



About Estimates Committees

Estimates Committees are established each year for the purpose of examining the Appropriation Bill (the Budget). They provide an opportunity each year for a more detailed examination of public expenditure than would be possible under the normal procedure of the Committee Stage of a Bill.

The Parliament's financial authority is the most important of the powers traditionally and constitutionally devolved to the Executive (Government). The examination by the Estimates Committees is therefore an integral part of the process of ensuring Executive accountability to the Legislature.

The Estimates Committees provide Members of the House of Assembly with the opportunity to examine Ministers, including those Ministers who are Members of the Legislative Council, on aspects of Government operations. Members of the Legislative Council do not participate in the examination of Ministers.

The Estimates Committees traditionally meet in the parliamentary chambers – Estimates Committee A in the House of Assembly and Estimates Committee B in the Legislative Council. The Committees meet concurrently over a two-week period.

The proceedings of the Estimates Committees are open to the public and may be viewed from the Strangers Galleries of either chamber at Parliament House. The proceedings are also broadcast live on the Parliament's website.

The first Estimates Committees in South Australia were conducted in 1980. Since 1980, the Estimates Committees have become an important feature of the annual parliamentary calendar in the weeks following the introduction of the Appropriation Bill.



Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Hon. C L Wingard, Estimates Committee A, 2021

Estimates Committee Procedures

Standing Orders 266 to 278 determine the procedure to be adopted for the consideration of the schedule of proposed payments as listed in the Appropriation Bill. These payments represent the funding allocated to government departments and agencies in each Minister's portfolio area. Each payment is examined separately.

Each Minister and their associated portfolios are allocated a full or part day for examination, usually between the hours of 9.00am to 6.00pm, (a timetable for the Estimates Committees is published following the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill). The examination involves Members seeking information through questions of the Minister.

During the Estimates Committees, at the beginning of each sitting day, or when a new Minister appears before the Committee, the Chair determines the agreed informal timetable for the examination of that Minister. This timetable sets out the order in which officers from each of the agencies assisting the Minister will be present, thus determining the order in which the Minister's portfolios will be examined.

Members use the Estimates Statement and Portfolio Statements along with the other documents that make up the collection of financial papers known as the *Budget Papers* tabled on the introduction of the Appropriation Bill as references for their questions.

Prior to the asking of questions, both the Minister and the Opposition spokesperson are traditionally permitted to make brief opening statements if they desire. The allocation of questions to Members is determined by the Chair.

Ministers may undertake to supply information at a later date. This is known as taking the question 'on notice'. Responses to questions on notice are published in Hansard on the day they are provided by the Minister.

Access to Estimates Proceedings

The Estimates Committee program, outlining when Ministers will appear each day, are posted to the [Programs](#) page of the Parliament's website, once available.

Estimates Committee hearings are broadcast on the [Live Broadcast](#) page of the Parliament's website.

A transcript of each day's Estimates Committees proceedings (Hansard) is available the following day on the [Hansard page](#) of the Parliament's website.

The complete set of Budget papers can be accessed once the Appropriation Bill has been introduced and Treasurer has delivered the Budget Speech in the House of Assembly. The Budget Papers are available from the [Tabled Papers and Petitions](#) page on the Parliament's website, or the [State Budget](#) website.

Further information

For further information, please contact the House of Assembly Procedure Office via:

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