

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2022 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the Service Delivery Statements (SDS) – Department’s Service Areas: Water resource management services –

Could the Minister outline how many water users have had a reduction in their allocation since the last water year, reported separately by irrigation scheme?

ANSWER:

Water allocations are legal entitlements to draw water. A water allocation is a property right and cannot be reduced, therefore no water users have had a reduction in their water allocation.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 2

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to the capital budget for 2022/23, SDS page 7 –

Will the Minister provide a list of approved projects, including (a) the budget and scope of each project for 2021-22 and 2022-23 (reported separately) and (b) the scheduled date of completion for each project (reported in table format)?

ANSWER:

The projects listed below are those relevant to page 7 of the SDS which shows capital purchases by the agency for the relevant years. Further information about the agency's capital outlays can be found in Budget Paper 3: Capital Statement, specifically pages 92 to 98, including detail on significant infrastructure investments for 2022–23 to be undertaken by Sunwater, Seqwater, the Gladstone Area Water Board and the Mount Isa Water Board.

Project	Estimated Actual 2021-22 ('000s)	Budget 2022-23 ('000s)	Scope	Scheduled Completion Date
Capital Purchases				
Rookwood Weir	106,432	116,907	To construct Rookwood Weir and drive new economic employment opportunities for the agricultural industry and community of Central Queensland. Part funded by the National Water Grid Fund (NWGF).	Mid-2023
Other	3,468	2,600	Includes improvements made to the state-wide water monitoring network and general plant and equipment requirements.	NA
Total Capital Purchases	109,900	119,507		

Project	Estimated Actual 2021-22 ('000s)	Budget 2022-23 ('000s)	Scope	Scheduled Completion Date
Capital Grants				
Big Rocks Weir – planning	5,000	1,000	Planning and other pre-construction activities for a new conventional concrete weir and saddle dam at Big Rocks. Part funded by the NWGF.	30 June 2023
Building our Regions (Round 6)	1,000	39,000	Grant program for local government water and sewerage infrastructure projects in regional Queensland.	30 June 2024
Rookwood Weir	10,090	6,000	Enhancements required to existing community infrastructure (e.g., roads and bridges) to service and support the Rookwood Weir project.	mid 2023
Southern Downs Drought Resilience Package	3,820	3,820	Upgrades to critical infrastructure to address immediate water security in the Southern Downs region.	30 June 2023
Warren's Gully System Capacity upgrade project	1,190	2,380	To increase the peak flow capacity of the Warren's Gully aquifer recharge and water distribution system. In partnership with the Australian government through the NWGF.	30 June 2024
Warwick recycled water for agriculture project (stage 3)	145	336	To improve water quality and capacity in the Warwick region by upgrading existing recycled water treatment and chemical systems. In partnership with the Australian government through the NWGF.	30 June 2023
Emu Swamp Dam project	3,500	-	Planning for a proposed 12GL dam on the Severn River near Stanthorpe and a 117km pumped pipeline distribution network. In partnership	TBD

Project	Estimated Actual 2021-22 ('000s)	Budget 2022-23 ('000s)	Scope	Scheduled Completion Date
			with the Australian government through the NWGF.	
Mareeba- Dimbulah Channel Modernisation Project	3,164	-	Contribution to Sunwater for the Mareeba-Dimbulah Water Supply Scheme efficiency improvement project. In partnership with the Australian government through the NWGF	30 June 2023
Total Capital Grants	27,909	52,536		

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 3

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 4 of the SDS Supporting the Manufacturing Industry in Queensland and in relation to the Manufacturing Ministerial Council –

Could the Minister outline: (a) how many times has the council met in the 2021-22 financial year, (b) what recommendations have been outlined from the Ministerial Council meetings, and (c) what are the status of implementation for such recommendations?

ANSWER:

The Manufacturing Ministerial Council (the council) provides strategic and practical advice to the Queensland Government, to assist in developing our manufacturing industry and drive economic, regional and employment growth throughout the state.

The council is an initiative of the Queensland Advanced Manufacturing 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan, which is driving development of Queensland's manufacturing industry and assisting manufacturers to increase their competitiveness and transition to new technologies.

The council provides opportunities for the Queensland Government to hear directly from manufacturing industry leaders. Its membership includes key peak industry organisations, the Australian Industry Group, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union and the Australian Workers' Union. A cross section of manufacturing businesses, including regional manufacturers, are represented to ensure that the government hears from manufacturers across Queensland.

The council met three times in 2021–22. Meetings were held on 23 August 2021 in Brisbane, 25 November 2021 in Gladstone, and 10 March 2022 in Brisbane.

Through the council, the government has worked with Queensland manufacturers and industry leaders on a range of important initiatives and proposals that have either been implemented already or are in the process of being implemented. Examples include:

- encouraging adoption of advanced manufacturing through Industry 4.0 workshops with a strong focus on sustainability;
- incorporation of energy efficiency and sustainability as part of the assessment process in the next round of the Made in Queensland Grants Program and the Manufacturing Hub Grants Program;

- driving advanced manufacturing and increased efficiency, through a series of two-day workshops on LEAN Manufacturing commencing shortly to further demonstrate the value of LEAN techniques and processes for small to medium manufacturers;
- building the capabilities of manufacturers through grants and workshops to support new technology adoption that positions them to better compete for procurement opportunities;
- the Gold Coast Hub providing a focal point for developing manufacturing opportunities for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and, more broadly, working on large scale and emerging industry supply chain opportunities for these events;
- increasing the participation of women in manufacturing through the Women in Manufacturing event series and other initiatives; and
- continuing to showcase the strength of Queensland's manufacturing sector.

The council has also established two working groups on key areas of the Advanced Manufacturing 10 Year Road Map focusing on women in manufacturing, and carbon neutrality in manufacturing.

In addition to these activities, the council is also advising government on the revision of the Advanced Manufacturing 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan.

The council is an integral part of how the government engages with industry to ensure our plans and policies for manufacturing are informed by industry so that we can continue to deliver great outcomes for the manufacturing industry in Queensland.

The council will continue to help shape important government initiatives as we continue our efforts to drive jobs and growth in this important sector, including ensuring Queensland manufacturers are positioned to benefit from emerging opportunities such as the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, growth in the renewable energy sector, battery manufacturing and industries like hydrogen.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 4

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 7 of the SDS, Staffing –

Could the Minister provide a breakdown of staffing numbers for each financial year from 2015 to present, by (a) department separately - (i) water, (ii) regional development and (iii) manufacturing, (b) work base, and (c) number of graduate roles?

ANSWER:

The Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (the department) was created on 12 November 2020. Records prior to this date are not comparable to the current department.

The full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce profile across the service delivery areas of the department over the last two financial years is:

Financial Year ending	Grow the Economy	Water Resource Management	Total FTE
30 June 2021	40.0	535.0	575.0
30 June 2022	100.0	489.0	589.0

Staff across the department can actively work to support all objectives of the department regardless of the allocation to a specific work function or work location.

Of the total FTE, 47.1% are physically located outside the Brisbane central business district (the CBD). When including the FTE staff who work in the department's South Region which is located within a Brisbane CBD location, this percentage grows closer to 60%.

As at 30 June 2022, there were two staff engaged as graduates who rotate across a number of functional areas within the department as part of their development.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 5

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the SDS, “Building our Regions” and in relation to the Regional Community Forums –

Could the Minister advise (a) the costs associated with holding Regional Forums across Queensland, (b) who is on each of the seven forums, (c) what is the selection process for attendees to the forums, (d) will minutes of these forums be made available for the public and (e) what measures are in place to ensure the arrangements around these events are transparent?

ANSWER:

The Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water assists the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to deliver the Regional Forums (the forums) across Queensland and assists with implementation of the identified priorities that arise from the forums.

My role is to work with the Premier and Minister for the Olympics to bring community representatives together with Ministers and Assistant Ministers to provide a platform for Queenslanders in rural, remote, and regional areas to discuss their regions' priorities and challenges directly with the Queensland Government. These forums also provide an invaluable link between rural and regional communities and government decision-making.

As administrative arrangements for the forums and funding for this initiative falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Premier and Minister for the Olympics, questions in relation to operational matters should be referred to the Premier for a response.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 6

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 2 of the SDS, which refers to a Queensland bulk water infrastructure assessment –

Can the Minister confirm (a) when the assessment is due to be completed, (b) the criteria used as part of the assessment, (c) will the recommendations be made public upon completion of the assessment and (d) what will be the timeline for any recommendations to be implemented?

ANSWER:

While the question refers to page 2 of the SDS, I understand the Member may be referring to page 3 of the SDS which makes this reference.

The importance of water to local communities, particularly in Queensland's regions, makes it critical that infrastructure must be planned, and proposals must be assessed for need, viability, efficiency, and effectiveness.

The government insists all options are properly considered, and to do that, mandates quality forward planning.

That is why, in addition to existing planning initiatives already underway, the Queensland Government is developing a strategic water infrastructure plan (SWIP) to guide the assessment and consideration of bulk water projects and inform future bulk water infrastructure projects, particularly in regional Queensland.

The intent of the SWIP is to inform investment decisions, guide project assessments, ensure Queensland's precious water resources are optimised and provide an overarching view of the bulk water capital portfolio. Consideration of important matters such as financial, economic, environmental, community and social outcomes will be part of this work.

This work will incorporate a statewide supply and demand audit, so that we use the most up to date information on where bulk water can make a difference to communities and the economy.

This work will also interface with the regional water assessments that are currently underway.

Project planning and scoping is underway, and it is anticipated the first draft of the SWIP would be ready for consideration by government in 2023–24, with public presentation of the outcomes to be considered at that time.

This will be a planning activity which can be updated as drivers change, and project assessments are undertaken to ensure that our planning activities are responsive to future challenges and opportunities.

It is a measure of this government's commitment to water infrastructure and regional community development that since 2015, over \$3.4 billion has been committed to water infrastructure and planning across Queensland, delivering thousands of jobs, many of those in regional Queensland.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 7

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the SDS, Department's Service Areas: Water resource management services –

Given the upgrade target date of 2025 for the Cooby, Cressbrook Creek and Gordonbrook Dams, will the Minister advise (a) why is there no funding in the 2022/23 Budget to assist the Toowoomba and South Burnett Regional Councils start large spillway projects and (b) how is the department actively managing the risk that the affordability of significant upgrades could delay these important safety upgrades?

ANSWER:

Community safety is a priority for the Queensland Government and Queensland has an excellent dam safety record.

Dam safety upgrades are the responsibility of the dam owner, and the monitoring and audit of dam safety for referable dams in Queensland is managed and overseen by Queensland's Dam Safety Regulator.

Ongoing management of dams is achieved through an appropriate dam improvement program of upgrades, inspections, maintenance and recordkeeping under state and national dam safety standards. These requirements are not new and have been specified in statutory guidelines and dam safety conditions since 2007.

The Toowoomba Regional Council and the South Burnett Regional Council are responsible for the Cooby, Cressbrook Creek and Gordonbrook Dams. My department, to date, has not received any requests for support or funding for the spillway projects for these dams.

Local governments that own dams requiring upgrades have successfully delivered dam upgrade projects and where necessary, secured funding for upgrades from various sources, supported by the Queensland Treasury Corporation. The Queensland Government also has a strong record of supporting local governments to deliver on their water supply, security and safety obligations.

My department will continue to support and work with local governments to ensure that they are on track to deliver their dam safety upgrades.

My department will also continue to work with local governments and the Queensland Treasury Corporation to explore options for funding opportunities if a request is made.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 8

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 2 of the SDS, ‘Regulating Dam Safety’ and the Queensland Audit Office Report of December 2021 which estimates that there is \$4.6 billion worth of upgrades required to ensure the safety of Queensland Dams due for upgrade by 2035 –

Can the Minister advise (a) why is there no significant funding for these upgrades in the 2022/23 Budget and (b) how is the department actively managing the risk that the affordability of significant upgrades could delay these important safety upgrades?

ANSWER:

This question has been substantively answered in my response to Question on Notice 172, tabled on 19 April 2022.

As I said in that response, the Queensland Government will always prioritise the safety of Queenslanders and welcomes the Queensland Audit Office report (the QAO report).

The QAO report focusses on collecting information from dam owners, with a particular focus on smaller dams, rather than the state’s major bulk water storage facilities. The QAO report also noted “The department’s endorsed dam safety site audit strategy and plan includes a clear prioritisation process to identify those dams with the highest safety risk. It includes eight risk factors recommended by the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry.”

The Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water’s (the department) regulatory approach to dam safety prioritises public safety. Dam owners must have dam safety management programs that reflect industry good practice and must report on all aspects annually. In addition, the department targets emerging risks including enforcing requirements for technical review for dam projects, educating stakeholders on management of irrigation dams, and requiring additional reporting on dam safety upgrades.

Ninety per cent of the costs referred to in the QAO report are associated with the costs of dam safety upgrades for large dams owned by Sunwater and Seqwater. This is because the cost to upgrade these large pieces of infrastructure is obviously more significant than, for example, small dams on rural private properties. Both Sunwater and Seqwater are on track to deliver those upgrades in accordance with their regulatory obligations.

All owners of referable dams in Queensland needing an upgrade must provide an upgrade project plan report annually, which includes confirmation that the dam owner has funding arrangements in place

for its upgrade program. This allows the department to foresee any delays to upgrade projects and take appropriate action to ensure that dam upgrades are completed in a reasonable timeframe.

Queensland's dam owners are on track to deliver on dam safety upgrades in a timely manner, tackling each dam in a priority order according to industry guidance.

In the 2022–23 State Budget, Sunwater, Seqwater and the Gladstone Area Water Board have allocated \$57.5 million to dam improvement projects. This includes important planning and preparatory works for two Seqwater projects and two Sunwater projects including commencement of early works to restore Paradise Dam to its original height.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 9

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the SDS –

Will the Minister please advise how the Ministerial Manufacturing Council is supporting the manufacturing industry in Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Manufacturing Ministerial Council (the council) provides strategic and practical advice to the Queensland Government, to assist in developing our manufacturing industry and drive economic, regional and employment growth throughout the State.

The council is an initiative of the Queensland Advanced Manufacturing 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan, which is driving development of Queensland's manufacturing industry and assisting manufacturers to increase their competitiveness and transition to new technologies.

The council provides opportunities for the Queensland Government to hear directly from manufacturing industry leaders. Its membership includes key peak industry organisations, the Australian Industry Group, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland, the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, and the Australian Workers' Union. A cross section of manufacturing businesses, including regional manufacturers, are represented to ensure that the government hears from manufacturers across Queensland on the issues that matter.

Advice and recommendations have been provided on key issues such as:

- the Made in Queensland Grants Program;
- the Manufacturing Hubs Grants Program;
- adopting automation and digitisation;
- carbon neutrality and sustainable manufacturing;
- large-scale and emerging industry supply chain opportunities such as the supply chain for the 2032 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games;
- increasing the participation of women in manufacturing;
- Industry Engagement Program workshops and events to assist manufacturers transition to Industry 4.0;
- skills development and jobs of the future; and
- showcasing Queensland's manufacturing industry.

The advice and recommendations provided by the council continues to be implemented as the Queensland Government works with industry to further strengthen our manufacturing sector.

Groups like the council are an integral part of how the government engages with industry to ensure our plans and policies for manufacturing are informed by industry leaders so that we can continue to deliver great outcomes for the manufacturing industry in Queensland. The Queensland Government looks forward to continuing to work with the council, including on the revised roadmap and actions, and important strategies including growing the role of women in the manufacturing sector and carbon neutrality in manufacturing.

The Queensland Government is thankful for the advice of the council, particularly during the challenges of COVID-19 and looks forward to collaborating further particularly in light of emerging manufacturing opportunities in hydrogen, renewable energy, battery manufacturing, rail manufacturing and the 2032 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 10

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 8 of the SDS –

Will the Minister provide details of the grants made through the Made in Queensland (MIQ) program, including round 4?

ANSWER:

Made in Queensland (MIQ) is a highly successful grants program that helps small and medium-sized manufacturers in Queensland to increase international competitiveness, productivity, innovation through new technologies, and create jobs for the future.

Manufacturers across Queensland have received funding under MIQ. MIQ provides matched funding from \$50,000 to \$2.5 million to Queensland manufacturers for eligible equipment, processes, systems, and expertise.

Since 2017, 105 projects have received funding from MIQ. Thirty-nine of these projects are located in regional Queensland. These projects are anticipated to create and support more than 7,400 jobs over five years and generate more than \$140 million in private sector investment.

MIQ Round 4, the most recent round, supported 21 new projects with a focus on onshoring manufacturing to Queensland from interstate and overseas. These projects started in 2022 and are due for completion by June 2023.

For example, I recently visited Zone RV based in Coolum Beach. They were awarded a grant of up to \$1,408,849 in Round 4 for their project to establish an advanced composite division, plus a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility involving equipment, robotics and interconnected systems via the Internet of Things, to lead the industry in manufacturing of advanced composites, plastics, and metals in an Industry 4.0 environment. This project is expected to create 90 new jobs over five years at Zone RV's Sunshine Coast manufacturing facility.

Some examples of successful MIQ grant projects from earlier rounds include:

- Round 1, Orica onshored production of their electronic blasting system from Canada to their project site near Helidon, reducing lead time from six months to three weeks for the mining industry. The project created 18 new jobs;
- Round 2, Dobinsons Springs and Suspension at Rockhampton installed a state-of-the-art cold coiling machine which has allowed them to capture work from overseas competitors disrupted by international shipping delays and employ 21 additional staff; and

- Round 3, Cairns-based Neamco purchased two advanced manufacturing machines which allows for fully automated cylinder honing, and 5 axis CNC machining on a larger scale. The new machines have improved productivity and enable the business to win new contracts in the mining sector.

Eighty-one projects have been completed at 30 June 2022. These projects have created and supported over 5,800 jobs and attracted more than \$100 million in private sector investment.

The MIQ program has been boosted by \$40 million in this year's budget, to a total value of \$101.5 million. This new funding will support two further rounds of MIQ over two years, creating still more jobs, benefits, and bring manufacturing activity back to Queensland.

The Queensland Government's investment in projects through MIQ provides direct support to Queensland manufacturers and to the community more broadly. This occurs through the positive flow on effects to other local businesses, industries and suppliers that all benefit through increased productivity and job creation.

Consistent with previous years, MIQ is a competitive program. Initial applications scoring highest against the assessment criteria are invited to proceed through to a detailed application process. The multi-stage assessment process undertaken by the department means the best and most worthy projects are successful in receiving funding.

A detailed summary of the recipients of MIQ Round 4 grants awarded are:

Made in Queensland Round 4

Business name	Suburb	Local Government Area	Made in Queensland funding	Project Status	Jobs over 5 years
Aletek Pty Ltd	Svensson Heights	Bundaberg Regional Council	\$1,362,888	Ongoing	29
Aqseptence Group Pty Ltd	Geebung	Brisbane City Council	\$413,850	Ongoing	28
Beehive Vinyl Products Pty Ltd	Currajong	Townsville City Council	\$274,980	Ongoing	9
Berg Engineering	Brendale	Moreton Bay Regional Council	\$416,827	Ongoing	8
Foscap Investments Pty Ltd	Salisbury	Brisbane City Council	\$118,765	Ongoing	95
Freeze Dry Industries Pty Ltd	Yandina	Sunshine Coast Regional Council	\$450,000	Ongoing	24

Business name	Suburb	Local Government Area	Made in Queensland funding	Project Status	Jobs over 5 years
Holmwood Highgate (aust.) Pty Ltd	Loganholme	Logan City Council	\$2,480,025	Ongoing	51
Imaging Solutions Pty Ltd	Meadowbrook	Brisbane City Council	\$988,800	Ongoing	26
IntelliDesign Pty Ltd	Seventeen Mile Rocks	Brisbane City Council	\$96,067	Ongoing	36
Newfresh Foods Pty Ltd	Alloway	Bundaberg Regional Council	\$1,919,545	Ongoing	52
Obadare Pty Ltd	Glenvale	Toowoomba Regional Council	\$937,387	Ongoing	15
Packer Leather Pty Ltd	Narangba	Moreton Bay Regional Council	\$586,024	Ongoing	17
PRIESTLEY'S GOURMET DELIGHTS	Acacia Ridge	Brisbane City Council	\$2,500,000	Ongoing	75
QPP Pty Ltd	Narangba	Moreton Bay Regional Council	\$778,269	Ongoing	19
Syngeneering	Banyo	Brisbane City Council	\$54,375	Ongoing	17
Tanuki	Wellcamp	Toowoomba Regional Council	\$198,849	Ongoing	8
Thompson Meat Machinery Pty Ltd	Crestmead	Logan City Council	\$244,992	Ongoing	36
UAP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD	Northgate	Brisbane City Council	\$184,741	Ongoing	17
Watkins Steel Pty Ltd	Northgate	Brisbane City Council	\$670,302	Ongoing	10

Business name	Suburb	Local Government Area	Made in Queensland funding	Project Status	Jobs over 5 years
Womble Investments Pty Ltd	Brendale	Moreton Bay Regional Council	\$750,894	Ongoing	3
Zone Rv Pty Ltd	Coolum Beach	Sunshine Coast Regional Council	\$1,408,849	Ongoing	90
Round 4 totals			\$16,836,428 committed	Ongoing	665

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 11

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the SDS –

Will the Minister please advise how his department supports improved outcomes for regional development in Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting the growth and development of regional communities and the importance of regional development crosses all parts of my portfolio.

Through our support for regional Manufacturing Hubs, the Made in Queensland Grants Program (MIQ) and the Manufacturing Hubs Grants Program, the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (the department) is boosting regional economies and supporting job creation now and into the future.

MIQ is now a \$101.5 million program following an additional \$40 million investment in the 2022–23 budget. MIQ helps small and medium sized manufacturers to increase competitiveness, productivity and innovation via the adoption of new technologies, which drives the highly skilled jobs of the future.

Since 2017, MIQ has supported 105 advanced manufacturing projects across the state which are expected to create and support more than 7,400 jobs over five years. Nearly 40 per cent of projects funded through MIQ are in regional Queensland, creating and supporting over 2,900 jobs over five years.

The Manufacturing Hubs Grants Program supports businesses to invest and adopt the machinery, technology and processes they need to advance their businesses. Investment in this program reached \$28.5 million, following an additional \$10 million which was announced in the 2022–23 State Budget to assist eligible manufacturers in the manufacturing hub regions of Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Gladstone, Rockhampton, and the Gold Coast.

To date, 38 grants have been provided to regional manufacturers, creating and supporting over 1,300 jobs.

Our regional manufacturing hubs provide local manufacturers with expert advice and support, helping them grow and expand into new markets, creating more opportunities for manufacturers

to thrive. The critical services the manufacturing hubs provide have been further strengthened by the announcement earlier this year to permanently fund the hubs, with \$17.75 million allocated over the next four years.

The highly successful Building our Regions program supports regional local governments to build infrastructure in regional communities supporting job creation and liveability in these areas. Round 6 is focused on supporting local governments with important water and sewerage systems.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to announce that 35 grants totalling \$8.292 million had been awarded to local governments for important planning projects across the state. This funding is to support smaller councils plan for important water and sewerage projects. The construction projects under Round 6 will be announced in the coming months, with \$39 million allocated in the 2022–23 budget for councils to commence construction.

Our total investment of \$70 million in Round 6 of Building our Regions takes total government funding for the Building our Regions program to \$418.3 million. This funding has leveraged over \$539 million in additional investment and supported more than 2,700 construction jobs.

Since 2015, the Queensland Government has invested more than \$3.4 billion in water infrastructure, initiatives and planning, with many projects and the jobs they create, being in regional Queensland. This includes projects and initiatives like:

- Rookwood Weir;
- Big Rocks Weir;
- both stages of the Haughton Pipeline;
- essential safety works on Paradise Dam and restoring the dam to its original height;
- the Toowoomba to Warwick Pipeline;
- the Southern Downs Drought Resilience Package;
- dam safety upgrades in several locations across regional Queensland;
- irrigation pricing discounts;
- the Regional Water Assessment Program;
- Stage 1 of the Cairns Water Security Project;
- the Hughenden Water Bank Project;
- the Mount Morgan Pipeline; and
- investments in infrastructure to connect the Lansdown Industrial Precinct to the Haughton Pipeline

Investment in water infrastructure and planning is driving jobs and growth in regional communities across Queensland. Projects like Rookwood Weir for example, will transform Central Queensland, providing significant opportunities for increased agricultural and industrial development, as well as increased water security for the region.

The department also works across government on important initiatives that support regional development, including:

- supporting the Department of The Premier and Cabinet to deliver the Regional Community forums; and
- working with the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and local stakeholders to develop regional infrastructure plans.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 12

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS –

Will the Minister advise what steps the Queensland Government is taking to ensure dams across Queensland meet required safety standards?

ANSWER:

Dams are essential components of our water supply and irrigation infrastructure and underpin Queensland's economy.

Community safety is a priority for the Queensland Government and dams in Queensland are maintained to very high safety standards.

The safety of a dam is the responsibility of the dam owner, and the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (the department) regulates dam safety for referable dams to minimise risks and impacts to the community.

Referable dams in Queensland are built to very high standards. However, as long-life assets, they require ongoing maintenance and investment, and our understanding of risks associated with each dam is updated by new science on rainfall and increased development downstream.

The department has in place strict licensing conditions for referable dams. The conditions require owners to comply with appropriately high, internationally accepted safety standards, and the department's dam safety management guidelines. The regulatory safety standards apply to dam design, ongoing operations and management and emergency response.

There are 109 referable dams in Queensland. These include major dams such as Wivenhoe Dam and Burdekin Falls Dam, and also smaller detention basins and off-stream storages.

Seqwater and Sunwater own two thirds of Queensland's referable dams. Both organisations have dedicated teams to manage their dams. Both Seqwater and Sunwater follow the Queensland dam safety guidelines and those set by the Australian National Committee on Large Dams (ANCOLD).

Ongoing management of dams is achieved through a program of upgrades, inspections, and maintenance.

Queensland has an excellent dam safety record, but we are not complacent. We continue to identify emerging risks and avoid the realisation of impacts through regular review, taking on lessons learnt during wet weather events, engaging with experts and maintaining good practice standards.

This includes, for example, the Queensland Government's response to safety concerns raised at Paradise Dam. All eight recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into Paradise Dam were accepted by the government, reaffirming our commitment to dam safety.

Dam upgrade programs ensure dam safety risks are mitigated and remain within tolerable levels. These upgrades may include spillway capacity increases, storage capacity increases, structural modifications or operational and maintenance modifications. They are implemented according to a considered timeframe commensurate with the latest dam safety standards.

Major dam improvement projects currently underway include Paradise Dam, Burdekin Falls Dam, and Teemburra Dam. Planning is also underway in relation to the dam safety upgrades required to Somerset Dam, North Pine Dam and Wivenhoe Dam which must be completed by 2035.

We have already carried out upgrade works on nearly 20 dams since 2015 including Kinchant Dam, Eungella Dam, Wappa Dam, Boondooma Dam, Leslie Harrison Dam, Fairbairn Dam, Sideling Creek Dam and the essential safety works at Paradise Dam.

The department reassesses its approach to referable dams through regular review, taking on lessons learnt during wet weather events, engaging with experts, industry bodies and other regulators across Australia and globally and maintaining good practice standards. Some of the regulatory activities the department undertakes include:

- requiring dam owners to carry out annual safety inspections and more significant comprehensive risk assessments on a periodic basis;
- a program of audits and on-site inspections to confirm that dam owners are complying with their regulatory obligations;
- compliance and enforcement through conditions, warning letters, and compliance notices;
- assisting Dam owners with voluntary compliance by providing advice, guidelines, workshops, dam owners forums and dam management training for the industry;
- participating in technical review panels for new dam projects and significant upgrades; and
- participating in exercises with dam owners as part of wet season preparedness and EAP activity.

The government welcomed the Auditor General's report into Regulating Dam Safety.

The report focussed on collecting information from dam owners, with a particular focus on smaller dams, rather than the state's major bulk water storage facilities.

The report noted, and I quote: "the department's endorsed dam safety site audit strategy and plan includes a clear prioritisation process to identify those dams with the highest safety risk. It includes eight risk factors recommended by the Queensland Floods of Commission Inquiry."

The Auditor General's report made nine recommendations regarding improvements that can be made to processes, systems and record keeping. Importantly, there were no findings that dams were unsafe.

The department has moved swiftly to implement the recommendations of the report, and six of the nine recommendations have already been implemented.

The 2022–23 State Budget has supported this by providing \$3.4 million over four years to address the report recommendations, including for recruiting specialist regulation, compliance and engineering staff and further developing information communication technology capability.

All the dams identified in the Auditor General's report are now fully compliant with their Dam Safety conditions.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2022 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 13

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 4 of the SDS –

Will the Minister advise provide examples of how the Queensland Government supports economic development by making more water available to water users?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government continues to support regional communities and stimulate economic development through the targeted and sustainable release of unallocated water.

The Queensland Government has jointly funded the Rookwood Weir Project, which included raising the height of the weir. This has allowed Sunwater to undertake a highly successful tender in 2020 with all 30,000 megalitres on offer being sold. The successful bidders are pursuing expansion plans along the Fitzroy River and that means more local jobs. A second tender is planned for later in 2022 and will make 7,500 megalitres available in smaller lots of less than 500 megalitres targeted to support local farms.

In the past 12 months, the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (the department) has made an additional 156,568 megalitres of unallocated water available to water users across Queensland. This equates to over 62,000 Olympic size swimming pools. Examples include:

- on 30 November 2021, the department announced a competitive tender to release 110,000 megalitres of unallocated water from the Flinders general reserve;
- in the past 12 months 3,748 megalitres of water has been granted at no cost from the Cape York Peninsula Heritage Area reserve to support the economic, social, and cultural aspirations of First Nations peoples; and
- the department is currently running a release process in Western Queensland making 4,545 megalitres of unallocated water available in the Great Artesian Basin.

The release of this unallocated water demonstrates the Queensland Government's commitment to boosting economic recovery, supporting local businesses, supporting First Nations peoples and driving jobs and growth in regional Queensland.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2022 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 14

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS –

Will the Minister please update the Committee on how the Queensland Government is planning for Southeast Queensland's future water needs?

ANSWER:

South-East Queensland's (SEQ) water grid is one of the largest urban grids in Australia. It includes 12 major water storages, 36 water treatment plants, and spans from Noosa in the north to the New South Wales border in the south and west to Toowoomba.

Thanks to the foresight of previous governments, the grid is supported by two major climate resilient assets, which were constructed following the Millennium Drought. These assets are critical for ensuring the region has sufficient supplies available during a prolonged drought.

The way the grid connects drinking water supplies across SEQ is one of the most unique systems in Australia. It provides us flexibility to manage water supply challenges arising from patchy rainfall, drought, climate change and population growth. The grid's design makes it one of the most secure supply grids in Australia and throughout the world. It allows water to be moved around the region as necessary to address demand and guarantee supply.

Seqwater is the statutory authority responsible for providing bulk water across SEQ and for planning to ensure that the water supply requirements for the region are met.

Seqwater's approach to ensuring water security in SEQ is demonstrated by its current water security program. This program is available online and currently outlines plans for water security in SEQ out to 2046.

This program provides water security through a range of measures, including by increasing the use of drought and flood resilient water sources such as the Gold Coast Desalination Plant.

Seqwater have also been supplying recycled water to power stations and industrial customers to offset demand on the water grid.

Seqwater has also been upgrading its water treatment facilities across the region to provide security and continuity of supply during unforeseen events.

The program has also stood up to the challenge of recent drought, with the combined water grid level only dropping to around 55 per cent despite the region being in a drought just one year shorter than the Millennium Drought, and with another 1 million people.

Further, restrictions across the region weren't necessary because of the way the grid is designed and due to Seqwater's forward planning through its program.

This shows that Seqwater's long term planning activities are working, providing water security for South East Queenslanders now and well into the future.

The system was also able to adjust to flood events as we saw in February and March this year.

We know that challenges lie ahead. The impacts of climate change are now better understood, and SEQ is one of the fastest growing populations in Australia.

These issues will be addressed in the revised water security program to be released later this year. The revised program will also address the additional demands of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Important projects to cater for SEQ's growing population are already occurring including the South West Pipeline.

Construction of the \$95 million pipeline is underway. Once complete, it will ensure water security for one of the fastest growing regions in SEQ. The 27 km pipeline will connect two recently built reservoirs at the existing Beaudesert Water Treatment Plant to the SEQ water grid.

South East Queenslanders can be confident that safe and secure water supply will continue to be delivered in SEQ, now and into the future.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2022 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 15

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 4 of the SDS –

Will the Minister provide an update on the Queensland Government’s water planning activities for regional Queensland?

ANSWER:

This government knows that water is an opportunity to build communities, jobs, and industry, particularly in regional Queensland.

The importance of water to local communities makes it critical that infrastructure must be planned, and proposals properly assessed so that our investments deliver the best outcomes for communities now and into the future.

Through the \$9 million Regional Water Assessment program, the Queensland Government is working with communities and stakeholders to plan for future economic growth.

The program is focussed on assessments in three of Queensland’s most important food bowl regions – the Southern and Darling Downs, the Bundaberg and Burnett, and the Tablelands region.

We are working with local stakeholders to investigate long-term water security solutions which create economic opportunity and drive jobs growth in those regions.

Work commenced in late 2021 on all three assessments, including important early investigations into service needs and hydrology.

All assessments are well underway, and I know the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (the department) and Sunwater are engaging with stakeholders across these regions right now.

I have had discussions and feedback from stakeholders in the three assessment regions and I know they are pleased with the process and the progress that has been made.

These assessments will follow a common process while developing localised proposals. First, they will investigate water usage and likely future needs, then get every practicable proposal on the table, and after that determine the best solutions possible. At every stage, irrigators, councils and community stakeholders are involved.

In the Tablelands, representatives from Mareeba Shire Council, Tablelands Regional Council and Cairns Regional Council, along with representatives from agriculture, industry, and other peak bodies, are participating actively.

In the Southern and Darling Downs, the findings on service need were presented to the Stakeholder Advisory Group last month, and work is now underway to develop and shortlist options for further exploration.

In the Bundaberg and Burnett region, SunWater has hosted four Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings, and a detailed online survey has been released so irrigators can identify future water demand.

In all three regions, future water service demand analyses have been developed already, and along with development of options to meet those demands, are under discussion with locals.

I would like to acknowledge the local council and industry stakeholders who have made the time to support this process to date. The three assessments are getting great support in every region.

We want to consult thoroughly and get all options on the table so priority projects can be considered.

We can then determine which infrastructure, and non-infrastructure, options will best deliver water security and economic growth, suited to each region.

This investment is further evidence of the government's commitment to water security across Queensland, and we are constantly working to improve water security and bolster economic growth by planning for the future.

Through these planning processes, we are seeing investment in projects now, and important planning underway to inform the projects of the future.

In addition to the Regional Water Assessment process, the department also undertakes several other important planning activities.

Queensland's catchment-based water planning provides irrigators, industry and communities with greater transparency and certainty about Queensland's water needs and how water is managed.

There are twenty-three water plans across the state, and these plans are reviewed and assessed regularly to ensure they remain fit for purpose and that plan outcomes are being achieved. Earlier this month, I released the draft Barron Water Plan for public consultation and work is underway in relation to other water plans around the state.

Renewal of water plans is underpinned by the best available science through hydrologic, social, economic, cultural and environmental assessments and includes input from stakeholders in our local communities. Assessing future demand for, and use of, water resources is a key part of developing each plan.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2022 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 16

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 4 of the SDS –

Will the Minister outline how the Queensland Government assists with making water prices in Southeast Queensland affordable for households and businesses?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring South East Queensland residents and businesses continue to have access to clean, affordable and secure water supplies.

That is why the government is continuing to provide relief through the South East Queensland Pensioner Water Subsidy Scheme and the state wide Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme.

These subsidy schemes help pensioners to continue to live in their own homes and meet the costs of essential services.

The Pensioner Rates Subsidy, paying an estimated \$57.4 million in 2021–22, provides up to \$200 per year to eligible pensioner homeowners state-wide.

The South East Queensland Pensioner Water Subsidy, introduced in 2008, provides a maximum subsidy of \$120 per annum to eligible pensioners. In 2021–22, approximately \$19.7 million will be made available through this scheme.

These programs are managed through the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

To be eligible to receive a subsidy, a person must:

- hold a Queensland Pensioner Concession Card or a Department of Veterans' Affairs Health Card (Gold Card);
- be the owner or life tenant of the property, which is their principal place of residence and located in the South East Queensland Water Grid area; and
- be legally responsible for the payment of local council rates and charges levied on that property.

Queensland water entities also have existing measures in place to assist 'at risk' customers facing financial hardship. This can include the introduction of payment plans or negotiating short-term

extensions to payment terms. Customers should contact their water service provider for assistance.

In addition to these measures, and as announced in June this year, bulk water prices in Queensland will rise by less than 20 cents a week, following the Queensland Government's decision to accept recommendations made by the Queensland Competition Authority (the QCA).

Bulk water charges account for around one third of the average household water and sewerage bills, with the remainder comprised of costs set by the water service provider. The bulk water price is paid by council-controlled water service providers across South-East Queensland.

The price of bulk water will rise by an average of 2.14 per cent per year, over the next four years. This is well below the Consumer Price Index and one of the smallest historical increases.

The recommendations made by the QCA, and accepted by the Queensland Government, equate to approximately \$11 per year increase to the average water bill.

The Queensland Government remains committed to making sure people in South East Queensland continue to have a safe and secure water supply. This essential infrastructure service, provided by Seqwater, supports more than 3 million households and businesses in South East Queensland.

The approach recommended by the QCA and adopted by the Queensland Government, ensures bulk water prices remain reasonable and that Seqwater can continue to invest in maintaining its assets and constructing new ones, to ensure the water needs of this growing region are met now and into the future.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2022 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 17

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the SDS –

Will the Minister please advise how the Queensland Government supports irrigators by keeping water costs affordable?

ANSWER:

Irrigated agriculture is one of Queensland's traditional economic strengths. It is a major pillar of our economy and provides jobs for regional Queenslanders across the state.

Supporting this high employment industry is a priority for the Palaszczuk Government particularly as we deliver our plan to strengthen the Queensland economy following the COVID-19 pandemic.

That is why we have invested \$81.6 million over the three years from 2021–22 to subsidise irrigation prices for 6000 irrigators across the state supplied by Sunwater and Seqwater.

This investment includes funding to reduce irrigated water prices for horticulture crops by 50 per cent and by 15 per cent for all other irrigators.

The 50 per cent discount to support horticulture irrigators recognises the thousands of harvesting, picking, and processing jobs this sector creates and sustains across the state.

In defining crops eligible for the 50 per cent discount, this government listened to stakeholders and defined horticulture in the broadest possible sense to maximise the benefit to irrigators.

The 15 per cent discount is automatically applied to bills for the 2021–22 to 2023–24 period, and irrigators do not have to do anything to access this discount.

In May 2021, I appointed the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (the QRIDA) to administer the horticulture rebate program because they have a long history of providing these types of services to Queensland irrigators.

Applications for the rebate opened in August 2021. I am advised that as at the end of June 2022, more than 280 applications had been approved for the rebate, with around \$1 million in payments made to irrigators so far.

Irrigators have until December 2024 to make their applications for the horticulture rebate and can choose to make application for any part of the three-year period up until applications close.

On top of the discounted prices to support jobs, this budget maintains a long-standing policy which allows prices for many water supply schemes to be below cost recovery levels, even before

the discounts are applied, including because of our policy not to recover dam safety costs from irrigators.

This government will continue to support irrigators by stimulating jobs growth in this sector. I encourage all eligible irrigators to take advantage of the additional 35 per cent rebate through QRIDA while these discounts remain in place.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2022 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 18

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the SDS –

Will the Minister provide an update on the Government's record of investing in water infrastructure in Queensland, particularly in regional Queensland following recent announcements in the 2022-23 budget?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government has invested more than \$3.4 billion in water infrastructure and planning since 2015.

This investment has created more than 2,500 jobs across Queensland, many of these jobs in regional areas.

This includes investments like:

- the essential works and rebuild at Paradise Dam;
- Rookwood Weir;
- Stages 1 and 2 of the Haughton Pipeline;
- Big Rocks Weir;
- the South West Pipeline;
- the Southern Downs Drought Resilience Package;
- Building our Regions Round 6;
- the Mareeba Dimbulah Supply Scheme Upgrade;
- progressing planning for the dam improvement and investigations into raising of Burdekin Falls Dam; and
- undertaking three Regional Water Assessments in key food bowl regions across the state

Through the 2022–23 budget, the government has committed to more vital water security projects, including:

- more than \$300 million toward the Toowoomba to Warwick Pipeline;
- \$107.5 million for Stage 1 of the Cairns Water Security project;
- \$40.4 million for the Mount Morgan Pipeline;
- \$25.6 million toward the Hughenden Water Bank project; and

- \$26 million toward enabling infrastructure for Townsville’s Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct.

Other important investments in this year’s budget include:

- \$24.5 million over 5 years to upgrade a number of Sunwater’s regional recreational areas;
- \$27.8 million to subsidise water delivery to Cloncurry Shire Council via the North West Queensland Pipeline to provide an affordable and safe water supply to Cloncurry;
- \$9.3 million toward the Rural Water Futures Program to transform how we deliver sustainable water management and ensure Queensland is a digitally enabled, modern and responsive manager of its valuable water resources; and
- continuation of the irrigation water price subsidy for Sunwater and Seqwater customers.

A number of significant investments will also be made in 2022–23 through our state owned water businesses. This includes more than \$250 million in capital expenditure on projects like:

- planning and early works to return Paradise Dam to its original height;
- the Burdekin Falls Dam Improvement Project;
- the Burdekin Falls Dam feasibility investigation into raising the dam wall;
- the South West Pipeline;
- the Mount Crosby Flood Resilience Program; and
- important investments in local water supply infrastructure through both Gladstone Area Water Board and Mount Isa Water Board.

All these projects deliver jobs, economic growth, water security and greater opportunities for Queensland communities.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2022 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 19

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to ethanol manufacturing –

Will the Minister please outline how much ethanol has been produced in Queensland annually over the last 10 years and what efforts he has made and plans to make to stimulate development of this industry?

ANSWER:

Ethanol is an important chemical for many industrial processes and applications and as a renewable biofuel to assist in the state's transition to net zero emissions.

The Queensland Government is committed to the production of this important chemical in Queensland and is supporting the ongoing production of ethanol in this state through the Biofutures 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan 2016 and the *Liquid Fuel Supply Act 1984*, which requires fuel sellers to sell minimum amounts of sustainable biobased fuel, such as E10.

As the *Liquid Fuel Supply Act 1984* falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement, this question should be referred to Minister de Brenni for a response.

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2022 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 20

THE STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER –

QUESTION:

With reference to the upcoming Flinders River water release, which is being awarded through a tender process that is ultimately based on price –

Will the Minister please explain to young, emerging producers how they can hope to achieve equitable access to water so develop their irrigated cropping businesses?

ANSWER:

Existing water licences in the Flinders River catchment total 220,000 megalitres of which more than 80 per cent was released under previous sale processes targeting new agricultural development.

In addition to the current release, people wanting access to new volumes of water can seek temporary or long-term water supplies from the water market established under the Gulf Resource Operations Plan.

I am advised by the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (the department) that the current release process uses a market based tender mechanism with a confidential reserve price that protects the value of existing water licences and businesses, so the market will continue to determine the price it is able to pay for water in this region.

Use of a market-based mechanism is consistent with the principles agreed to by all jurisdictions under the National Water Reform (2004) and consistent with previous releases in other areas of Queensland and the Flinders.

To ensure proponents for agricultural projects can compete fairly in this process, a decision was also made to exclude resource projects from the current sale. Within this catchment there is a general reserve (to which the current process applies) and a strategic reserve. This is a further way the department provides fair access to water for agricultural projects and mining projects.

An open and transparent tender process is presently underway, and that is the best way to ensure access to this water is equitable. The current release of 110,000 megalitres also means that some water will remain in reserve for future water needs.

It is also important to note that the water release process, and decisions in relation to it, are made by a departmental decision maker, and not by the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water.