

Questions on Notice

No. 1 – Question on Notice

Question:

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Thank you to the panel that has come here this morning. Is it correct to say that, in the recent renovations to the building, the alarm system that had existed on the Macquarie Street perimeter fence was disengaged and is no longer operational?

The PRESIDENT: It will shock you to know that I might throw to Mr Webb on that one, Mr Latham.

MARK WEBB: There were times through the process where we did have to shut down. For instance, we had to redo the electricals through the forecourt et cetera. There were times that it had been brought down. To the best of my knowledge, it's back up and running again now. I will ask my crack team, who I know are watching today, to let me know if there are any current issues with the perimeter security. I will either answer you later on or take it on notice. The intent is for the perimeter to be restored to where it absolutely should be.

Answer:

The Macquarie Street perimeter alarm detection system was restored following the renovation works and is fully operational.

No. 2 – Question on Notice

Question:

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: I'm sure you would be aware that with aged payroll systems across multiple organisations—in the real world outside of here—there have been issues with systems not coping with particular industrial instruments and inadvertently or otherwise resulting in underpayments to staff. Have we done anything to ensure that that old system doesn't inadvertently, for example, roll the incidence allowance into an hourly rate of pay that then results in an underpayment?

MARK WEBB: Yes, you're quite right. These are issues that are across the whole community, especially with older systems. We have a few things in place to try to prevent things like that happening. I will not pretend that we've never made a mistake over the course of the years. There have been individual instances of people being both overpaid and underpaid.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: But you haven't done a systematic audit to make sure that there's not—

MARK WEBB: No, every year—annually—we do a systematic audit at the end of the financial year to reconcile the information that we have in our payroll system with the information we have in things like HR et cetera.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Sorry, I don't mean to interrupt, but I think I've not stated my question right. In terms of an audit of the actual way that the system calculates, not so much that it calculates each individual's correctly. Of course mistakes can happen, but in terms of the actual way that it calculates.

MARK WEBB: We have had internal audits in the past that looked into issues like that. I'd have to take on notice when the last one of those was. I don't have that in my head, but it is something that we'd look at on a regular basis.

Answer:

In most instances, salaries and allowances are entered as 2 separate entries in the payroll system.

There are only a few unique circumstances in which this does not occur. DPS applies rules in the system to ensure payments are calculated in accordance with the designated industrial arrangements.

The aged payroll system presents a challenge in how payslips reflect the entries in the payroll system, rolling the separate entries into a single amount on the payslip. There is no indication that this results in incorrect payments.

The last payroll audit was completed in June 2023 and no systems issues were identified that would increase the risk of underpayments.

However, should any underpayments be identified, they would be rectified immediately.

Significant work has been undertaken in the design of functional requirements for a new system to ensure that it caters to the complexities of the appropriate industrial framework.

No. 3 – Question on Notice

Question:

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Thank you for coming along and giving evidence today. I've got a bunch of questions I want to start with in relation to committees, which may be best directed to the Clerk or to Mr Webb. You may well want to take some of these on notice. How many active committee inquiries have there been each month, conducted by the Upper House, since 1995?

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Just off the top of your head.

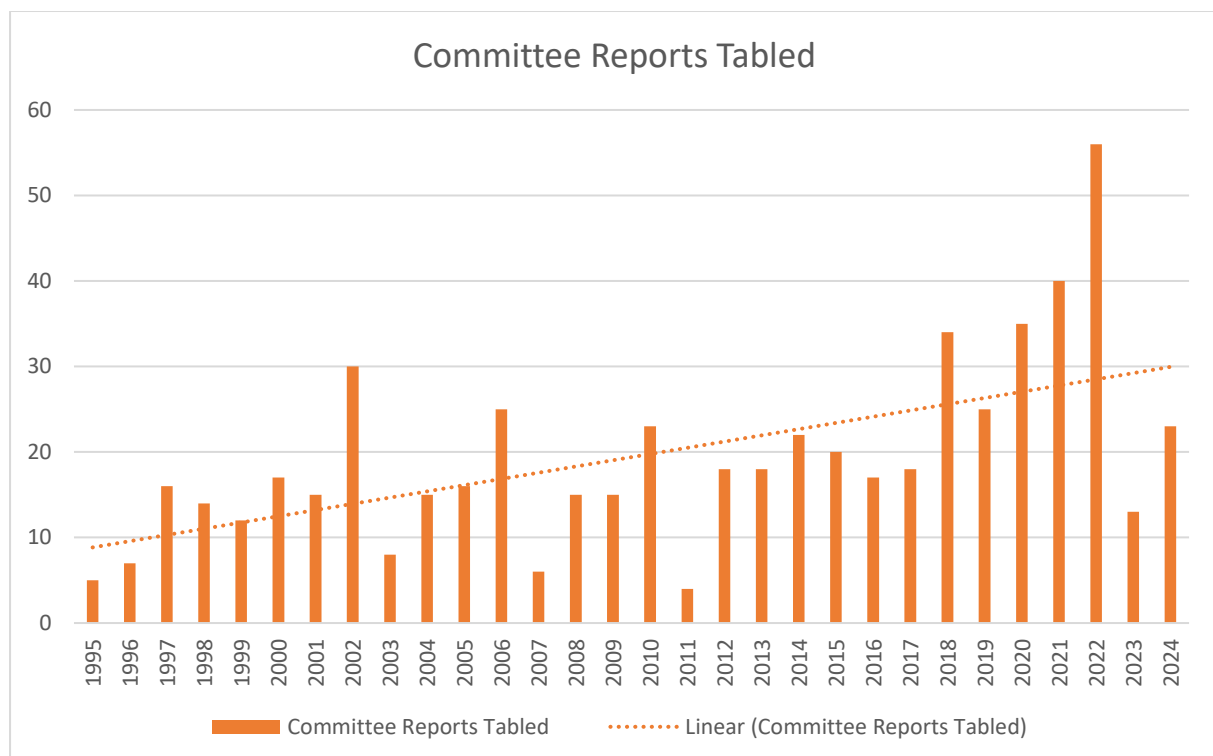
The PRESIDENT: I'll throw to Mr Blunt on that one.

The CHAIR: My money is he can answer it.

DAVID BLUNT: I do have a long memory, and I am passionate about the Legislative Council committee system, but you've stumped me there. I will have to take that on notice. We'll see what we can do.

Answer:

The graph and table below show the total number of Legislative Council committee reports tabled in the period 1995 to 2024 (to date), by calendar year:



Year	Committee reports tabled
1995	5
1996	7
1997	16
1998	14
1999	12
2000	17
2001	15
2002	30
2003	8
2004	15
2005	16
2006	25
2007	6
2008	15
2009	15
2010	23
2011	4
2012	18
2013	18
2014	22
2015	20
2016	17
2017	18
2018	34
2019	25
2020	35
2021	40
2022	56
2023	13
2024 (YTD)	23
	582

Source: Sessional returns for Committees appointed; Register of Legislative Council committee reports and committee joint reports.

Please note that this data does not include:

- reports of the Privileges Committee and the Procedure Committee, which are supported by the Legislative Council Procedure Office
- reports of joint committees not administered by the Legislative Council
- interim reports
- reports on study tours
- reports of the Printing Committee
- proceedings of public seminars

- special reports
- Regulation Committee monitors.

Further, based on data from the Department of the Legislative Council's annual reports:

- between 2004 and 2014, the average number of active annual inquiries was 30
- between 2014 and 2024, this average increased to 42.

No. 4 - Question on Notice

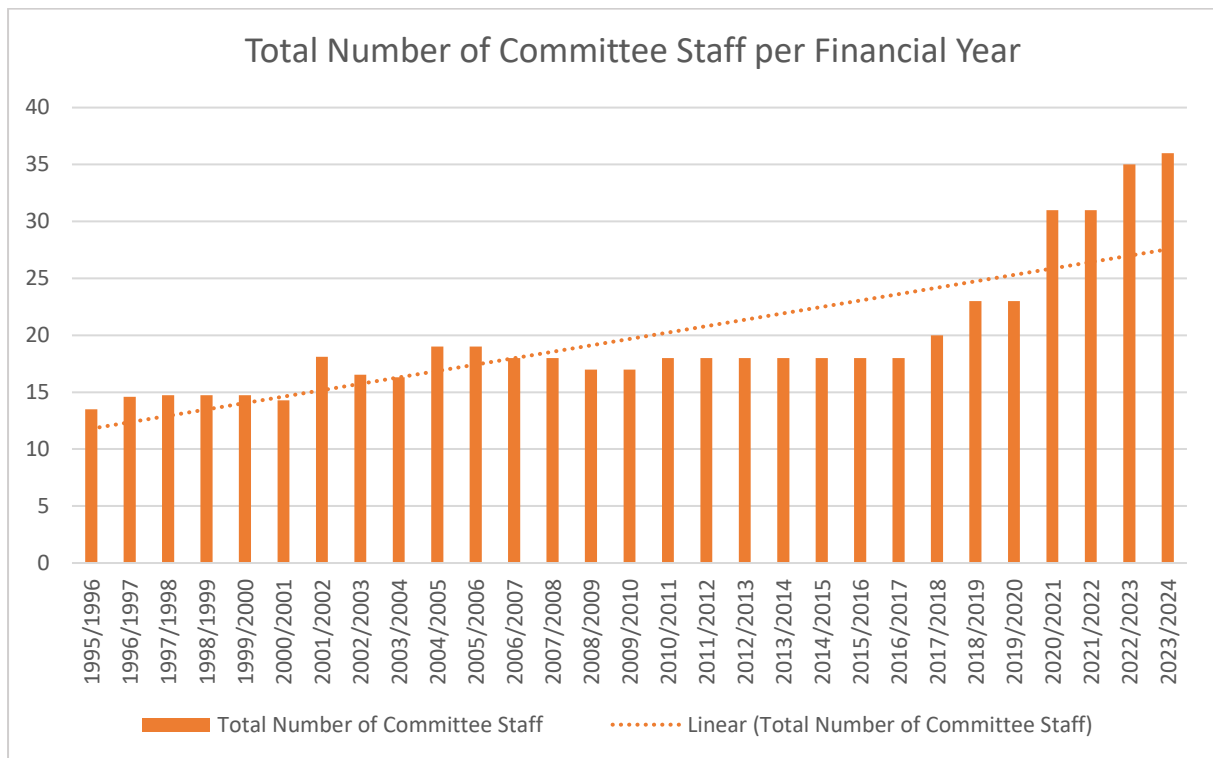
Question:

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: While you're doing that, another question I had was how many full-time equivalent staff are employed by the LC in order to facilitate committee work each month—I don't know if you do it on that basis; maybe it's an annual basis—since 1995? I'm just looking as to whether there has been an increase in the number of staff and an increase in the number of committee inquiries. Over the past 30 years, has that committee work increased?

DAVID BLUNT: Absolutely. I'll see what I can do on notice to answer your specific question. I very much doubt we'll be able to break it down on a month-by-month basis, either for committee inquiries or staff numbers, but we'll see what we can do on an annual basis.

Answer:

The graph and table below shows the number of full-time equivalent staff in the Legislative Council Committee Office from the 1995/1996 to 2023/2024 financial years:



Financial Year	Total number of Committee staff
1995 - 1996	13.5
1996 - 1997	14.6
1997 - 1998	14.75
1998 - 1999	14.75
1999 - 2000	14.75
2000 - 2001	14.3
2001 - 2002	18.1
2002 - 2003	16.55
2003 - 2004	16.3
2004 - 2005	19
2005 - 2006	19
2006 - 2007	18
2007 - 2008	18
2008 - 2009	17
2009 - 2010	17
2010 - 2011	18
2011 - 2012	18
2012 - 2013	18
2013 - 2014	18
2014 - 2015	18
2015 - 2016	18
2016 - 2017	18
2017 - 2018	20
2018 - 2019	23
2019 - 2020	23
2020 - 2021	31
2021 - 2022	31
2022 - 2023	35
2023 - 2024	36

Source: Annual reports of the Department of the Legislative Council.

No. 5 – Question on Notice

Question:

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What is our current approach to flexibility? Now that COVID has long gone, how many staff of the 278 would be here working in the office on a normal day?

DAVID BLUNT: From the point of view of the Department of the Legislative Council, the memorandum that was circulated to the public service is pretty much doing what we've been doing for the last 18 months. When we moved back to the Parliament building in April-May 2023, the Deputy Clerk and I communicated to our staff that, yes, we're 100 per cent supportive of flexible work practices but the benchmark that we expected as a starting point for negotiations within teams was three days in the office as a minimum, and that is what has happened for the last 18 months. Our staff love being here. They love collaborating with one another and getting together. In a sense the public sector is catching up."

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What was it pre-COVID?

DAVID BLUNT: Pre-COVID, although we had flexible work practices, there wasn't a sort of benchmark. I'd have to scratch my head and take that on notice.

Answer:

The Department of the Legislative Council has embraced the "if not, why not?" approach to flexible work practices for many years pre-COVID. This has contributed to very high rates of return to work of staff part-time after maternity leave and the retention of outstanding staff generally. From time to time some Committee staff would also work from home when drafting committee reports, and other staff would do so from time to time when writing papers for conferences etc. We also had two staff who completed short term contracts drafting committee reports fully remotely. However, the imposition of compulsory work from home requirements during COVID certainly accelerated the take up of these options. Now that COVID has passed the Department of the Legislative Council position is as articulated by the Clerk at the hearing on 30 August 2024.

No. 6 – Question on Notice

Question:

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: That leads me to other questions about contracts with external suppliers across the board. I wonder if you could provide— and it might be on notice—a complete list of contracts for services that we do source from elsewhere. I particularly also wanted to ask you about the IT contract you mentioned earlier. You said it was an external supplier. We noted that its role will be something that's quite complex and over years. The other question I wanted to ask is, in the case of a project that's going to last a while—and I know there is particular expertise in IT—is there not the capacity to bring some of that in house if it's a long-term project?

MARK WEBB: Yes.

Answer - ICT Services sourced from external providers:

External providers are used where there is not the specialist capability or resources in-house to perform a particular function or where it makes sense to transfer routine operations to a specialist provider i.e. system patching.

The following list covers ICT contracts that have a managed services or professional services component. It does not capture contracts related to software licensing and subscriptions, telecommunications, or cloud services.

Contract	Purpose	Remarks
EPI-USE	SAP maintenance, monitoring support	
Brennan IT	Microsoft SQL maintenance, monitoring, and support	
Rowe Consulting	Sailpoint ISC (Internet Security Cloud) - Identity and Access management ad-hoc support	
NovaWorks	Parliament Information Management System (PIMS) and public website maintenance and support	
DXC Technology	Managed support services for end user compute and networking Ad hoc project professional services	Contract has not been renewed. Services will cease on 30 November 2024
Fusion 5	Ad hoc support hours for Xurrent IT service management platform	
Macquarie Telecom	Cyber Security managed	

	service providing – security operations support and incident and event monitoring	
Crowdstrike	Software as a service subscription including incident response and identity policy enforcement	
Citrus Solutions	Ad hoc support for Cisco telephony platform	
Informotion Pty Ltd	CM9 maintenance and support	
Toshiba	Printer and multifunction device – support and toner provision for Toshiba and Lexmark devices	
FujiFilm	Printer support and toner provisioning	
Gartner Australasia Pty Ltd	Executive program IT News and Insights	
Serko	Members entitlements and corporate credit card management platform. Hosting and maintenance	
Adaptive Insights	Financial management budget and forecasting. Maintenance and support	
CSO Group	Penetration testing	
Cyber CX	Cyber security tabletop exercise Independent security assesment	
ASI solutions	Smartway2 room booking system maintenance and support	
Advent One	Extended maintenance and support for ICT hardware that is out vendor maintenance	
IQ3	Networker backup and support software maintenance and support	
Hays IT	Contingent support\contract staff	
Enterprise IT	Contingent support\contract staff	

SenseMaker	Data management consultancy	
Quorum	Ad hoc project professional services – M365 and Azure	
ACG Integration	Ad hoc professional services – Genetec physical security software	
PTA Group	Ad hoc professional services – Genetec physical security software	

Answer – Long-term projects:

Resource allocation for long-term ICT projects is evaluated individually. If a specific technical capability needed for a project is also required for ongoing operations, in-house resources will be considered. For example, in the cyber security uplift program, external resources were initially brought in for project delivery and later transitioned to business as usual operational roles.

No. 7 – Question on Notice

Question:

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: I just wanted to check—because I asked several questions in one—that you did take my question about a complete list of contracts to be provided on notice?

MARK WEBB: Yes, that's exactly right. Just so I'm clear and we get you the right things, because we have thousands of contracts, you are interested in the contracts for service that are provided here within the Parliament.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Yes.

MARK WEBB: Things like the cleaning contract, the work we do with the AVB team and the casuals there—the services that we provide from DPS.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: Services, whether it's maintenance and all of those kind of things, yes.

MARK WEBB: Yes, the electricians we bring in et cetera. That's taken on notice. The other question I think you've asked is around the monitoring. The work we do up-front on the modern slavery, that's great, but what do we do to monitor that, especially for some of those larger contracts that have an overseas component. I know we do that monitoring, but I will come back on notice with details about how we do it.

Answer:

List of Facilities Maintenance and Service Contracts:

Contract name	Company
<i>text</i>	<i>text</i>
Parliament House Electricity	ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd
Parliament House Gas supply	Origin
Parliament House Water Supply	Sydney Water
Fire Systems maintenance	Encore Fire Systems
Lift maintenance	Otis Elevators
Chiller maintenance	Interchillers
BMCS maintenance	Environmental Automation
X-Ray machine maintenance	Rapiscan
Refrigeration maintenance	Intermarine
Autotmatic Doors	Tormax Auto Doors
Cooling Tower & Condenser Water maintenance	360 Water

Pest Control & Treatment	SafeSpray Services
Waste & Recycling	Suez
Waste & Recycling	A1 Rapido
Waste & Recycling	Cleanaway
Waste & Recycling	Grace Records
Waste & Recycling	Fresh & Clean
Garden maintenance	Botany Bay Landscapes
Gym equipment service	Techfit
Kitchen Hoods & Riser Service	National Duct Clean
Dishwasher maintenance	Hobart
Diesel Generator maintenance	Ryan Wilks
Chamber Timing Systems	Leotech
Plumbing maintenance	John Neal Plumbing
Exit Signs & Lights	LVX Group
Boilers Service	Tomlinsons Boilers
Building Security	ACG
Building Security	Boon Edam
Building Security	Leda Security Products
Contract Staff	Hays Recruitment
Hygiene Services	Flick Anticimex

The above contracts mostly represent specialist maintenance works and services contracts which require technical skills.

Furthermore, with regard to the question surrounding modern slavery, the Parliament of NSW is committed to ensuring that our suppliers are not part of using modern slavery.

The Parliament of NSW mirrors the NSW Procurement Framework and Policies, which includes NSW Supplier Code of Conduct which have introduced specific supplier requirements related to modern slavery. Specifically, section 4.6 “suppliers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that businesses within their supply-chains are not supplying products of modern slavery.”

The monitoring of this would form part of the contract management between the Parliament of NSW and its suppliers.