



## 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 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.

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 (see below). These payments represent the funding allocated to government departments and agencies in each Minister's portfolio area. Each payment is examined separately.

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

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.

### **Schedule 1—Amounts proposed to be expended from the Consolidated Account during the financial year ending 30 June 2014**

<u>Appropriation—Estimates of 2013–14</u>	<u>Estimate</u>
<b>Operating Purpose</b>	
Arts SA	\$132 559 000
Attorney-General's Department	\$85 898 000
Administered Items for the Attorney-General's Department	\$107 276 000
Auditor-General's Department	\$16 016 000
Courts Administration Authority	\$89 348 000
Defence SA	\$16 482 000
Department for Communities and Social Inclusion	\$1 040 343 000
Administered Items for the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion	\$179 118 000
Department for Correctional Services	\$228 250 000
Department for Education and Child Development	\$2 777 471 000

## **PROCEDURE**

Each Minister and their associated portfolios are allocated a full or part day for examination, usually between the hours of 9.00am to 10.00pm, (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.

During the examination of proposed payments Members of the Committee are usually allowed three questions each at one time. A Member may ask further questions once other Members have had an opportunity to ask their questions. Questions alternate between Opposition and Government Members. The Chairman may permit supplementary questions in order to conclude a line of questioning.

Ministers may undertake to supply information at a later date for insertion in Hansard. This is known as taking the question 'on notice'.

## **ACCESS TO ESTIMATES COMMITTEES RECORDS AND BUDGET PAPERS**

A transcript of each day's Estimates Committees proceedings is posted the next day by Hansard on the Parliament's website at [www.parliament.sa.gov.au](http://www.parliament.sa.gov.au).

The complete set of Budget papers can be found via a link from the Parliament's website once the Appropriation Bill has been introduced and Treasurer has delivered the Budget Speech in the House of Assembly.

### **For further information:**

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