

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

asked on 28 September 2012

ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES
(MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister explain efforts made to rehabilitate abandoned mines and mitigate potential environmental risks at these sites?

ANSWER:

This government is committed to the long-term rehabilitation of abandoned mine sites throughout Queensland, and has appointed an Assistant Minister for Natural Resources and Mines—Ms Lisa France MP—specifically tasked to ensure that these works are given the highest priority.

Queensland has more than 15,000 abandoned mine sites, of which about 3500 are on public land, such as national parks, state forests, timber reserves and other state-owned land, including unallocated state-owned land.

A site is classed as an abandoned or orphaned mine when the mining lease under which it was created no longer exists, and there are no longer any legal avenues to require the company that created the disturbance to carry out remediation.

The Abandoned Mine Lands Program aims to assess and reduce risks arising from these mines.

Issues are addressed on a risk-prioritised basis, with the program's highest priority assigned to human safety and health.

Key rehabilitation actions include works to address health and safety risks; contaminated seepage interception and pump-back; water treatment; diversion works; and historic mining infrastructure management.

Mine sites requiring major remediation works include Mount Morgan, the Herberton Tailings Dam, Jumna, Mount Oxide, Croydon and Horn Island.

In cases where there is a public hazard and unsafe living environment, the state has assumed responsibility for abandoned mine issues.

The program is also responsible for delivery on the government's election commitment to implement the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry recommendations relating to abandoned mines.

The cost of implementing the recommendations relating to abandoned mines is expected to be \$0.5 million per year for two years, as a dedicated abandoned mines database is developed and landholder information on abandoned mines on their properties is sought. This will be funded from the priority projects allocation.

2.

A four-year works program has been developed prioritising works for implementation, with a number of projects now underway including additional water treatment at Mount Morgan, and water surveys at Herberton.

Historic coal mining subsidence at Collingwood Park is managed through the Collingwood Park State Guarantee, which is legislated under Part 10AA, section 381 of the *Mineral Resources Act 1989*.

The Charters Towers and Gympie shaft repair programs progressively make safe the many historic gold mining shafts in these cities. These programs are funded under the state-wide Abandoned Mine Lands Program.

The shaft repair program addresses historic shafts located on all types of land tenure. In addition, there is often little indication of the exact location of a shaft from the surface until it collapses. Shaft location requires the collation of many pieces of incomplete historic mining information.

Work is carried out on a risk-prioritised basis, with reports of possible subsidence as the highest priority. Common causes of subsidence are historic shafts, old wells, trenches, dumps and unconsolidated fill.

All reports of subsidence are treated as potentially dangerous. Upon notification, the first priority is to inspect the site and to brief the land holder and/or residents. Fencing is then used to make the site safe while site information is gathered and subsequent repair works are carried out.

In 2011–12 in Charters Towers, 22 reported subsidences were investigated with 12 identified as being unrelated to historic mining. The remaining ten historic shafts were made safe (capped) under the program.

In Gympie, 21 subsidence-related incidents were investigated. Six of these required concrete capping of shafts, with the remaining 15 subsidences excavated and backfilled.

The specialist expertise of the shaft repair teams is also utilised to address other historic mine shaft issues across the state, such as at Herberton, Croydon, Kilkivan, the Ipswich area, and the opal fields at Winton and Opalton.

The average cost of rehabilitation is \$20,000 to \$25,000. Costs include the location of the shaft, shaft capping or filling, remediation of any buildings impacted, and the condition of properties prior to rehabilitation works.

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines is working closely with government agencies, the landholder and other stakeholders on the rehabilitation of the Mount Oxide historic mine site.

Approximately \$2.4 million has been spent to date on remediation works, monitoring, mitigation of potential livestock impacts and stream clean up.

Works completed in 2012 include earthworks to further separate clean water flows from contaminated materials, and fencing and lining of recently constructed catch dams.

Downstream contamination recorded over the 2011–12 wet season was reduced. This has been attributed to reduced infiltration of runoff into mineralised stockpiles as a positive outcome of previous stockpile capping and runoff diversion works, and also to significantly less rainfall over the last wet season.

3.

Further works to install solar pump systems will be completed prior to the start of the 2012–13 wet season.

Rehabilitation at the historic Mount Morgan mine is a complex long-term project. The current site activities are directed towards reducing contaminated seepage from the site, and lowering the water level in the open-cut pit, thereby minimising the risk of spills of contaminated water into the Dee River.

The primary mechanism to reduce the volume of water contained in the open-cut pit is a lime dosing water treatment plant.

A further \$0.477 million upgrade (Stage 3) to improve operational efficiency and reliability of the plant is expected to be completed in February 2013.

Additional water treatment initiatives undertaken in 2011–12 were:

- \$0.74 million for additional portable water treatment for a quick reduction of the water level in the open-cut pit;
- \$0.23 million for the hire of an evaporator to provide an additional 0.4 megalitres per day water removal capacity, which has proven successful and has now been purchased and installed; and
- \$0.33 million for the purchase and installation of two pumps and pontoons, to improve the security of key site water management systems affected in the 2010–11 wet season. Both pumps were commissioned in August 2012.

Initiatives in train or planned for the near future are:

- \$1.2 million for the purchase of three new high-volume evaporators that will boost water removal capacity from the open-cut pit by an additional 1.5 megalitres per day. The evaporators are expected to be operational in late October 2012.
- \$0.8 million for the replacement of the ageing main electrical substation on the Mount Morgan mine site. The replacement of this unit will ensure reliability of power supply for operation of the site water management systems.
- \$0.2 million to begin progressive diversions of rainfall from the mineralised areas of the mine site. The diversions will minimise fresh water inflow into the open-cut pit, reducing long-term water treatment requirements and costs.

These measures will nearly double the current water treatment capacity on site and result in reduced pit levels.

Rehabilitation of the abandoned Horn Island mine site includes the encapsulation and re-vegetation of the tailings dam, rehabilitation of the mine processing areas, and partial capping of the low-grade ore stockpile and waste rock dump.

The 2011–12 works program incorporated the lowering of the process water dam maximum level by 1.6 metres, the installation of a solar powered seepage pump-back system below the dam wall, repairs to the capping of the tailings dam and road upgrades.

Future rehabilitation works required include the removal and clean up of the process water dam, and the completion of site rehabilitation to achieve long-term site stability and acceptable impacts.

The state-managed land is subject to a 1999 native title ruling, which requires that the land be handed back to the traditional owners as soon as rehabilitation of the mine is completed.

4.

The process to hand back one of the land parcels (Lot 48 on SP142707) to the traditional owners has commenced and is expected to be completed in March 2013.

Acidic seepage from the Herberton tailings dam flows into the Wild River, a tributary of the Herbert River, just upstream of an historic weir which can affect water quality in the Wild River at times of low flow at the end of the dry season.

The water in the weir is treated annually with lime to raise the pH, when the pH of the water is at its lowest.

The Herberton tailings dam is not the only source of low quality water along the Wild River, which is also affected by natural mineralisation in the area and widespread historic tin mining.

Following multi-agency discussions, it has been agreed that the following investigative and impact management actions would be carried out:

- a survey of landholder water usage and stream water quality in the first 12 km downstream;
- placement of signs along the stream bank warning of the risks of low-quality water; and
- discussions with the Tablelands Regional Council on the best way to manage public awareness of possible low water quality in the Wild River.

These actions have been timed to coincide with a geophysical survey of the tailings dam area that is currently underway. The survey will check for possible groundwater contamination plumes.

As can be seen, this government is actively addressing abandoned mines legacy issues.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. 2

asked on 28 September 2012

ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister explain the importance of the State's mine safety regime and describe his actions to protect the safety of all Queensland mine workers?

ANSWER:

Queensland has a world-class mine safety and health record when measured in terms of the number and frequency of accidents causing injury to workers.

While recognised as having one of the best legislative frameworks and safest mining industries in the world, we are still not satisfied and will not be until we achieve Zero Harm.

In the fiscal year 2011–12, unfortunately there was one fatal incident in the metalliferous and quarry sector when a 21-year-old quarry worker was pulled into a conveyor belt at a quarry near Moranbah in the Central Highlands.

While still enjoying a world-class performance last fiscal year, on preliminary numbers, a disturbing trend was witnessed with a significant increase in the lost-time injury frequency rate in underground coal mines, up from 4.2 to 6.8. There were also increases in the other industry sectors with the exception of quarries. This increase is a concern and will be addressed by an increased vigilance on behalf of the Mines Inspectorate and by direct interface with mine operators.

For the previous years, since the commencement of the new legislation in 1999, we have enjoyed a decreasing trend across the board in accident statistics.

Queensland's mining and quarrying safety and health legislation provides the men and women who work in these industries with the legislative framework necessary to protect their safety and health.

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines is responsible for enforcing compliance with the legislation and monitoring the safety and health of all workers in these industries. This is one of the most critical tasks in this state as there is nothing more important than the safety and health of all workers.

There are currently 46 mines inspectors in the Safety and Health area of the department who carry out audits and inspections across these industries.

These audits and inspections continue to be conducted in accordance with identified risks and inspectors' work programs, ensuring that resources are concentrated on high-risk activities, while recognising good performance.

The department uses promotion, education and advice to encourage compliance with the provisions of legislation. Where these methods do not result in compliance, the use of formal notices, directions and other enforcement methods, including prosecution, are utilised.

Departmental inspectorates have documented enforcement policies to provide a simple and clear framework to ensure transparent, consistent, accountable and proportional application.

In cases of serious injury or death, the incident is always thoroughly investigated. If the investigation reveals that there is a case to answer, the investigation report is considered by a compliance review committee.

Eliminating fatalities and serious accidents is directly related to effectively managing risk and associated hazards at mines and quarries.

This was further highlighted following a review of the number of fatalities at Queensland metalliferous mine sites where it was found that small mines and quarries were over-represented, and the fatality rate was increasing.

Legislation was introduced, effective 1 September 2010, that required mines of 10 workers or less (excluding opal and gemstone mines) to develop and implement a health and safety management system (HSMS).

To ensure this legislative change would have minimal impact on the small mine and quarrying sector in meeting its new obligations, the inspectorate has successfully conducted training and mentoring to assist operations.

There were approximately 300 small mines and quarries across Queensland affected by the legislation change. A total of 26 workshops were conducted by the inspectorate.

There was a positive response from industry for the small mines initiative and all operations targeted have developed and implemented a HSMS.

The program has led to a further initiative, in conjunction with the Institute of Quarrying Australia, involving the publication of a number of safety booklets aimed at workers and supervisors in the extractive industry.

The first publication, *Slope Stability*, was well received by that industry. A second publication, *Traffic Management*, has been published, and a third publication, *Working Safely with Electricity*, will be published by December 2012.

These initiatives and other actions taken by the Mines Inspectorate should assist in lowering the fatality rate in Queensland's extractive industry over coming years.

Under the proposed legislation amendments due in 2013, it will also be a requirement for opal and gemstone mines to develop and implement a HSMS.

To assist the opal and gemstone miners meet their future obligations, the inspectorate has developed the *Opal and Gemstone Mines* campaign.

In conjunction with industry leaders, the Mines Inspectorate has successfully developed and refined resources and training material suitable for training opal and gemstone miners to develop and implement a HSMS to suit the size and complexity of their operation.

Up to 31 December 2011, a total of 22 one-day workshops, attended by 723 miners, were undertaken throughout regional Queensland.

The workshops have proved so successful that an additional 12 workshops, involving 337 attendees, have been undertaken in the year to date. A further five to seven workshop will be held this calendar year to complete the program

In addition, the Safety in Mines Testing and Research Station, known in the industry as Simtars, delivers a range of scientific, engineering, training and certification services, and undertakes mine safety and health research aimed at preventing accidents, fatalities, disasters and occupational illness in the mining industry.

Simtars is a resource available to the government, mining companies, mining equipment manufacturers, suppliers to the mining industry and unions.

Simtars supports the Safety and Health Inspectorate through the provision of expert advice and assistance with accident investigations, and with attendance at mine emergencies.

The delivery of services on a commercial basis has underwritten the development of Simtars from its inception 26 years ago to the internationally acclaimed mine safety resource it is today.

There are no statutory or regulatory requirements for the mining industry to use Simtars, so it has to compete with other service providers on a commercial basis, while ensuring government-funded research and community service obligations are met.

Simtars has designed a range of mine gas monitoring systems used to prevent mine fires and explosions. These systems are essential to ensure the safety of underground coal mine workers. They are used extensively throughout Australia and, in recognition of their best-of-breed status, have been exported to the United States, China, India and New Zealand. Mines with these systems can access expert support provided by Simtars around the clock.

In addition, Simtars has an emergency response team and a mobile mine gas analysis system on call 24/7 to respond rapidly to a mine fire or explosion—most recently responding to the disaster at Pike River Coal Mine in New Zealand and the mine heating at Carborough Downs in Central Queensland this year.

As an accredited registered training organisation, Simtars has provided nationally recognised training and qualifications in mine safety to thousands of mine workers in Australia and overseas. In addition to local workers, it is currently training teams of engineers from Coal India Limited in mine safety management.

Simtars is also an accredited certification body under national and international certification schemes implemented to ensure electrical equipment used in underground mines is safe. Simtars' certification activities are conducted in Australia and overseas.

Research projects continue to be conducted by Simtars to provide practical solutions to safety and health issues in the mining industry. Over 40 research projects have been conducted over the last 26 years.

The flow-on benefits from Simtars' international and domestic activities, commercial and otherwise, continue to be invested in improving the safety and health technology and expertise available to the Queensland mining industry.

As can be seen mine safety remains a priority of this government.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 3

asked on 28 September 2012

ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister outline the actions taken to streamline project approvals in order to promote sustainable and productive utilisation of Queensland's minerals and natural resource wealth?

ANSWER:

Aligned with the objectives of Queensland's mining legislation, the government is taking action to streamline mining project approvals to encourage environmental responsibility and enable appropriate financial return to the state.

The *Streamlining Approvals* project is the primary initiative to reduce red tape and regulatory burden on the Queensland resources industry. The delivery of a modern, online tenure administration system, MyMinesOnline, is the focal point of the Streamlining project.

MyMinesOnline will assist in reducing assessment times for mining and petroleum projects. Online service delivery will improve the integration of government assessment process and will improve the transparency of the assessment process and certainty of pace.

Soon to be released MyMinesOnline functionality will allow online acceptance of exploration permit applications. This is a major milestone in modernising paper-based lodgement with online service delivery. Further MyMinesOnline functionality will continue to be released to encompass all tenure types and administrative process.

The government has sent a strong message to industry that Queensland is actively improving its investment attractiveness by passing the *Mines Legislation (Streamlining) Amendment Act 2012* this year. This Act reduces assessment times without compromising assessment rigour by transferring power to grant mining leases and petroleum leases to the Minister, provides a legislative framework for online lodgement, streamlines process and improves efficiency by providing greater consistency across the resources legislation.

The small-scale mining sector has also been recognised as an important aspect of mining in Queensland by making a commitment in the six-month action plan to review legislation and regulation to reduce red tape.

A package of reforms is currently being developed, in close cooperation with the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, to reduce financial and administrative burdens for the small-scale mining sector. Measures will be developed that will alleviate pressure on existing small scale miners and also seek to revitalise the industry to the benefit of local economies.

The government is also reviewing the strategic cropping land standard conditions code for resource activities that are subject to the strategic cropping land framework.

Under the strategic cropping land framework, certain coal, mineral, petroleum and gas activities that can comply with the code are issued with a compliance certificate and are not subject to a full strategic cropping land protection decision assessment.

The revised code will allow a greater number of temporary resource activities on strategic cropping land to be assessable under the code—streamlining the assessment process for these activities.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. 4

asked on 28 September 2012

ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

What work has been done to minimise the impact of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines' cost savings program in areas of regional Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines is committed to reducing red tape on business while ensuring the sustainable use of Queensland's resources and quality services to its clients.

This commitment will help ensure a delivery-led, outcomes-based focus to policy development across the department that achieves the government's red tape reduction target of 20 per cent by 2018.

The department has worked with its stakeholders, particularly across the agricultural and resource sectors, to identify opportunities for reducing the regulatory burden on producers and business.

This is resulting in simpler, less cumbersome regulation and ensures that its administration is fit for purpose, streamlined and has a client focus designed to expedite approvals and information exchange.

The department is already delivering a number of reforms under the government's *90 Day Red Tape Reduction* program and *Six Month Action Plan*.

Within the first 90 days of this government, the department developed a suite of regulatory and administrative reforms. This included streamlining shotfirer licencing requirements and resource entitlement processes for low risk activities on state land, as well as implementing the issuing of low risk vegetation permits for fodder, thinning and infrastructure.

These initiatives reduced the regulatory burden for farmers and the resource and development industries by cutting unnecessary regulation and administration and speeding up approvals.

The department is developing legislative amendments to deliver on the government's *Six Month Action Plan*. It is reviewing legislation and regulation to reduce red tape for the small mining sector.

A new water metering framework is being developed that will provide greater flexibility for water users in installing and maintaining their meters, and will reduce the administrative role for government, while ensuring continued sustainable use of water resources.

These initiatives will deliver cost savings to business and government.

The department is committed to the government's reform of the planning system and, in conjunction with this reform, is reviewing all referral agency triggers administered by the department under the Sustainable Planning Regulation 2009.

Operational and policy areas of the department are working together to simplify requirements through self-assessable codes for vegetation management or water extraction, greater use of planning approaches rather than development assessment, and removal of some triggers.

Where reform is needed, we are expeditiously reducing approval times for landholders and the development industry.

To illustrate, local government identified the acid sulphate soils advice agency trigger as redundant, so it was removed immediately. This ceased the requirement for several hundred development applications a year to be referred to the department to duplicate assessments already made by local government.

This initiative, also implemented under the government's *90 Day Red Tape Reduction* initiative, reduced red tape by removing the cost of obtaining a range of development approvals and unnecessary delays for industry and local government.

The department will continue to implement red tape reduction initiatives that are operationally focused, support sustainable use of resources and deliver the greatest net benefit to all Queenslanders.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 5

asked on 28 September 2012

ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

How is the Department of Natural Resources and Mines looking to attract investment in emerging and operational minerals provinces, including the Galilee Basin?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is keenly aware of the need to stimulate resource exploration growth in Central and Western Queensland, not only to underpin the state's future economic growth, but to provide real employment and infrastructure benefits for rural communities.

To address this need, the government has implemented the \$7.7 million *New Minerals Frontier* initiative, a key component of the \$18 million *Greenfields 2020* program, carried out by the Geological Survey of Queensland within the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. This initiative aims to fuel exploration growth by providing new, high-quality, pre-competitive geophysical data to explorers to lower exploration risk, generate new exploration models, and identify new prospective targets. Geophysical data surveys were commissioned to highlight the magnetic and density (or gravity) character of deep rock layers, effectively opening up emerging "greenfields" regions to innovative explorers, as well as stimulating exploration in more well-known "brownfields" mineral provinces. These surveys were complemented by acquisition of radiometric data that provides invaluable information on surface rock and soil compositions.

Geophysical datasets were acquired as part of the *New Mineral Frontiers* initiative over two areas of the state – the Galilee Survey, covering over 44,000 square kilometres in Central Queensland (centred on Muttaborra), and the Thomson Survey, covering almost 124,000 square kilometres of southern Central Queensland, from Charleville south to the New South Wales border.

The Galilee Survey will provide coal explorers with important information on the structure of the Galilee Basin coal seams and will enable coal seam gas explorers to focus their exploration efforts into the most favourable sites. The geophysical data will also help to pinpoint buried areas of hot rocks suitable for geothermal power generation within the Galilee Basin.

The Thomson Survey will enable mineral explorers to find prospective copper-gold targets under shallow cover sediments in the Cunnamulla-Eulo area. This area has a similar geological environment to rocks hosting the large gold and base metal mineral deposits at Cadia and Cobar in New South Wales.

2.

Both the Galilee and Thomson geophysical surveys were completed by private contractors by the end of June 2012. The gravity data have been released to the public for both areas, and the magnetic and radiometric data are undergoing final quality-control at Geoscience Australia in Canberra. It is anticipated that both survey datasets will be released before the end of this year, bringing the total area of magnetic and radiometric coverage at this detail to 95 per cent of the state.

To further encourage “greenfields” exploration as part of the initiative, geoscientists in the department are undertaking a series of targeted prospectivity studies. These studies employ sophisticated geophysical analysis to appraise favourable areas in 3D and reveal potential targets beneath blanketing sedimentary layers. As over 70 per cent of the state’s prospective rocks fall into this category, the government is leading the way in encouraging the industry to adopt the new technologies required for 21st Century mineral exploration.

The department’s district-scale geophysical analyses are currently focussed on the Cloncurry-Mount Isa region, while a broader-scale scientific resource analysis of the Townville-Cairns hinterland (focussing on strategic metals) is due for completion by June 2014. As well as focussing on greenfields regions, these studies also involve reappraisal of “brownfields” areas using new ideas, data and technologies to stimulate re-entry of explorers into these more mature regions.

Results from this work have proven of great interest to explorers and also form a valuable input into government land-use planning processes. Outcomes from the latest prospectivity study in the Quamby area of North West Queensland were presented at the International Geological Congress held in Brisbane in August, and received great interest from both Australian and overseas mining interests.

These data acquisition and value-adding programs are attracting the international investment spotlight to Queensland, ensuring that the state’s economy will be well placed to profit from expanding Asian demand for our mineral and energy commodities.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 6

asked on 28 September 2012

ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister please outline the commitments Natural Resources and Mines has made for protection of the Great Barrier Reef through programs, support, and funding?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to protecting and safeguarding the future of the Great Barrier Reef. The government has committed \$5.4 million through the Department of Natural Resources and Mines to protect and enhance the health of the Great Barrier Reef. These commitments are delivered on-ground across the reef catchments through three primary programs:

- Paddock to Reef;
- Queensland Regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) Investment to the five reef regional NRM bodies; and
- Queensland Wetlands program.

The *Paddock to Reef* program, which provides \$2 million in funding, is a world-leading approach to evaluating the effectiveness of agricultural land management practices that have benefits for producers in the reef catchments, as well as water quality outcomes. One million dollars of the funding is provided to the regional NRM bodies to coordinate the paddock scale component of the program, and the remaining \$1 million is allocated to conducting water quality monitoring and modelling. The program provides rigorous information to support sustainable agriculture planning, improved land management practices, extension and education.

The five reef regional NRM bodies receive an additional amount of \$2.9 million aligned to activities such as sustainable agriculture, wetland rehabilitation, and pest and weed management which contributes towards improved water quality outcomes for the reef.

The department also provides \$500,000 to the *Queensland Wetlands* program which promotes the wise use of wetlands for multiple purposes, including production, tourism, water quality improvement, biodiversity, flood mitigation and others. The program delivers a range of tools and outcomes that are critical to the sustainable management of wetlands in Queensland and are essential to frontline staff, industry, on-ground activity and government. Through these initiatives and activities, the Queensland Government is dedicated to the preservation of the reef and ensuring the environmental values of the Great Barrier Reef are protected for future generations.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 7

asked on 28 September 2012

ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister please describe Queensland's commitment to sustainable management of water across the State, in particular in the Gulf, Burdekin, Baffle and Great Artesian Basin, water resource plans?

ANSWER:

Queensland's water resource planning process is designed to plan for the allocation and sustainable management of water to meet Queensland's future water requirements. Water resource plans establish a framework to share water between human consumptive needs and environmental values. Such plans also recognise and provide for non-consumptive uses like fisheries, grazing and tourism that are important for the state and regional economies.

Water resource plans are developed through detailed technical and scientific assessment as well as extensive community consultation to determine the right balance between the many interests that rely on the state's water resources. Generally, a water resource plan will apply to a plan area's rivers, lakes, dams and springs and, if necessary, underground water and overland flow. In developing a plan, the size and nature of the resource is assessed to ensure that water is allocated within sustainable limits.

This includes the identification of unallocated water where water is set aside to meet that area's future urban growth, mining and/or irrigated agricultural requirements, without compromising the environment or the supply to existing water users. Reserves are also set aside, where required, to support new large-scale water infrastructure.

Unallocated water reserves have been identified after careful consideration of each catchment's water resources, as well as current and future economic, social and environmental needs.

The Queensland Government is determined to deliver fair and equitable decisions about unallocated water that protect the rights of existing water entitlement holders and the environment.

Water Resource (Gulf) Plan 2007

The Queensland Government has started a process to release unallocated water from the Flinders River and Gilbert River catchment areas, delivering a boost for the economy in the north west of the state. Up to 80,000 megalitres of unallocated water in the Flinders River catchment and up to 15,000 megalitres of unallocated water in

the Gilbert River catchment are available through a public tender process. Water licences granted through the release process will include conditions to protect existing rights to water and the Gulf's environmental, cultural, tourism and fisheries values. This water release builds on the government's commitment to support a productive and successful agricultural industry— one of the pillars of the state economy.

Water Resource (Great Artesian Basin) Plan 2006

In South West Queensland, the department is preparing to release unallocated water from general reserves in the Great Artesian Basin.

The department is proposing to undertake an unallocated water release process this financial year.

A review of this plan is being undertaken so that, as Minister, I am satisfied that, after five years of implementation, the plan's objectives remain current. This review will include additional water monitoring and water use information.

Water Resource (Baffle Creek Basin) Plan 2012

In Central Queensland, the department is planning to initiate a process for the release of unallocated water from the Baffle Creek Basin in late 2012.

The department is preparing to respond to the emerging water demands associated with future growth from the rural, agriculture and urban sectors through a release of unallocated water from the general reserve.

Water Resource (Burdekin Basin) Plan 2007

In the Galilee Basin in central to north Queensland, there are currently seven major coal mining projects under various stages of the approval process. The new mines will require reliable access to water.

The resource sector is one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy and the Queensland Government aims to support the sustainable growth of this industry.

The Galilee mines could deliver significant employment opportunities and royalty returns to the state.

The Burdekin Basin water resource plan sets aside unallocated water volumes of up to 150,000 megalitres in the Belyando-Suttor subcatchment, which overlaps with the coal resources.

The scale of development in the Galilee Basin is such that water resources will need to be well managed to optimise water availability, minimise costs and manage hydrologic, social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of any new water resource development in this area.

The department is working closely with the Department of Energy and Water Supply, and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning in developing a long-term water supply strategy for the region.

As the Minister responsible for both natural resources and mines, I understand the importance of a secure, reliable and affordable water supply in the mining industry. The government is committed to striking a fair balance between growing the mining and resources sector and the responsible management of our water resources.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 8

asked on 28 September 2012

ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES
(MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

Would the Minister please describe the plan to efficiently deal with vegetation management applications, vegetation monitoring, and compliance?

ANSWER:

As I announced at this year's annual AgForce conference in Charleville, the government's intention is to make common-sense practical reforms to the vegetation management framework. This includes streamlining the application process for a number of common management activities, such as thinning and weed control.

It is proposed, under the reforms, that these activities become self-assessable, removing the need for the landholder to make an application to the department and the need for the department to assess each application.

The department is also working on streamlining the assessment process for Property Map of Assessable Vegetation (PMAV) to ensure decisions are made in a timely fashion. The new process will also allow the current backlog of PMAVs to be reduced as quickly as possible.

Compliance monitoring for vegetation management is largely on the basis of analysis of the annual Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS) satellite imagery. Remote imagery specialists within the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts review satellite imagery data to identify unexplained vegetation clearing.

Additional monitoring occurs as a result of intelligence from complaints and reports of unexplained vegetation clearing.

In both instances, unexplained clearing is checked to ascertain whether there is an obvious explanation, such as whether a development approval has been issued, or the clearing is as a result of a lawful pursuit, such as a native forestry practice. In some instances, it is identified that the unexplained clearing of vegetation is not subject to the provisions of the vegetation management framework.

In the event that there is no obvious explanation for the clearing and it is identified that the vegetation is subject to the vegetation management framework, the area may be inspected and the property owner and other relevant entities will need to clarify what work has been done on the property. In many instances, this results in the

legislation and its intent being clarified, work practices being adjusted, and no further action being necessary.

Where monitoring identifies a breach or potential breach of the legislation, further action is undertaken to ascertain a measured and proportionate response to achieve compliance. That is not to say that all breaches of the legislation are intentional or warrant prosecution. There are a range of tools available to promote and achieve compliance with natural resource legislation, including vegetation management legislation, not just prosecutions.

As the vast majority of Queenslanders set out to comply with the law, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines works proactively with law abiding and hard-working Queenslanders to assist them comply with the legislation. The department will continue to work to detect deliberate non-compliance and correct that behaviour by the most appropriate and measured means, but no longer will the first and only option be to prosecute.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 9

asked on 28 September 2012

ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

How will the proposed changes to water metering reduce the costs of water metering to irrigators and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines?

ANSWER:

New arrangements will be implemented during 2012–13 to streamline water meter installation and management in rural catchments across Queensland.

Under these new arrangements, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines will specify minimum requirements for water metering, with the purchase, installation and maintenance of meters being the responsibility of the landholder.

The new framework will replace current processes where the department purchases water meters, and then manages installation and maintenance, primarily through external contractors, and recovers costs through charges levied on landholders.

Landholders will be responsible for payment of the direct costs of meter installation and maintenance, so government charges will be substantially reduced and eliminated where possible.

The overall cost to landholders will be reduced as landholders will be able to choose a meter and arrange for installation and maintenance. This is good news for irrigators, who regularly complain about charges levied to recover the cost of meters and contractors.

There will also be a reduction in annual meter operating charges for the reading of meters for areas where the department had already arranged the installation of meters.

The new framework will also result in savings for the government through a reduction of costs for managing contracts and administering the program.

The need to implement water metering in an area will continue to be based on water planning and management priorities. Water meter installation is also a critical link in allowing landholders to enter water trading markets.

A transition period to 30 June 2013 is required to:

- finalise the installation of meters in current project areas;
- make changes to the Water Regulation 2002; and
- work with landholders and industry to develop the necessary metering capacity and accreditation.

In the meantime, the department will not be installing any water meters in new areas which are currently not metered; however, it will finalise installations in areas where work is currently under way.

The department will complete the installations in high priority catchments where work is currently under way in the Burdekin, Coastal Burnett, Condamine–Balonne, Gowrie Oakey Creek, Oakey Creek, Lower Balonne, Whitsunday and Mulgrave Russell areas.

Most of the approximately 1400 meter installations in these areas have been completed with the remainder scheduled for completion by the end of November 2012.

The department will be working with the water user communities around the state to explain the new process and work out a transition process and to ensure landholders are aware of the important role they play in the management of water in Queensland.

During the 2012–13 financial year, the state will invest up to \$2.4 million in water metering to finalise current project areas and to implement transition arrangements for the new metering process.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. 10

asked on 28 September 2012

ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

The release of water for tender in the Flinders and Gilbert was recently completed by the Queensland Government. Would the Minister describe how the real cost of tendering water, and the planned outcomes for water allocation in the Flinders and Gilbert River catchments?

ANSWER:

In late July 2012, I announced the commencement of a tender process to release 80,000 megalitres of unallocated water from the Flinders River Catchment and 15,000 megalitres from the Gilbert River Catchment.

Importantly, these volumes meet the requirements of the Gulf Water Resource Plan and reflect potential demand for water in the catchment areas at this time.

As a result of community feedback, I recently requested that the Department of Natural Resources and Mines extend the closing date for tenders to give irrigators more time to demonstrate the merits of their proposals.

The department has extended the closing date from 28 September 2012 to 26 October 2012.

In order to protect the integrity of the tender process which is still underway, I am unable to provide information on the financial cost of the tender process. To be successful, tenders must meet the conditions and evaluation criteria of the process, including the reserve price.

The price charged for unallocated water is a one-off, up-front cost.

Granting water licences from unallocated water based on merit ensures that water is allocated to landholders who present the best opportunities for using the resource.

This process strikes the right balance between economic development and responsible management of our water resources.

Water licences granted from unallocated water will include conditions to protect existing rights to water and the Gulf's environmental, cultural, tourism and fisheries values.

2.

This release complements the work being undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation under the North Queensland Irrigated Agriculture strategy.

This release also supports the government's commitment to grow the agricultural sector as one of the pillars of the state economy, and all the water that can be presently made available from these catchments has been made available.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

asked on 27 September 2012

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

I refer to page 4 of the SDS and the Minister's statement on 19 April 2012 that the Government has placed investigations and penalties on hold relating to the Vegetation Management Act and had discontinued appeals by the Department seeking increased penalties. Can the Minister advise (a) the number of breaches in the 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 financial years, reported separately (b) the area of land illegally cleared in each of those financial years (c) the amount of revenue collected through prosecuting these breaches and (d) how much revenue has been forgone in the 2012-13 Budget and forward estimates?

ANSWER:

The State Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS) imagery is used to identify changes in vegetation cover within areas regulated by the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* which are unable to be otherwise explained as lawfully approved or exempt activities. The accumulation and interpretation of the SLATS data are lengthy scientific processes that can take greater than 12 months to generate specific alleged clearing allegations for investigation.

As a result, specific figures on the number of total breaches in the 2009–10 financial year onwards are not currently available. Due to the time required to collate, interpret and then investigate potential breaches, the department is unable to identify the number of specific breaches that occurred during the periods you have requested.

It is possible that additional instances of breaches of the legislation in each of these financial years requested may still be identified as a result of ongoing analysis of SLATS satellite imagery, further public complaints and follow up field work.

This government is working to ensure that, where a deliberate act of non-compliance is identified, enforcement action is measured and proportionate.

In regards to the specific financial years and your request, I can provide the following data:

- (a) In relation to the number of breaches for illegal clearing, there has been one breach determined by the court for illegal clearing in 2009–10; two in 2010–11 and there have been no court determinations yet made for the financial year 2011–12.

2.

- (b) The findings of the courts have been that in 2009-10 14 hectares of vegetation were illegally cleared; in 2010-11 19 hectares were illegally cleared; and as there have yet to be any findings by the Court in regard to illegal clearing in 2011-12 no reportable area is available.
- (c) In 2009–10, fines totalling \$23,500 were levied by the court in relation to the offence committed, and in 2010–11, \$22,500 was levied in relation to the offences committed. That is a total of \$46,000 levied by the court for illegal clearing.

I can also advise that, in addition, the previous Department of Environment and Resource Management took a range of alternative enforcement actions in response to allegations of unauthorised vegetation clearing notifications. They ranged from the issue of monetary fines through to corrective action requirements and warning notices.

Of note, 14 penalty infringement notices were issued for alleged minor clearing offences in the 2009–10 and 2010–11 financial years inclusive, totalling \$22,575. The breakdown of this total is:

- 2009–10 eight penalty infringement notices with a total penalty of \$12,175; and
- 2010–11 six penalty infringement notices with a total penalty of \$10,400.

No penalty infringement notices have yet been issued in 2011–12 in relation to any identified unlawful clearing events.

- (d) The 2012–13 Budget and forward estimates have not been reduced as a result of the decision to place investigations and penalties on hold.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. 2

asked on 27 September 2012

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

I refer to page 14 of the SDS for Natural Resources and Mines where it details that the target for the “Number of structured programs / activities helping business build their capacity, improve their performance and/or access opportunities” is lower in 2012–13 than the estimated actual for 2011–12. The footnote further states that the increase in 2011–12 reflected “increased demand for mine safety training”. If there is increased demand for mine safety training, why are there 56 less programs / activities being targeted for in 2012–13?

ANSWER:

The increased demand for mine safety training in 2011–12 was related to a significant growth in employee numbers in the mining industry over the preceding 12 months.

The projected decrease in activities in 2012–13 is as a result of recent announcements by the mining industry of a slow down in activities, and the increased competitiveness from suppliers in the training industry, while also recognising that Simtars resources have been diverted in the early part of 2012–13 to address safety concerns at major mines.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 3

asked on 27 September 2012

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

I refer to page 28 of the SDS for Natural Resources and Mines where it details at footnote 3 to the income statement a deferral of the Water for the Future Program, Valuation Appeals, Native Title claims, Greenfields 2020 and the Streamlining Mining and Petroleum Approvals functions. Can the Minister advise the reason for these deferrals listed separately?

ANSWER:

Your question refers to the major variations between the 2011–12 Adjusted Budget and the 2011–12 Estimated Actual for Supplies and Services. The Supplies and Services for 2011–12 Adjusted Budget was \$46.997 million and the 2011–12 Estimates Actual was \$20.191 million—a decrease of \$26.806 million.

As per Footnote 3, the variation in Supplies and Services is due to the deferral of funds into the 2012–13 Estimate. The deferrals primarily are made up of the following items:

- The *Water for the Future* program deferral relates to a delay in the implementation of water infrastructure programs to 2012–13. This is a Commonwealth Government program that includes two main components—
 - a water entitlement purchasing program (Restoring the Balance in the Murray–Darling Basin); and
 - an infrastructure investment program (including Sustainable Rural Water Use and Infrastructure Program and Water Smart Australia).

The water entitlement purchasing program is entirely undertaken by the Commonwealth Government—Queensland has no part in this program. The infrastructure investment program (known in Queensland as the *Healthy Headwater Water Use Efficiency* program) remains in progress after a recent announcement inviting a third round of proposals.

- The valuation appeals deferral is to ensure that the department and legal counsel have funds carried forward to finalise the payment of legal costs in relation to appeals relating to the valuation of shopping centre valuations for Pacific Fair and Chermside dating back to 2003. The payment of the costs has been ordered by the courts and there is no option but to comply with this obligation.

2.

- The native title claims deferral is due to legal and native title claim resolution expenses. The Federal Court has scheduled 22 consent determinations and has set down six matters for trial in 2012–13.
- The *Greenfields 2020* deferral is for the purchase of a large spatial data online delivery system. The system will manage and deliver large spatial data sets, such as airborne geophysical surveys, hyperspectral surveys, gravity surveys, seismic surveys and 3D models, so that clients can self-serve subsets of data for download or can request larger volumes for packaged delivery.
- The *Streamlining Mining and Petroleum Approvals Tenure* functions deferral is due to delays in rolling out the system as a result of difficulty in recruiting staff with the skills required for the project. The objective of this project is to deliver a system that will reduce red tape and drive efficiencies in the mining approvals process.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 4

asked on 27 September 2012

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

If the target for titles registry (in 5 days) as set out on page 15 of the SDS was exceeded at 94% in 2011-12 why is the target for 2012-13 back at 90% when the Government is increasing lodgement title fees to raise an additional \$24 million and is spending \$5.5 million on an Automated Titles System?

ANSWER:

The Automated Titles System (ATS) commenced operation in 1994 to computerise the former paper-based title registers. The ATS has been progressively enhanced over the years, but its underlying software platform remains largely a legacy of the 1990s.

The government will increase the standard lodgement fee of \$137.10 by \$15 in order to generate a revenue stream of approximately \$6 million that will be reinvested in modernising the Department of Natural Resources and Mines' critical land and cadastral information technology systems including the ATS.

A budgeted investment of \$5.5 million in the ATS will fund the modernisation project and also support the development, testing and rollout of an interface to the new national electronic conveyancing system being developed in collaboration with the other states.

The ATS modernisation in itself will not immediately deliver efficiencies or savings. It is an essential and major risk mitigation strategy to ensure the ongoing integrity and reliability of this critical system that is the cornerstone of titles registry operations and is fundamental to the government's Torrens title guarantee that secures and protects property interests in Queensland.

In the meantime, the government is committed to maintaining a service standard that reflects a realistic target for timeliness in registering interests on title.

As the government continues to grow Queensland's four pillar economy, the amount of title transactions is likely to increase. This is in response to the stimulation of the property and construction sectors, with some signs of the beginnings of a moderate recovery starting to emerge.

Maintaining a realistic 90 per cent target to cover all dealings lodged in the titles registry balances the need for timeliness in registration against the need for diligent

compliance examination and registration processes that ensure the rights and entitlements of registered proprietors are appropriate, secure and protected.

Subdued activity in the property sector contributed to the favourable result of SDS exceeding the target at 94 per cent in 2011–12. This was largely a consequence of the global economic downturn, with less complex types of title dealings lodged for registration (such as basic transfers of ownership and mortgages). As the economy continues to grow, the complexity of titles dealings will also increase and the target of 90 per cent is considered to be appropriate moving forward.

While most transfers and mortgages are usually registered within a couple of days, it is important to acknowledge the significant proportion of relatively complex dealings which, by their very nature, involve a myriad of complicated legal, surveying and titling practice implications that must be factored into the service standard, for example, the transmission of deceased estates, large community title developments, and potentially contentious caveat and court-related issues.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. 5

asked on 27 September 2012

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

I refer to page 28 of the SDS for Natural Resources and Mines where it details that savings are being made from land legislative and operational reform and water metering. Can the Minister advise what these savings consist of within each of these areas and what the amount saved is for each of these areas listed separately?

ANSWER:

The savings realised for major legislative and operational reforms to land services that will streamline business processes and reduce regulatory burden will be an estimated \$8 million.

This includes:

- simplification of the *Acquisition of Land Act 1967*;
- simplification of the vegetation management framework;
- Rural Leasehold Land Lease renewal;
- rationalisation of operational processing activity, and streamlining and reform of *Land Act* regulatory provisions; and
- rationalisation of management structures and vacant positions.

Water metering reforms will achieve ongoing savings of an estimated \$1 million per annum. Water licensees will be able to purchase, install and maintain a water meter that meets their individual circumstance. This will substantially reduce red tape, departmental meter use and meter operating charges, program management and additional billing activities.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. 6

asked on 27 September 2012

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

I refer to page 84 of Budget Paper 2 of the 2012-13 Budget. Will the Minister advise how many positions (broken down by permanent, temporary, casual and contract) have been abolished since 26 March 2012 in the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, listed by job title, salary level and location and/or departmental region?

ANSWER:

I can advise that as at 27 September 2012 my department had reduced its size by 405 positions. This figure includes a reduction of 288 Permanent, 6 Contract and 111 Temporary positions since March 2012.

The regional data represents the staff reductions against each of our regions with a separation of Brisbane CBD data.

Title	Permanent	S122 Contract	SES Contract	Temporary	Grand Total
OO4	1				1
Support Officer					
A02	22			23	45
Administration Officer					
Assistant Conference Centre Coordinator					
Business Support Officer					
Customer Service Officer					
Products Officer					
A03	41			28	69
Administration Officer					
Business Support Officer					
Conference Centre Coordinator					
Customer Service Officer					
Desktop Publisher					
Executive Assistant					
Graduate policy officer					
Information Officer					
Paralegal/Project Officer					
Policy Officer					
Project Officer					
Research Officer					
A04	39			6	45
Administration Officer					
Debt Recovery Officer					
Executive Secretary					

Human Resources Officer					
Information Management Officer					
Land Officer					
Native Title Research Officer					
Project Officer Customer Service					
Project Support Officer					
Senior Administration Officer					
Research Officer					
AO5	25			11	36
Communications Officer					
Deputy Mining Registrar					
Editor					
Natural Resources Management Officer					
Senior Communications Officer					
Senior Electronic Publishing Officer					
Senior Finance Officer					
Senior Graphic Designer					
Senior Human Resources Officer					
Senior Land Officer					
Senior Policy Officer					
Senior Project Officer					
Senior Support Officer					
Supervisor Water Monitoring					
AO5 / PO3	1				1
Natural Resource Management Officer					
AO6	27			7	34
Coordinator (Water Services)					
Correspondance Liaison Officer					
Customer Services Manager					

Leader (Water Resource Management)					
Policy Officer					
Principal Project Officer					
Regional Finance Officer					
Senior Administration Officer					
Senior Advisor					
Senior Communications and Client Liaison Officer					
Senior Communications Officer					
Senior Land Officer					
Senior Natural Resources Officer					
Senior Officer Planning & Development					
Senior Policy Officer					
Senior Project Officer					
Senior Vegetation Management Officer					
A07	24			2	26
Business Advisor					
Business System Manager					
Coordinator Historical					
Digital Solutions Manager					
Manager					
Principal Advisor					
Principal Environmental Officer					
Principal Land Officer					
Principal Media Officer					
Principal Policy Officer					
Principal Products Officer					
Principal Project Officer					
Senior Business Analyst					
State Negotiator					

Team Leader Aquatic Ecosystem Report					
A08	23				23
Account Manager					
Manager					
Principal Advisor					
Principal Policy Analyst					
Principal Policy Officer					
Regional Manager					
Senior State Negotiator					
Team Leader					
A0T				1	1
Trainee - Office Administration					
002	1				1
Maintenance Officer (Cleaning)					
003				1	1
Health Safety & Env Operations Officer					
004	1				1
Operations Officer					
005	1				1
Technical Officer (Drilling)					
006	1				1
Senior Technical Officer (Drilling)					
P01	1			1	2
Surveyor					
Valuer					
P02	12			15	27
Assistant Valuer					
Data Analyst					
Graduate Project Officer					
Natural Resource Management Officer					

Policy Officer					
Project Manager					
Project Officer					
Scientist (Aquatic Ecology)					
Spatial Information Officer					
Vegetation Management Officer					
PO3	15			9	24
Land Resources Officer					
Natural Resources Officer					
Planning Officer					
Policy Officer (Science)					
Project Officer					
Senior Lawyer					
Senior Policy Officer					
Senior Scientist					
Senior Spatial Information Officer					
Spatial Information Officer					
Surveyor					
Valuer					
PO4	21			3	24
Lawyer					
Senior Engineer					
Senior Historian/Anthropologist					
Senior Lawyer					
Senior Planning Officer					
Senior Policy Officer					
Senior Rehabilitation Scientist					
Senior Spatial Information Officer					
Senior Valuer					
Senior Water Monitoring Officer					

P05	6			3	9
Chief Surveyor					
Policy Officer					
Principal Lawyer					
Principal Valuer					
Senior Lawyer					
P06	1				1
Principal Lawyer					
SES2	1		2		3
General Manager					
Regional Services Director					
SES3		1	3		4
Assistant Director-General					
Executive Director					
SO	13				13
Director					
Regional Manager					
S01	1				1
Corporate Counsel					
S02	1				1
Deputy Valuer-General (Policy)					
T02				1	1
Technical Officer					
T03	3				3
Cartographer					
Hydrographer					
Technical Officer (Groundwater Hydrology)					
T04	3				3
Senior District Advisor					

Senior Laboratory Technical					
Senior Technical Officer					
T05	3				3
Principal Hydrographer					
Senior District Advisor					
Senior Extension Officer					
Grand Total	288	1	5	111	405

Region	Permanent	S122 Contract	SES Contract	Temporary	Grand Total
Brisbane CBD	144	1	4	50	199
Central	23			10	33
North	29			13	42
South	92		1	38	131
Grand Total	288	1	5	111	405

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 7

asked on 27 September 2012

MS TRAD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

I refer to Schedule 2 in the *Appropriation Bill 2012* outlining the 2012-13 funding allocation for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and to page 9 of the SDS outlining a staffing reduction of 462 FTEs from the 2011-12 adjusted budget to the 2012-13 estimate. Will the Minister list every work unit, branch and/or division that has been abolished within the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, specifically separating out any reductions in Mine Safety, Health Services, Water Services and Land services and the number of staff positions contained within each abolished work area, as part of the process of developing the 2012-13 State Budget?

ANSWER:

Firstly, may I point out that the total staffing reduction for the Department of Natural Resources and Mines will be 413, not 462

Secondly, in identifying positions that could be de-limited, the department firstly looked at vacant funded roles, of which there were 71.

As at 30 June 2012, the Department of Natural Resources and Mines had a workforce of 2828 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. In 2012–13, the department will have 2444 FTE staff by 30 June 2013. This represents a reduction of 384 FTEs.

An additional staffing reduction of 29 FTEs to allow for reduced cost in the 2013–14 financial year will occur before the end of the current financial year to allow for a full year of savings in the following year, which takes the total reduction to 413 FTEs.

The expected decrease of FTEs is made up of:

- 14 per cent in Water and Catchments;
- 29 per cent in Land and Indigenous Services;
- 35 per cent in Natural Resources Operations;
- 5 per cent in Mining and Petroleum; and
- 17 per cent in Business and Corporate Partnerships.

There has been no reduction to front line services in Mine Safety and Health.

These savings have been achieved through a restructure of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, which has brought together Service Delivery and Policy and Program Support functions from across the former department.

2.

This new structure will enable the department to be more flexible with its resources so that it can meet the government's priorities with maximum efficiency. It also realises the government's focus on Service Delivery and the customer experience, which will now be a driving force in the development of natural resource and mining policy.

Meanwhile, the integrity of the Mines Safety and Health function has been maintained as a separate business area.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. 8

asked on 27 September 2012

MR KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister advise of the factors leading to the decision to close the Small Mines office in Mareeba and how small miners in the region will now access similar services?

ANSWER:

There has been no decision taken to close the Mines office of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines in Mareeba.

This office continues to provide critical frontline services not only to the small mining industry but to all stakeholders in the mining industry in the North Queensland region.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 9

asked on 27 September 2012

MR KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise of the value of mineral wealth unable to be mined due to the lack of energy, rail or road infrastructure in North Queensland. Can the Minister provide his response in mineral and resource category with associated value in current commodity prices?

ANSWER:

In North Queensland, I am not aware of any specific mineral resource that is currently stated as being unable to be mined as a direct result of the lack of energy, rail or road infrastructure; however, I am aware of a number of projects that are currently under development that will require expansion or new infrastructure construction to allow the projects to be progressed into production.

I am also aware of a number of bulk commodity coal and mineral resources that will also require appropriate infrastructure for any future development to be undertaken.

One of the steps in assessing a viable mining operation is a feasibility study that must include the costs associated with a range of infrastructure types to support the operation. This includes the costs of energy, rail and road infrastructure.

A good example of this is the need for a multi-user rail load out facility near Cloncurry that is integral to the production from the Ernest Henry copper, gold and magnetite mine, and the planned development of the Dugald River zinc/lead mine and the Rocklands copper, gold and cobalt mine.

These projects alone are estimated to require somewhere in the order of \$1.8 billion in capital, and will create approximately 600 jobs for the region. The infrastructure required by these operations is included in their capital development costs.

The recent MITEZ (Mount Isa Townsville Economic Zone) 50-Year Freight Infrastructure Plan (MITEZ report) identified that the future demand for critical supply chain infrastructure is likely to expand in the Townsville to Mount Isa region. This region had an estimated \$15 billion gross regional value in 2010–11 that has been modelled to increase significantly, potentially more than doubling in value by 2050, and would include new high-value mineral mines in this significant increase. These high-value mineral developments are stated to not impact markedly on the freight infrastructure in the region.

2.

The infrastructure requirements for other known coal and bulk mineral commodities in the region are viewed by industry as a logistics and cost issue associated with the development of the operation, rather than a lack of infrastructure issue.

The future growth in the North Queensland region, which is in part reflected by the MITEZ report, is very positive. The provision of required infrastructure for new mineral or coal mine developments in the future will be a consideration for proponents in their economic feasibility assessment and is an integral part of the total capital cost of any development.

AGRICULTURE, RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING
NON-GOVERNMENT QUESTION ON NOTICE**

No. 10

asked on 27 September 2012

MR KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND MINES (MR CRIPPS)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister advise how many positions and services in his department which have been terminated since March 2012 will be outsourced to private enterprise?

ANSWER:

None of the positions or services ceased from March 2012 until October 2012 has been outsourced to private enterprise.