



Accountability Report 2014-15

A Summary Report to British Columbians



Legislative Assembly of British Columbia ~ December 2015

Message from Madame Speaker

The Legislative Assembly *Accountability Report 2014-15* highlights our actions to strengthen the Assembly's financial management and administration. This new summary version provides an overview of our accomplishments during the past fiscal year.

The Parliament Buildings are where the Legislative Assembly's 85 Members meet to represent their constituents as they consider new laws and the expenditure of public funds. The Parliament Buildings are also the people's house, where British Columbians can see their Legislative Assembly at work and meet with their elected Members.

Over the past year, we have enhanced security, improved access to the Assembly, and made more information available online to Members and citizens. We increased the Assembly's outreach to schools, with a renewed Speaker in the Schools program to engage with young people and encourage them to become involved in democracy and making their communities better. To find out more about our accountability to British Columbians and the work of the Legislative Assembly, I encourage you to read our [Accountability Report 2014-15](#).

We worked with the Ambulance Paramedics of British Columbia and government partners on funding and a design to honour fallen paramedics in British Columbia. This new memorial recognizing these brave women and men was unveiled on the Assembly's grounds in May 2015, between the existing British Columbia Law Enforcement and Firefighters memorials.



Sincerely,
Honourable Linda Reid, Speaker

Progress and Achievements

Good financial management and administration at the Legislative Assembly require effective governance, the use of best practices for administrative rules and procedures, and accountability to British Columbians for the use of taxpayers' funds.

The all-party Legislative Assembly Management Committee serves as the Assembly's parliamentary management board. It is responsible for: the sound administration of the Assembly's operations; the provision of effective administrative and financial policies and support for Members in the discharge of their parliamentary and constituency responsibilities; and prudent Assembly budgets and expenditures.

Guided by principles of openness, transparency, and accountability, the Committee is:

- Improving accountability for the Legislative Assembly's expenditures.
- Expanding the public disclosure of Members' compensation and expenses.
- Enhancing the effectiveness of the Assembly's financial management and administration.

Strengthening Budget Management

At the top of its achievements in 2014-15, the Committee approved a budget containing total Legislative Assembly spending for the 2015-16 fiscal year at the previous year's level, by limiting operating and administrative costs.

- The Committee supported the first ever independent Legislative Assembly Support Programs Accountability Review, to identify opportunities for efficiencies, cost savings, and ways to improve service delivery and ensure the best possible use of taxpayers' funds. A robust fundamental review of support programs concluded that the Assembly compares well to other Canadian jurisdictions, and identified potential initiatives to generate savings of over \$1 million.
- The Committee used the review's recommendations to trim administrative and operating costs, improve program delivery, and redirect savings to higher priorities.

Enhancing Financial Administration

The Committee is overseeing a comprehensive multi-year program to enhance the financial administration of taxpayers' funds. More rigorous internal controls are helping to ensure systematic and prudent administration of Assembly expenditures.

- For the second consecutive year, BC's Office of the Auditor General audited the Assembly's financial statements, and confirmed to British Columbians that the statements are reliable and fair.

Transparency Initiatives

Openness and transparency enable public sector entities to demonstrate that they are serving the public interest, supporting the engagement of citizens, and fostering public trust and confidence in decisions and actions.

- The Committee oversaw work to implement its decision to post receipts for Members' travel and constituency office expenses on the Assembly's website. The Legislative Assembly is the second parliamentary jurisdiction in Canada to post copies of Members' reimbursable expense receipts.

Ensuring a Secure and Accessible Legislative Assembly

A secure and accessible working environment enables the Legislative Assembly and Members to carry out their functions of holding government to account, and scrutinizing legislation, taxation, and spending initiatives.

- After the tragic October 2014 attack in Ottawa, the Committee reviewed the Assembly's security framework and readiness. The Committee concluded that a principled approach to security and accessibility should be continued, with flexible administration to manage changing security risks. The Committee initiated key actions to ensure security and public accessibility at the Parliament Buildings.

Priorities for Moving Forward

Building on these achievements, the Legislative Assembly will focus on the following priorities in the year ahead.

- *Advancing the Legislative Assembly's multi-year program to strengthen financial management, accountability, and transparency* – with support from the internal audit program, an updated financial/accounting system, revised financial and operating policies, an automated financial disclosure system, and improved reporting.
- *Harnessing technology to increase the availability of parliamentary information and information services to Members and all British Columbians* – with website innovations, improved document management systems, and more timely, and cost-effective Library information services.
- *Ensuring safe and suitable facilities for the work of the Legislative Assembly and Members* – to address increases in the number of Members, and evolving requirements to support the responsibilities of the Assembly and Members.
- *Implementing a robust Business Continuity, Earthquake Preparedness, and Disaster Recovery program* – including collaboration with government to ensure the continued operation of governance institutions.
- *Planning for the completion of arrangements for the dissolution of the 40th Parliament and for the next general election in May 2017* – with support for the induction of new Members, orientation and administrative programs for Members and their staff, and procedural advice and operational services for the launch of the new Parliament.



Key Performance Indicators 2014-15

70 Sitting days

37 Bills processed accurately through all stages and adopted

13 Active parliamentary committees

273,319 Visitors to the Parliament Buildings

80,080 Visitors who participated in a Legislative Assembly tour of the Parliament Buildings

1,769,106 Visits to the Legislative Assembly website

Yes The external auditor has provided an unreserved (unmodified) opinion on the financial statements

Yes The Legislative Assembly has maintained expenditures within its annual budget appropriation

2014-15 Key Initiatives

Legislative Assembly management and staff worked to support 2014-15 key initiatives for the organization.

Our work focused on the following:

- *Supporting the Assembly's key legislative functions* – including the Assembly's debate and adoption of the February 2015 budget, 19 ministry Estimates, and 37 bills, and 13 parliamentary committees carrying out three statutory officer appointment processes and a record six public consultations.
- *Strengthening budget review* – with the first ever independent Legislative Assembly Support Programs Accountability Review, and expanded reporting and analysis on budget management to support effective decision-making by the Legislative Assembly Management Committee.
- *Reforming financial administration and transparency* – through strengthened internal controls and administration, implementation of Committee decisions to enhance transparency on Assembly expenditures, Members' compensation and expenses, and Executive Staff Travel quarterly reports.
- *Ensuring a secure and accessible Legislative Assembly* – with updated equipment and training, strategic partnerships with police and intelligence agencies, and enhancements to our business continuity and emergency preparedness plan.

Financial Results

The Legislative Assembly's second set of audited annual financial statements received an unreserved (unmodified) opinion from the Auditor General of BC. As per the Audit Report on page 41 of the *Accountability Report 2014-15*, the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

For the year ended March 31, 2015, the Legislative Assembly's net cost of operations was \$62.5 million (budget was \$69.6 million) in comparison to \$66.1 million in the previous year. In addition, the Legislative Assembly purchased \$990 thousand (budget was \$3.4 million) in capital assets in comparison to \$1.9 million in the previous year.

The *Accountability Report 2014-15* includes a new section called the Management Discussion and Analysis. This section provides insight and analysis on the Assembly's financial results. Charts and tables, along with trend analysis, are used to visually illustrate and explain past and projected future results.

Net Cost of Operations	Budget		Actual	
<i>(in thousands of dollars)</i>	2015-16	2014-2015	2013-14	
Expenses				
Members' Services	36,068	32,654	36,243	
Caucus Support Services	7,097	6,933	6,846	
Office of the Speaker	420	329	297	
Office of the Clerk	1,130	900	984	
Office of the Clerk of Committees	628	592	581	
Legislative Operations	13,939	12,078	12,939	
Sergeant-at-Arms	4,623	4,436	4,363	
Hansard Services	4,015	3,572	3,360	
Legislative Library	2,171	1,578	1,796	
	70,091	63,072	67,409	
Revenues				
Dining Room	436	403	421	
Parliamentary Gift Shop	47	87	64	
Constituency Office Allowance Recovery	0	0	737	
Recovery of Prior Year's Expenses	0	23	0	
Lease Revenue	43	42	43	
	526	555	1,265	
Net Cost of Operations	69,565	62,517	66,144	
Capital Purchases				
<i>(in thousands of dollars)</i>	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	
Furniture and Equipment	561	137	242	
Computer Hardware and Software	398	466	735	
Buildings	2,433	0	64	
Vehicles	0	0	34	
Specialized Equipment	0	388	794	
Total Capital Purchases	3,392	990	1,869	

For more information and to read the *Accountability Report 2014-15*, visit our website at:

<https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/accountability>



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