue: 12:00 noon - approx. 8:00 pm (Lunch 1:30 - 2:30 pm)</p> <p>Wed: 10:00am – approx. 8:00 pm (Lunch 1:30 - 2:30 pm)</p> <p>Thurs: 10:00am – approx. 6:30 pm (Lunch 1:30 – 2:30 pm)</p> <p>The Legislative Assembly sits approx. 13-16 weeks a year.</p>	<p>The adjournment is typically around 8pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and 6.30pm on Thursdays, but varies significantly depending on the Government and other business before the House.</p>	<p>The current sitting pattern was introduced on 17 January 2022. Standing Order 97 was subsequently amended by Sessional Order on 9 May 2023 which set out the new routine of business which stated that the Legislative Assembly was to adjourn without motion at the conclusion of Private Members' Statements.</p> <p>Community Recognition Statements (CRS) and Private Members' Statements (PMS) conclude the routine of business on sitting days, with approximately 20-25 PMS at five minutes each (100-125 minutes); and 30 minutes of CRS each sitting day.</p>
NSW LC	<p>Tue: 12:30 pm – 10:00 pm + 30 min adj debate (break 3-4pm, dinner 6:30 – 8:00 pm)</p> <p>Wed: 10:00 am – 10:00 pm + 30 min adj debate (dinner break 6:30 – 8:00 pm)</p> <p>Thur: 10:00 am – 10:00 pm + 30 min adj debate (dinner break 6:30 – 8:00 pm)</p> <p>Hard adjournment at 10.00 pm each night.</p> <p>House sits approx. 16-18 weeks a year</p>	<p>House doesn't always sit through to 10:00 pm hard adjournment, perhaps around 50 % of sitting nights a year.</p> <p>The hard adj may be set aside by motion on notice or by leave, but it is rare for it to be set aside.</p>	<p>A hard adjournment at midnight was adopted at the commencement of the 57th Parliament in May 2019. It was moved to 10.00 pm from June 2022, when the current standing orders were trialled by the House.</p>

ACT	<p>Tue: 10:00 am to 6:30 pm (lunch break 12:30 – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>Wed: 10:00 am to 6:30 pm (lunch break 12:30 – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>Thur: 10:00 am to 6:30 pm (lunch break 12:30 – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>* The trend is to rise between 5:00 and 6:00 pm.</p>	<p>The House very rarely sits late, generally around the budget debate.</p>	<p>The last 10 years has seen a decline in sittings past 10:00 pm (only 2 in last 10 years) and a trend towards earlier risings (only two of the last ten years have seen the average time of rising after 6:00 pm) as the Assembly has moved to family friendly sitting hours.</p>
Vic LA	<p>Tue: 12 noon – 7:00 pm + approx. 45 min adj deb (no break)</p> <p>Wed: 9:30 am – 7:00 pm + approx. 45 min adj deb (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>Thur: 9:30 am – 5:00 pm + approx. 45 min adj deb (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>House sits approx. 13 weeks in election years and 16-17 weeks in regular years.</p>	<p>Debate very occasionally – perhaps a handful of times a year – extended at the hard adjournment, but usually only for a short time to finish a time-sensitive debate.</p>	<p>Under the standing orders, the automatic interruption for the adjournment is actually 10:00 pm. The House has been ‘trailing’ the earlier finish time of 7:00 pm and 5:00 pm by sessional order for nearly ten years.</p>
Vic LC	<p>Tue: 12.00 noon – 10:00 pm* + approx. 45 min adj deb (dinner 6:30 – 7:30 pm)</p> <p>Wed: 9:30 am – approx. 6:30 pm + approx. 45 min adj deb (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>Thur: 9:30 am – 10:00 pm* + approx. 45 min adj deb (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm, dinner 6:30 – 7:30 pm)</p> <p>Fri: 9:30 am – 4:00 pm + approx. 45 min adj deb (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>The House only very occasionally sits on Fridays.</p> <p>* But see comments over</p>	<p>At 10.00 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 4.00 pm on Fridays a minister can declare up to two one-hour extensions (no vote required by the House). After that, a minister can move a motion to extend the sitting, which is then voted on by the House. This hasn’t been done this Parliament, but was regularly used previously if needed to complete an item of business.</p>	<p>While there has been no formal move to adopt more ‘family friendly’ sitting hours in the standing orders, the House is routinely finishing between 6:30 – 7:00 pm on most days.</p>
Tas HoA	<p>Tue: 10:00 am – 6:00 pm + approx. 1 hour adj deb (lunch 1:00 – 2:30 pm)</p>	<p>The House frequently agrees to sit beyond 6:00 pm to complete urgent business.</p>	<p>No recent changes in sitting hours. The 6:00pm adjournment (plus 1 hour adj debate) was</p>

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	<p>Wed: 10:00 am – 6:00 pm + approx. 1 hour adj deb (lunch 1:00 – 2:30 pm)</p> <p>Thur: 10:00 am – 6:00 pm + approx. 1 hour adj deb (lunch 1:00 – 2:30 pm)</p> <p>The House sits approximately 16 weeks per year, including a week of budget estimates</p>		<p>agreed to in 2000 as a family friendly measure.</p>
Tas LC	<p>Tue: 11:00 am – approx. 6:00 pm (with some variation) (lunch 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm, afternoon tea 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm)</p> <p>Wed: 11:00 am – approx. 5:00 to 6:00 pm (with some variation) (lunch 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm, afternoon tea 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm)</p> <p>Thur: 11:00 am – approx. 5:00 to 6:00 pm (with some variation) (lunch 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm)</p>	<p>Some outliers but the House generally adjourns around the times nominated.</p>	<p>In recent times it has been difficult to predict hours, but generally hours are "family friendly". It is not usual for the House to sit late on a regular basis.</p>
SA HoA	<p>Tue: 11:00 am to approx. 6.00pm, but with 7:00 hard adj (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>Wed: 10:30 am to 6 approx. 6.00pm, but with 7:00 hard adj (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>Thur: 11:00 am to approx. 6.00pm, but with 7:00 hard adj (lunch 1:00 – 2:00 pm)</p>	<p>On most sitting days the House will rise just before 6.00 pm or will extend beyond 6.00pm to finalise a matter and will get up before 7.00 pm. Standing Order 55 provides that if the sitting of the House has been extended beyond 6.00 pm and the House has not already adjourned, the Speaker adjourns the House at 7.00 pm without a question being put. It is very rare for the House to sit later now.</p>	<p>From 1 May 2007 the House adopted a new sessional order to enable it to meet at 11.00am on both Tuesday and Wednesday with the aim of establishing 'family friendly' sitting times. The sessional order was adopted as a standing order in late 2017. A corresponding change to the standing orders at this time was the removal of set adjournment times of 10 pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and 5 pm on Thursdays.</p>
SA LC	<p>Response not received</p>		
WA LA	<p>Tue: 1:00 – 7:00 pm (no break)</p> <p>Wed: 12:00 noon – 7:00 pm (no break)</p> <p>Thur: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm (lunch 1:00 to 2:00 pm)</p>	<p>Rare for the House to deviate from the scheduled adjournment times.</p>	<p>The House adopted 'family-friendly' hours via a Temporary Order in June 2022. This Temporary Order will be renewed in 2024.</p>

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<p>WA LC</p>	<p>Tue: 1:00 pm – 8:45 pm + 40 min max members' statements (dinner break from 6:00 – 7:00 pm)</p> <p>Wed: 1:00 – 6:20 pm + 40 min max members' statements (no break)</p> <p>Thur: 10:00 am – 5:20 pm + 40 min max members' statements (lunch break from 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm)</p> <p>The House sits approx. 19-21 weeks a year, including 1 week of budget estimates.</p>	<p>It is very unusual for the House to set aside the fixed adjournment times (maybe once or twice per year). Usually that would be in the week before the winter recess or the last week of the year.</p>	<p>The House previously used to sit from 2:00 – 9:45 pm + members' statements on Tuesdays, but shifted to a 1:00 pm to be more "family friendly".</p>
<p>NT</p>	<p>Tue: 10:00 am commencement, close tends to vary between 6:30 and 8:30 (lunch break 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm)</p> <p>Wed: 10:00 am commencement, close tends to vary between 6:30 and 8:30 (lunch break 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm)</p> <p>Thur: 10:00 am commencement, close tends to vary between 6:30 and 8:30 (lunch break 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm)</p> <p>The House sits approximately 10 weeks per year, plus 2 weeks dedicated to budget estimates</p>		<p>No plans to vary the sitting arrangements</p>

Hansard Fatigue Management

To address staff fatigue, Hansard developed a Fatigue Management Action Plan in late 2020, which is reviewed and updated annually.

Key elements of the Hansard Fatigue Management Action Plan are:

- Increasing staff resourcing.
- Ensuring staff take adequate breaks during the day.
- A cap of 55 working hours per week.
- A minimum break of 8-10 hours between work days.
- A 'recuperation day'. The Friday of each sitting week is deemed a 'recuperation day' which Hansard staff are not required to work.
- The Editor of Debates will cut off transcription if a sitting is going late into the night, if there are staffing shortages, or if staff are in jeopardy of breaching the 55-hour p/w cap.
- Flexible working. Hansard operate on the DPS 3:2 flexible working model during non-sitting weeks. Hansard are currently working through a technical trial to give staff the option to work from home on sitting days.
- Access to caption text. This additional tool aids Reporters and reduces the amount of typing and respeaking required.

As sessional staff, Hansard are also awarded an extra two weeks of recreation leave resulting in a total of six weeks of annual leave per annum.

The Editor of Debates regularly checks in with Hansard staff to gauge fatigue levels. Staff feedback indicates that the fatigue management measures in place are effectively lowering fatigue. In particular, the recuperation day is seen as the most effective way to manage fatigue.

Impact of change to LC sitting hours

The adjustment to the LC hard adjournment to 10:30PM on sitting nights has had a positive impact on hours and fatigue in Hansard:

- Staff are able to finish work earlier in the evenings (at roughly 1AM at the latest, compared to beyond 3AM when the adjournment was at 12:30AM).
- Staff are working fewer hours per week. In 2022, staff worked 50-55 hours for 7 of the 15 sitting weeks. In 2023 to date, Hansard has not breached 50 hours per week (Refer to data table overleaf).

Hansard working hours during sitting weeks in 2022 (57th Parliament) and 2023 (58th Parliament) as at 31 October

Sitting week	Reporter Average hours	Subeditor average hours	Staff >50 hrs)
2022			
Feb week 1	34	35	0
Feb week 2	37	40	0
March week 1	41	42	0
March week 2	48	50	15
May week 1	41	44	4
May week 2	35.5	37	0
June week 1	33	38	0
June week 2	36	37	0
August week 1	40	44.5	7
September week 1	-	-	-
September week 2	26.2	24	0
October week 1	39	44	2
October week 2	40	41	5
November week 1	42	42	3
November week 2	41	40	4
2023			
May week 1	28	38	0
May week 2	37	41	0
May week 3	38	41	0
June week 1	35	38	0
June week 2	32	37	0
August week 1	35	38	0
August week 2	34	39	0
September week 1	36.5	39.5	0
September week 2	38	38.5	0
October week 1	40	36	0
October week 2	37	35.5	0

QUESTION 11:

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Are there any guidelines regulating what email addresses we can use as members of Parliament? I assume that the same protections that are afforded to the "@parliament" email addresses aren't afforded to a personal email server, so those protections you were talking about before regarding emails from constituents that might not actually be constituents—they might be phishing emails—isn't available to a personal email server, for instance.

MARK WEBB: That is correct. Anyone who sets up an environment outside of the Parliament's environment would have to take into account those security concerns themselves. You can obviously try to set up a system that does mimic the level of security that we have, but we don't have any visibility of that.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Any guidelines about the email addresses that we can use as MPs? You can take that on notice.

MARK WEBB: I will take that on notice just in case I am missing something, but my understanding is that a member can choose to use any email address if they like. We provide a service; you can choose to use it. You could choose to do something else but we lose the capacity to guarantee anything in the way of security if you use something outside of our system.

RESPONSE:

The IT Access and Use Policy

(<https://intranet.parl.nsw.gov.au/employmentpolicies/policies/Documents/IT%20Access%20and%20Use%20Policy.pdf>) states "Parliament IT resources made available to members and staff are to be used for purposes that relate to their parliamentary duties".

While there is nothing to stop them, the practice of some members using a personal email address for parliamentary duties may create a cyber security and privacy risk.

The IT Services and the Cyber Security team are producing best practice guides for cyber security awareness.

QUESTION 12:

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL: I might just add, obviously without betraying any confidence of the members of the PAG, could you outline for us in any detail or top-line statements about what some of their feedback was and how that's being addressed as we move forward?

The PRESIDENT: I'm very happy to do that.

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL: Obviously the independent chair is a part of that. That's really welcome news.

The PRESIDENT: Absolutely, I'm very happy to do that. If you don't mind, I might take that on notice.

RESPONSE:

The Presiding Officers met with PAG membership who served during the 57th Parliament. The topics discussed, included:

- General feedback on PAG members' experiences during the 57th Parliament.
- Opportunities for 58th Parliament.
- Suggestions on:
 - o Improvements to the Broderick Review Implementation Plan;
 - o How to better engage staff, members and external bodies; and
 - o Ways to improve the effectiveness of the PAG for the 58th Parliament.

PAG feedback has been incorporated into plans going forward, particularly with respect to the re-constitution and membership of the PAG of the 58th Parliament; strategies for consultation and engagement; and how to engage external bodies in implementing the recommendations.

QUESTION 13:

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Blunt, is it correct to say that the current Leader of the Government, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, had a regulation change in effect to have her remuneration recognised as a member of the Legislative Council for a position that she was elected to, which was the leader of the Labor Party at the time—or, sorry, the acting leader of the Labor Party?

DAVID BLUNT: I think that is the case but if I could just take that on notice as to whether it was Ms Sharpe. But it was certainly the Leader of the Opposition at the time.

RESPONSE:

The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC was temporarily remunerated as Leader of the Opposition for a three-month period from 25/3/2019 to 1/7/2019, when she reverted to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the LC with the associated change in remuneration. This was a result of the *Parliamentary Remuneration Amendment (Leader of the Opposition) Regulation 2019*.

