

Our Year in Review

Digital Transformation

In 2023–24, the Parliamentary Service embarked on a significant Digital Transformation Project, supported by Cabinet Budget Review Committee (CBRC) funding. This project includes the introduction of a commercial-off-the-shelf Parliamentary Information Management System (PIMS) and the replacement of key audio visual (AV) systems in the Chambers and to support Committees activities. The initiative, scheduled for implementation over three years, aims to modernise the Queensland Parliament's digital infrastructure.

A key milestone of this transformation was the upgrade of the Legislative Assembly Chamber's audio systems, which have been in use for over a decade. During the parliamentary recess from December 2023 to February 2024, Parliamentary IT Services collaborated with Property Services and Video Pro to install new audio conferencing, attendant call, and Chamber bells systems. These systems are now hosted on IP networks, replacing the outdated legacy systems, resulting in a substantial improvement in sound quality within the Chamber.

Looking forward, the project will continue to enhance the AV infrastructure, including the replacement of five Committee audio systems, upgrades to the AV systems in the Undumbi and Dandiir Rooms and the Red Chamber, and improvements to the Video Broadcast systems. Two new Committee Rooms on Level 3 of the Annexe are also being prepared for use in the 58th Parliament.

In parallel, the PIMS aims to replace the 19 bespoke IT applications that have supported the operations of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Committees over the past decade. These applications were originally developed in-house to meet the unique needs of parliamentary operations, and have supported critical functions such as the production of Hansard, Parliament TV, Questions on Notice and ePetitions.

In 2023–24, the Service released four PIMS modules to enhance parliamentary proceedings and accessibility:

- Members' Database: lists all current and former Members, positions held, titles, electorates and party affiliations
- Parliament TV Live Broadcast: providing the people of Queensland real-time vision of Parliamentary Sittings and Committee Hearings
- Video On Demand: a catalogue of all previous Parliamentary Sittings and Committee Hearings indexed and captioned by the Record of Proceedings (Hansard)
- Members' Video Extract: video extraction service where Members can clip segments of Parliamentary proceedings.

The newly implemented Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) technology, which provides live captions for Parliamentary Sittings, Estimates, and Committee Hearings, marks a significant advancement in making parliamentary proceedings more accessible to Deaf and hard of hearing citizens. This technology will also assist in the production of the Record of Proceedings, supporting the work of Hansard Reporters.

The Parliamentary Service continues to work towards the completion of additional PIMS modules and AV infrastructure upgrades. It is anticipated that the AV infrastructure will be fully modernised early in the 58th Parliament.

Replacement of the Video on Demand (VoD)

During 2022 and 2023, the Parliamentary Library sought to replace its outdated, in-house Video on Demand (VoD) system, originally developed by Information Technology Services in 2000, with a modern, reliable, and sustainable solution. The previous system, running on an unsupported platform, required remediation through backup recordings and was unable to produce recordings at industry-standard sizes.

In October 2023, a new VoD solution was selected, featuring an on-premises recording system integrated with a cloud-hosted delivery and archiving platform. The project commenced in November 2023, and the new system was launched in June 2024.

Since the 1970s, the Library has recorded a range of AV materials, including free-to-air news, current affairs and radio programs, supporting members and staff in their duties. The library also maintains a significant AV archive with over 100,000 items, showcasing key aspects of Queensland's history.

The new VoD system captures and seamlessly delivers Queensland news, current affairs, and radio recordings to the hosted platform. Librarians can easily clip, upload, and share content through a user-friendly interface, with clips archived every 60 days. The system also standardises AV recordings at industry-standard sizes, with flexible options for file types.

The new platform offers a modern design, enhanced search functionality and features such as subtitles and transcripts, greatly improving user experience. This updated VoD service provides a more efficient and functional solution for managing the library's extensive audio visual collections.

Committees

In 2023–24, the Committee Office supported 72 portfolio and select committee inquiries, as well as 631 committee meetings, hearings, and briefings, including those of portfolio committees, select committees, the Ethics Committee, and the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee. Amid this extensive activity, the Committee Office has introduced a new approach to committee reports, aiming to make them more accessible for busy readers. Reports are now shorter and more concise, particularly for bill inquiry reports, where an integrated approach has been adopted to address committee deliberations on policy outcomes, compatibility with fundamental legislative principles (relating to individual rights and parliamentary sovereignty), and compliance with the *Human Rights Act 2020*. Additionally, there has been an increased focus on using graphical representations of information, a trend that will continue into 2024–25.

Throughout the year, surveys were conducted with subscribers to committee updates, witnesses at hearings, and individuals who submitted to committee inquiries to assess their experiences with these engagement activities. Although we received a relatively small number of responses from individuals who appeared as witnesses at committee hearings, the majority expressed satisfaction with their experience, indicating they would participate again and encourage others to do so. Most witnesses, along with those who submitted written contributions, felt that the committees were genuinely interested in hearing from ordinary citizens, not just experts or organisations. Feedback from these surveys is being carefully considered to enhance stakeholder engagement with committees.

In developing the requirements for a new parliamentary information management system, the committee office has prioritised enhancing public participation. A key feature will be the introduction of an e-submissions platform, simplifying the process for the public to submit contributions to parliamentary inquiries. Additionally, the efficiencies gained through improved information management will allow us to allocate more resources towards fostering greater public engagement.

Engaging Students with Minecraft

In 2023–24, Queensland's Parliamentary Education Team launched an innovative project to engage students by challenging them to build a replica of the Legislative Assembly Chamber in Minecraft Education. This activity not only educated students about the structure and features of Parliament but also enriched the suite educational resources available to schools.

The initiative culminated in a state-wide competition, developed in collaboration with the Communications and Marketing team and launched in Term 2 of 2024. The competition attracted 258 teams from 55 schools across 36 electorates. Students received a resource pack with photos, floor plans, and a Teacher Handbook, all accessible via a dedicated webpage on the Parliament's website.

Participants submitted scale models of the Chamber, accompanied by narrated walkthroughs and slideshows documenting their collaborative efforts and innovative use of in-game resources. Despite the challenge of coordinating work across different classes, students employed creative strategies, such as using placeholders in Minecraft to communicate and plan their builds.

Ten teams were selected as finalists, with Jaxson and Louis from Fairview Heights State School in the Toowoomba North electorate emerging as the overall winners. The finalists and their families were invited to Parliament House for a special Presentation Day to receive their prizes.

The Build Your Parliament in Minecraft competition engaged 1,290 students who might not have otherwise participated in civics education, increasing the Parliamentary Service's engagement by 34% for the year. The winning entries are published on the Parliament's website, along with a Teacher Guide for ongoing classroom use, offering a valuable resource for those in regional and remote areas.

Building on this success, the Education Team plans to make this competition an annual event, continuing to provide an engaging and collaborative way for students to learn about democracy.

Annexe Refurbishment: Members Tower

Following the 2018–19 review by Wilson Architects, which drew on a series of previous reports, investigations, and assessments spanning 10–15 years, a series of recommendations relating to the Annexe Tower refurbishment were presented.

Key recommendations included:

- Upgrade of existing Members' office and accommodation floors (levels 9-23) to address current condition, equitable access and building code non-compliance, and potential to manage future increases in the number of Members.
- Upgrade of building facades to address building code non-compliance and deliver improved acoustic noise reduction to Members' bedroom and office floors.

Scope of Works

Based on these recommendations, a detailed scope of works was developed, including:

- Rectification and make-safe of the external façade comprising glazing, soffits, shrouds, balconies, concrete panels, precast sealant joints.
- The redesign and internal refurbishment of Members accommodation and offices (levels 9-23) including new internal walls, carpeting, re-painting and replacement of aged soft furnishings.

Project Management

Ridgemill Project Management was engaged as the Client-focused Project Delivery Specialist, operating under the management of the Property Services Project Team.

These refurbishment works have significantly enhanced the functionality, safety, and aesthetics of the Annexe Tower, ensuring it meets current standards and the needs of its occupants.

Key project milestones

March 2022	Works tendered on QTender
May 2022	Tender closed <i>Only one tender submission was received from Hutchinson Builders.</i> <i>Ridgemill and QPS evaluated the tender submission in detail.</i>
July 2022	Hutchinson Builders engaged <i>Began with investigative works focused on access and building design.</i>
August to September 2022	Finalisation of project methodology and set-up of site on level 7 <i>Significant structural work was undertaken, including the installation of back props on level 6 to support the 800 tonnes of steel and scaffolding placed on level 7.</i>
October 2022	Commencement of scaffold installation
November 2022	Tower crane installation <i>Six days of works required to reach its full height of 88 metres.</i>
November 2022	Commencement of demolition <i>Demolition work commenced on levels 9 to 23, where all internal walls, windows, and framing were removed, returning the building to its primary structure.</i> <i>Structural repairs were completed while the structure was open and accessible.</i> <i>Asbestos mastic was discovered in the wet areas of the accommodation floors and on the balconies. The removal process took 13 weeks and resulted in a \$1.1 million variation to the project estimate.</i>
May 2023	Internal wall set-out commenced <i>Construction commenced on level 22 and progressed down to level 9, before returning to level 23. The schedule was driven by the delivery of windows and the placement of orders tailored to the specific floors.</i> <i>All internal walls on the accommodation floors have been constructed to achieve a 2-hour fire rating.</i> <i>Office floors are fire-rated on a floor-by-floor basis.</i>
February 2024	Scaffolding and grillage removed
March 2024	Tower crane dismantled and moved from site
May 2024	Members move back into tower <i>Defect works have been ongoing, with a 12-month Defects Liability Period (DLP) for all work and trades. Approximately 20 defects remain outstanding.</i>

Construction Snapshot Data

- Eighty local contractors, businesses or consultants were engaged throughout the project, including a number of First Nations groups:
 - Beavis and Bartels
 - Brisbane Fire
 - Construc
 - G. James Windows and Doors
 - Keybuild Services
 - Logan Steel
 - Microfire Systems
 - Peddle Thorp
 - PJT Tiling
 - Pro Concrete Cutting Brisbane
 - Qld Pre-stressing Pty Ltd
 - RB Scaffold
 - Soil Surveys Engineering
 - Sotera Fire Engineering
 - Usher Group
- 990 worker inductions completed
- 33,703 workdays / 86,119 work hours logged
- 31,000 training hours completed
- 600 tonnes of scaffold used
- Copper cladding sourced from Germany and locally assembled
- 2,000m² of new glazing façade fabricated locally
- 3km of new partition walls constructed.