



2019-20 Budget Estimates

Report No. 20, 56th Parliament
Education, Employment and Small Business
Committee
August 2019

Education, Employment and Small Business Committee

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Acknowledgements

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Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2019-2020 financial year.

Consideration of the budget estimates allows for the public examination of the responsible Ministers and the chief executive officers of agencies within the committee's portfolio areas. This was undertaken through the questions on notice and public hearing process.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2019 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development, and their departmental officers for their co-operation in providing information to the committee throughout this process.

I would also like to thank Members of the committee for their contributions to the estimates process, and other Members whose participation in the hearing provided additional scrutiny of the estimates.

Finally, I thank the committee's secretariat and other Parliamentary Service staff for their assistance throughout the estimates process.



Ms Leanne Linard MP
Chair
August 2019

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

The Education, Employment and Small Business Committee (committee) is a portfolio committee of the Legislative Assembly which commenced on 15 February 2018 under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.¹

The committee's primary areas of responsibility include:

- Education
- Industrial Relations
- Employment and Small Business
- Training and Skills Development.

Section 92(1)(a) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that, in relation to its portfolio area, a committee may consider Appropriation Bills. Under section 92(3) the committee may consider and report on the Appropriation Bill, and may make recommendations about it to the Legislative Assembly.

On 11 June 2019, the Appropriation Bill 2019 (the Bill) and the estimates for the committee's area of responsibility were referred to the committee for investigation and report.²

On 1 August 2019, the committee held a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, and the Minister for Employment, Small Business and Training and other witnesses. A copy of the transcript of the committee's hearing is available on the committee's webpage.

1.2 Aim of this report

This report summarises the estimates referred to the committee and highlights some of the issues the committee examined.

The committee considered the estimates referred to it by using information contained in:

- budget papers
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice
- evidence taken at the hearing

Prior to the public hearing, the committee provided the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, and the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development with questions on notice in relation to the estimates. Responses to all the questions were received.

Answers to the committee's pre-hearing questions on notice; documents tabled during the hearing; answers to questions taken on notice during the hearing are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.

1.3 Participation by other Members

The committee gave leave for other Members to participate in the hearing. The following Members participated in the hearing:

¹ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 88 and Standing Order 194.

² Standing Order 177 provides for the automatic referral of the annual Appropriation Bills to portfolio committees once the Bills have been read a second time.

- Mr Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar
- Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, Shadow Minister for Education, Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, Manager of Opposition Business and Member for Kawana
- Ms Fiona Simpson MP, Shadow Minister for Employment and Small Business, Shadow Minister for Training and Skills Development and Member for Maroochydore
- Ms Sandy Bolton MP, Member for Noosa.

2 Recommendation

Pursuant to Standing Order 187(1), the committee must state whether the proposed expenditures referred to it are agreed to.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2019 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

3 Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations

This section discusses issues raised during the committee’s examination of the Bill.

3.1 Department of Education

The Honourable Grace Grace MP, Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, is the Minister responsible for the Department of Education. The department has three service areas as follows:

- Early Childhood and Care – focused on providing quality early education and care programs to support successful transitions to school
- School Education – focused on delivering Prep to Year 12 in state schools to support successful transitions from school to work, training or further study and administering funding to Queensland non-state schools
- Industrial Relations – focused on providing fair, safe and productive workplaces and communities through Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, The Electrical Safety Office, Worker’s Compensation Regulator, and Industrial Relations.³

The Minister’s areas of responsibility are administered through the Department of Education and through the statutory authority the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA). The QCAA is responsible for delivering syllabuses and guidelines, and assessment, testing, reporting, certification and tertiary entrance services to Queensland schools.⁴ A key priority for the QCAA for 2019-20 will be the delivery of the new Queensland Certification of Education system.⁵

In accordance with Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders, the CEO of the QCAA attended the estimates hearing and was available for direct questions by the committee.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2019 compares the appropriations for the department for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Appropriations	Budget 2018-19 \$’000	Vote 2019-20 \$’000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	8,803,118	9,325,328
equity adjustment	138,400	724,061
<i>Administered Items</i>	3,550,824	3,807,436
Vote	12,492,342	13,856,825

Source: Appropriation Bill 2019, Schedule 2, p. 8.

³ State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, pp 2, 5.

⁴ State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, p 26.

⁵ State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, p 26.

The departmental services expenses budgeted for each of the three service areas for 2018-19 and 2019-20 are illustrated in the table below. Consistent with previous years, a significant proportion of the department's appropriation will be utilised in the School Education service area.

Department of Education Expenses	Budget 2018-19 \$'000	Budget 2019-20 \$'000
<i>Early Childhood Education and Care</i>	270,773	293,083
<i>School Education</i>	8,994,639	9,494,164
<i>Office of Industrial Relations</i>	155,781	166,901
Total expenses	9,421,193	9,954,148

Source: State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, p 16.

The estimated increase in controlled expenses is due to student enrolment growth; enterprise bargaining outcomes; early childhood regulation and kindergarten programs; the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers initiative; an increase in depreciation expenses relating to school infrastructure investment; implementation of recommendations from the *Best Practice Review of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland* and additional funding under government agreements such as the National School Reform Agreement.⁶

Budgeted expenses for the QCAA for 2019-20 are \$65,663 million.⁷ The QCAA is expected to return an operating surplus of \$3.360 million for the financial year.⁸

Budget highlights and issues considered by the committee in relation to the Education and Industrial Relations portfolios respectively are discussed in the sections below.

3.1.1 Budget highlights – Education Portfolio

2019-20 budget highlights for the Early Childhood Education and Care service area include:

- investing an additional \$30.4 million in 2019-20 to support universal access to kindergarten
- investing \$25.6 million in 2019-20 to support the operation of *Early Years Places*
- investing an additional \$26.5 million in 2019-20 for regulation of the early childhood sector
- investing \$7.5 million over two years from 2018-19 to deliver Remote Kindergarten in 67 Queensland state schools.

2019-20 budget highlights for the School Education service area include:

- providing increased funding of approximately \$1.4 billion from 2019 to 2023, as part of the five-year school funding agreement with the Australian Government
- investing \$136 million over five years from 2018-19 to implement the *Teaching Queensland's Future Strategy*
- employing more than 1,000 teachers in 2019-20 as part of a four-year commitment to employ more than 3,700 teachers by 2021-22
- increasing the *Building Future Schools Fund* by \$532.6 million over seven years from 2018-19 to a total of \$1.3 billion

⁶ State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, p 17.

⁷ State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, p 29.

⁸ State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, p 29.

- continuing to invest up to \$235 million over four years from 2018-19 to modernise educational infrastructure under the *Renewing Our Schools* program
- completing the investment of \$250 million over two years from 2018-19 for additional facilities in state secondary schools
- investing \$225.7 million in 2019-20 in school maintenance to ensure it remains at one per cent of state school asset replacement value
- continuing to deliver the \$97 million *Advancing Clean Energy in Schools* program to upgrade and install solar and energy efficiency measures
- providing \$100 million over four years from 2019-20 for priority state school air-conditioning projects
- completing the investment of \$25.6 million over two years from 2018-19 to deliver renewal works at 31 state schools
- continuing to invest \$31.1 million in four Centres for Learning and Wellbeing in rural and remote Queensland through the *Advancing Rural and Remote Action Plan* with an allocation of over \$9 million in 2019-20
- implementing the Digital Technologies curriculum (including coding and robotics) in every state school and continuing the Advancing STEM initiative that allocates more than \$80 million in funding over four years from 2017-18 to provide STEM support in state primary schools
- investing \$89.9 million over five years for the development and implementation of the new senior assessment and tertiary entrance system, including \$24.8 million in 2019-20; and ongoing funding of over \$55 million per annum from 2020-21 to support the new system
- allocating \$63.6 million over four years from 2019-20 to continue provision of early childhood development programs and services
- distributing over \$270 million in 2020 for school improvement initiatives by providing Investing for Success directly to schools
- continuing to invest \$1.6 million over three years from 2018-19 to recruit and train up to 3,000 volunteers for the *Queensland Ready Reading* program in partnership with Volunteering Queensland
- investing \$28.1 million over four years from 2018-19 and a further \$10 million capital investment to increase engagement and re-engagement of young people into education, employment or training through Link & Launch, Youth FlexiSpaces, Regional Youth Engagement Hubs, the Digital Engagement Strategy, and with cross-agency efforts through the Youth Engagement Alliance
- contributing to the implementation of the Queensland Government response to the Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
- investing \$37.8 million in 2019-20 to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The education portfolio area activities include proposed 2019-20 capital purchases of \$1.227 billion; of which \$3.5 million includes the redevelopment of the QCAA's information and communication technology systems to support the new senior assessment system.⁹

A total of \$100.1 million in capital grants will be provided to the non-state schooling sector and student hostels for 2019-20.¹⁰

⁹ State Budget 2019-20, Capital Statement 2019-20, p 29.

¹⁰ State Budget 2019-20, Capital Statement 2019-20, p 29.

3.1.2 Key issues raised at the public hearing – Education portfolio

Issues raised by the committee in relation to the Education portfolio area included:

- Early Childhood Education and Care – particularly the remote kindergarten pilot in schools, and bedside kindergarten at the Queensland Children’s Hospital
- Cooler Schools Zone program - air-conditioning in schools
- Advancing Clean Energy in Schools program - solar power and energy efficiency measures
- additional classrooms for 2020 when there will be six full student cohorts in secondary schools
- Teaching Queensland’s Future strategy - health and wellbeing of principals and teachers
- tertiary entrance – transition to Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) in 2020
- support for students with disability – Early Childhood Development Program
- support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to engage with school
- NAPLAN
- Renewing Our Schools program – building enhancements and upgrades
- small and remote schools
- Respect Our Staff, Our School– awareness program to reduce abusive and violent behaviour
- Inner City South State Secondary College
- school recovery from natural disasters and fire
- student welfare and wellbeing, including an alleged incident involving a child
- Mansfield State High School catchment area changes
- parking at two schools
- Queensland Government Advertising and Marketing Communications Code of Conduct

3.1.1 Budget highlights – Industrial Relations portfolio

The Industrial Relations portfolio area is administered through the Office of Industrial Relations within the Department of Education. The Office of Industrial Relations comprises:

- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland
- Electrical Safety Office
- Workers’ Compensation Regulator
- Industrial Relations.¹¹

Within the planned \$166,901 million in departmental service expenses budgeted for the Industrial Relations service area in 2019-20, highlights include:

- allocating \$8 million over four years from 2019-20 to implement recommendations from the *Best Practice Review of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland Final Report 2017*
- continuing to implement recommendations from the review of the operation of the workers’ compensation scheme under the *Workers’ Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*

¹¹ Queensland Government, Office of Industrial Relations, 26 February 2019, <https://qed.qld.gov.au/programs-initiatives/oir>

- continuing to implement recommendations in response to the Parliamentary Committee's Report into Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis
- continuing to oversee the regulation of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ)
- supporting the Queensland Government's response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into wage theft in Queensland
- continuing to oversee the Queensland Labour Hire Licensing Scheme
- establishing improved safety standards for the amusement devices industry
- continuing to implement the recommendations of the independent review of Queensland's electrical licensing system and work with industry to build electrical workforce skills and capability to respond to emerging technologies
- continuing to partner with stakeholders to implement the Electrical Safety Plan for Queensland 2018-2022.

3.1.2 Key issues raised at the public hearing – Industrial Relations portfolio

Issues raised by the committee in relation to the Industrial Relations portfolio included:

- labour hire licensing scheme implementation
- electrical safety in the solar farm industry and invalidation of section 73A of the Electrical Safety Regulation
- safety and deaths on mining and construction sites, and the use of labour hire workers on those sites
- silica exposure in the manufactured stone industry, and the health and safety of workers
- appointments to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission and Industrial Court
- legal services panel for WorkCover Queensland.

4 Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development

This section discusses issues raised during the committee's examination of the Bill.

4.1 Department of Employment, Small Business and Training

The Honourable Shannon Fentiman MP, Minister for Employment and Minister for Training and Skills Development, is the Minister responsible for the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT). The department has three service areas as follows:

- Employment – focused on increasing employment opportunities for all Queenslanders, undertaking policy and strategic engagement activities and delivering key government employment programs
- Small Business Services – focused on delivering products and services to small business to enable growth and to make it easier to interact with government
- Training and Skills – focused on improving the skills of Queenslanders through the delivery of vocational education and training programs, and supporting publicly-funded training providers to deliver high quality training.¹²

The Minister's areas of responsibility are administered primarily through DESBT and the statutory authority TAFE Queensland.

In accordance with Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders, the CEO of TAFE Queensland attended the estimates hearing and was available for direct questioning by the committee.

In addition to her responsibility for DESBT, the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development also has a responsibility in relation to protected area management on Moreton Island (Mulgumpin) and North Stradbroke Island (Minjerrabah), an area of the employment portfolio that is administered by the Department of Environment and Science (DES).

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2019 compares the appropriations for the department for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Appropriations	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	1,057,196	1,049,892
equity adjustment	32,568	44,369
<i>Administered Items</i>		
Vote	1,089,764	1,094,261

Source: Appropriation Bill 2019, Schedule 2, p. 9.

¹² State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, pp 3, 5 & 7.

The departmental services expenses budgeted for each of the three DESBT service areas of Employment, Small Business Services, and Training and Skills in 2018-19, are in the table below:

Department of Employment, Small Business and Training Expenses	2018-19 \$'000	2019-20 \$'000
<i>Employment</i>	93,878	73,332
<i>Small Business Services</i>	26,802	26,214
<i>Training and Skills</i>	954,168	978,090

Source: State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, p 9.

Budgeted expenses for TAFE Queensland in 2019-20 are \$638,669 million. TAFE Queensland is expected to return an operating deficit of \$38,408 million for the financial year.¹³

Proposed capital expenditure in 2019-20 for DESBT and TAFE Queensland totals \$129 million. This includes \$58.9 million to refurbish and expand training facilities across several TAFE training sites and regions, and \$46.9 million to renew and refurbish Queensland's training assets.¹⁴

Budget highlights and issues considered by the committee in relation to the Employment and Small Business portfolio, and Training and Skills Development portfolio respectively are discussed in the sections below.

4.1.1 Budget highlights – Employment portfolio

2019-20 budget highlights for the employment service area include:

- continuing to deliver the *Back to Work* program designed to give Queensland employers the confidence to hire eligible unemployed jobseekers
- continuing to support workers to upskill and reskill and transition to new employment opportunities due to cessation of sand mining on Minjerribah through the *North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme*
- delivering a *Create Your Future Job* program to pilot targeted support and specialist business advice and mentoring
- continuing to support employment opportunities for young people and mature-aged jobseekers
- assisting disengaged Year 12 completers through the new *Link & Launch* pilot
- providing \$1 million for the *Social Enterprise Strategy* to support the further development and growth of the social enterprise sector.

4.1.2 Key issues raised at the public hearing – Employment portfolio

Issues raised by the committee in relation to the portfolio area of Employment included:

- job creation and labour force changes

¹³ State Budget 2019-20, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, p 19.

¹⁴ State Budget 2019-20, Capital Statement, p 43.

- Just Transition Group – energy sector stakeholder consultation, staffing and expenditure
- Back to Work program – apprentices and trainees, expenditure on initial payments, suspected fraudulent applications
- North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme.

4.1.3 Budget highlights – Small Business portfolio

2019-20 budget highlights for the Small Business service area include:

- funding of \$4 million in 2019-20 to support grants under the *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016-20*
- delivery of a \$10 million disaster recovery package North Queensland and North Western Queensland for business and industry support under the jointly funded Commonwealth-Queensland Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements
- supporting the Small Business Regulatory Reform initiative
- supporting the creation of new businesses and helping existing businesses through the delivery of three grants programs (Small Business Digital Grants Program, Small Business Entrepreneur Grants Program and the Business Growth Fund)
- supporting the Small Business Champion, the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council and the Better Regulation Taskforce to advocate for the interests of small business
- delivering Queensland Small Business Week to provide networking and knowledge exchange opportunities

4.1.4 Key issues raised at the public hearing – Small Business portfolio

Issues raised by the committee in relation to the portfolio area of Small Business included:

- Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy and improving the regulatory environment for small business
- payroll tax initiative, including changed threshold and discount for businesses outside southeast Queensland
- grants to small business: Small Business Digital Grants Program, Business Growth Fund and Small Business Disaster Recovery grants
- reduced invoice payment times to small business
- on-time payment policy for government agencies
- Queensland Small Business Advisory Council
- Supporting Artisan Producers
- Skilling Queenslanders
- disaster recovery package.

4.1.5 Budget highlights – Training and Skills Development portfolio

2019-20 budget highlights for the Training and Skills service area include:

- continue the Free TAFE initiative to cover the full cost of training in one of 160 high priority qualifications for eligible Year 12 graduates

- investing \$80 million (\$420 million over six years from 2015-16) to deliver the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative to support up to 10,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders (up to 54,000 over the six-year commitment) to get into work
- investing more than \$105 million in 2019-20 in upgrades and improvements in Queensland's training infrastructure
- delivering a Skills Strategy for Queensland that empowers a skilled workforce needed to attract investment and encourage job creation
- investing \$5.5 million (over three years from 2019-20 to 2021-22) for a Micro-Credentialing Pilot to support industry led skills development to address emerging workforce skills requirements
- establishing a Higher Level Apprenticeship Pilot to provide opportunities to partner with industry to develop new pathways to specialised skills and knowledge
- increasing engagement of young people in vocational education and training and in identifying pathways to careers
- continuing implementation of \$9 million (over four years from 2017-18 to 2020-21) for the Regional Skills Investment Strategy to align training outcomes for Queenslanders with local employment skills demand

4.1.6 Key issues raised at the public hearing – Training and Skills Development portfolio

Issues raised by the committee in relation to the portfolio area of Training and Skills Development included:

- Free TAFE initiative
- access to VET in regional and remote areas and the Torres Strait
- VET in Schools participation rate
- regional TAFE and any minimum number of students required to run a course
- VET Quality Framework
- suspension of prequalified supplier registered training organisations including those acting fraudulently or illegally
- TAFE Queensland expenditure on audit and assurance services
- health and safety at a TAFE campus.

5 Statement of Reservations

Education, Employment and Small Business Committee

Statement of Reservations 2019

Opening

The Palaszczuk Labor Government's 2019/20 budget was a bad budget for Queensland.

It was a budget of higher taxes, more debt, less jobs and less infrastructure.

Queenslanders can't afford Labor.

When Labor runs out of money, they come after yours.

The budget showed that Labor is actually cutting infrastructure spending at a time when we now have the worst unemployment on mainland Australia.

Annastacia Palaszczuk isn't borrowing to build, Labor are borrowing to cover their wasteful spending.

It was also a budget of new taxes – not announced at the last state election in another major breach of the trust to the people of Queensland.

It was a budget that introduced new taxes ripping another \$1.25 billion from the state's economy, plunged Queensland into more than \$90 billion of debt and revealed almost 26,000 less jobs than forecast.

This is \$1.25 billion in new taxes on top of the taxes Labor has already inflicted on Queensland since being re-elected.

A total of \$3.5 billion in taxes so far and Annastacia Palaszczuk hasn't ruled out more taxes and tax hikes into the future.

The 2019 estimates hearings were dominated by the Palaszczuk Labor Government's ongoing integrity crisis. In the 30th year since the Fitzgerald Inquiry report was published, these latest scandals raise significant questions about the government's openness, transparency, accountability and integrity that have engulfed the leadership of this government.

Education

As part of the Palaszczuk Labor Government's integrity crisis, it was revealed that the final sign-off for the Inner City South Secondary College at Cabinet Budget Review Committee (CBRC) occurred in April 2019, just days after the Deputy Premier signed a contract to purchase a property in Woolloongabba on 27 March 2019. The Premier stated that she was not aware of the house purchase until it appeared in the media. It is therefore likely that the Deputy Premier failed to declare a conflict of interest at that CBRC meeting in April.

There was also the serious matter raised about an alleged sexual assault of a young student at a Gold Coast state school. The parents of the victim have raised concerns that the matter was not acted on swiftly enough by the Education Department and were kept in the dark on the process.

In relation to air conditioning and the announcement from the budget, there are still a number of questions that remain unanswered.

It is unclear when the current review of air conditioning will be finished by the Department of Housing and Public Works.

It is unclear how many classrooms outside the Cooler Schools Zone don't have air conditioning.

It is unclear how many classrooms outside the Cooler Schools Zone that don't currently have air conditioning, will be air conditioned under the recent \$100 million announcement.

In any event, it significantly pales in comparison to the LNP's commitment to air condition every state school classroom in Queensland.

It was confirmed that Federal funding for state schools increased in this year's budget. Despite that, the Government still allows principals to have discretion that allows the union Fair Funding Now! campaign to be plastered all over the fences of state schools – despite politicising our schools with blatantly misleading information. We disagree with the Director General who said these signs are not political. They are misleading. Partisan politics has no place on the school gates or in the classrooms!

It was also revealed that the Government's Advancing Clean Energy Schools initiative was not delivered as outlined in 2018/19. The budget was \$47 million and yet only \$1 million was spent in 2018/19.

Industrial Relations

It was revealed that the Government did not advertise before appointing the four recent appointments to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.

One of those appointments was Jacqueline Power (nee O'Mara) who was adversely named in the Shepherdson Inquiry conducted by the former Criminal Justice Commission in relation to electoral fraud. Despite that, she was still appointed. Concerningly the Director General advised that further matters of CFMMEU influence over the Department have been referred to the Department by the Crime and Corruption Commission. The government should come clean and advise what these new allegations entail.

Employment, Small Business, Skills and Training

The embattled Employment and Small Business Minister faced the committee hearing after fresh media revelations regarding the worsening integrity crisis engulfing the Palaszczuk Labor Government.

In an admission to the committee it was revealed that the Minister had stayed at the luxury international ski town of Whistler free of charge courtesy of a government contractor whose employer had received more than a quarter of a million dollars in taxpayer contracts from the Minister's own department.

The Minister attempted to unsuccessfully brush away questions particularly when the Minister had the insolence to state that the reason why it took her six months to register the free gift was because she did not consider it to be material. It is almost unfathomable how out of touch the Minister is with hardworking Queenslanders if she believes free accommodation at the luxury ski town of Whistler provided by an employee of a government contractor as immaterial.

As the hearing continued, the more questions that were asked the more evasive the Minister's actions appeared. The Minister revealed that for a period of time the luxury ski accommodation was in the company of the scandal ridden Deputy Premier. It's certainly a poor reflection upon the Minister when even the embattled Deputy Premier prioritised the declaration of the luxury accommodation over her property interests adjacent to the proposed Boggo Road Cross River Rail Station. Regrettably for Queensland taxpayers, both the Director General and the Minister

refused to appoint an external auditor to review the hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth contracts compromised by the Minister's failure to declare the gift in a timely manner.

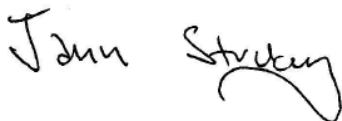
Further proof of the Palaszczuk Labor Government's anti-resources, anti-regions, anti-jobs agenda was uncovered from the Director General's admission that a 'Just Transition Group' had been setup to shutdown the jobs of Queensland thermal coal workers. The Director General revealed that this group had been allocated \$4.9 million over five years and an ongoing amount of \$1.06 million every year after to reskill thermal coal workers away from their existing jobs.

The Minister confirmed that after the Palaszczuk Labor Government first announced a \$5 million fund to assist North Stradbroke Island workers in December 2016 only 10% of the fund had been distributed to workers.

Concerningly the Director General refused to answer any questions on the secret Training Management System that the department has quietly discontinued. The value of this project has been reported to be in the vicinity of \$50 million. The Director General's refusal to answer questions on how taxpayer money was spent raises serious questions over the program's appropriation.

The hearing also uncovered yet another broken election commitment by the Palaszczuk Labor Government to Cairns. In 2017 Annastacia Palaszczuk promised Cairns a \$15 million upgrade of the local TAFE campus would be delivered within three years, after questioning from the LNP it was revealed that not a cent has been spent on the project to date. The Palaszczuk Labor Government promised this upgrade at the last election, yet nothing has been done. Instead of delivering the \$15 million upgrade in three years, Labor hopelessly don't even know in what month the project will start let alone when it'll finish.

Signed



Jann Stuckey MP

Member for Currumbin

Signed



Simone Wilson MP

Member for Pumicestone

