



# ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B - 2003

## REPORT TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

### INTRODUCTION

On 6 June 2003 the Legislative Assembly referred proposed expenditures contained in the Appropriation Bill 2003 to estimates committees for examination and report. Organisational units within the portfolios of the following ministers were allocated to Estimates Committee B —

- Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
- Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland
- Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province.

The committee has considered the proposed expenditure using the various budget documents and written and verbal evidence from the relevant ministers and public officials. The Additional Information folder tabled with the report includes answers to questions asked on notice before the hearing, answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing, a document tabled at the hearing and minutes of committee meetings.

### EXAMINATION OF THE PROPOSED EXPENDITURE

#### Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

##### *Appropriation Summary*

Within the portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice the Appropriation Bill 2003 proposes the following budgets for 2003-2004—

- Department of Justice and Attorney-General \$289 952 000
- Electoral Commission of Queensland \$19 363 000

*Issues raised by committee members at the hearing include:*

- the recent conviction of the Chief Magistrate, Ms D Fingleton
- the process of judicial appointments

- entitlements of holders of judicial office
- applications for the advertised position of Chief Magistrate
- details of leave currently being undertaken by magistrates, transfers and relocations of magistrates and the role of the Chief Magistrate
- reforms to the legal profession and how they will be funded
- progress of trials of the Drug Court in south-east Queensland and north Queensland
- diversion program in the Brisbane Magistrates and Childrens courts
- appointment of the state coroner and reform of the coronial system
- court facilities, improvements to protect vulnerable witnesses
- grief counselling services within the Office of the State Coroner and with reference to the drug courts
- operation of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions : revitalisation program; Criminal Assets Confiscation Unit
- operations of the Electoral Commission
- court facilities at Caloundra, Hervey Bay, Mackay, Richlands, the western districts of Brisbane and Cooktown
- capital works projects to improve facilities for juries
- Public Trust Office: Statement of financial performance; the Panopera Report; investment strategy and matters raised by the Auditor-General; programs to provide increased levels of support for people with disabilities
- participation of indigenous people in the administration of justice
- Legal Aid Queensland: delivery of services; roll-out of telephone legal advice service; legal advice clinics in regional areas
- use of e-technology in courts
- timeliness of the operation of Queensland's higher courts, comparisons to other

jurisdictions and how the higher courts deal with matters in regional areas

- Alternative Dispute Resolution Branch of the Department of Justice

### **Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland**

#### *Appropriation Summary*

Within the portfolio of the Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland the Appropriation Bill 2003 proposes the following budget for 2003-2004 —

- Department of Emergency Services \$345 654 000

*Issues raised by committee members at the hearing include:*

- Community Ambulance Cover
- Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS): revenue raised by the ambulance levy; capital works budget; budget for vehicle replacement and new vehicles; the voluntary subscription scheme; free ambulance services for pensioners, Seniors Card holders and veteran Gold Card holders; demand for services; interhealth facility transfers; technology used in the computer aided dispatch system; community satisfaction with services provided; training of officers; roster reform; overtime budget; audit of drug stocks; local ambulance committees
- new building legislation which covers budget accommodation
- national aerial fire fighting strategy
- Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS): funding for vehicles; training of officers; hot fire training facility at the Port of Brisbane; charging for call-outs; fire safety inspections; false alarms
- Rural Fire Service: government funding; monies raised by the fire levy; Veteran Vehicle Replacement Program
- State Emergency Service personnel training survey and funding for training
- co-location of QAS and QFRS communication centres
- Department of Emergency Services (DES): scope and quality of work undertaken by volunteers in assisting DES; Community Engagement Unit; community safety and prevention initiatives; preparedness for a terrorist incident; initiatives which target Cape York communities

- State Planning Policy regarding natural disasters
- charges for counter disaster and rescue services
- Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre
- emergency services funding for facilities in the Mackay-Whitsunday region
- Queensland Rescue and community helicopter rescue services
- Samford Valley First Responder group
- business excellence awards received by QAS, QFRS and the Counter Disaster and Rescue Services division of DES
- employees on WorkCover and stress related leave within DES

### **Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province.**

#### *Appropriation Summary*

Within the portfolio of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province the Appropriation Bill 2003 proposes the following budgets for 2003-2004—

- Department of Police \$1 016 949 000
- Department of Corrective Services \$410 473 000

*Issues raised by committee members at the hearing include:*

#### *Department of Police:*

- arrests in Queensland nightclubs for possession of illegal drugs and police raids on nightclubs
- State Drug Investigative Group
- budget for plant and equipment
- Oxley Police Academy
- capital upgrade program at the North Queensland Police Academy
- investigation of illegal activities within motorcycle gangs
- the government's new civil confiscation regime
- road safety initiative into illegal drug use and long-haul truck drivers
- operation of new antihooning laws
- Homicide Investigation Group's cold case records and initiatives to investigate older unsolved crimes
- clandestine laboratory sites
- investigation of allegations of abuse of children by foster carers
- police numbers
- police beats and police stations

- police liaison officers
- school based police
- overtime budget within the Gold Coast police district
- speed camera program
- Queensland crime rates and comparison with other jurisdictions
- capital works program

*Department of Corrective Services:*

- searches of correctional centres for mobile phones
- Maryborough prison
- staffing in the Department of Corrective Services
- Director-General (Ms Helen Ringrose)
- perimeter security at corrective facilities: use of armoured vehicles; joint working party
- abscond rate from community custody centres
- escape rate from Queensland correctional centres
- changes to the sex offender programs and the cost of the programs
- community supervision, practices in other countries
- Corrective Services Act, recent amendments and the WORC program
- integrated Offender Management System
- performance bonus for the Director-General or Acting Director-General
- budget for prison support programs
- internal audits within the Department of Corrective Services
- deaths in custody and results of coronial inquests
- cost of supervision services per offender per day and the quality of the service
- Queensland's rate of offenders returning to custody within two years
- urinalysis program

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The committee thanks the ministers and departmental officers for their cooperation during the estimates process. The committee also acknowledges the support and assistance of the committee's secretariat and those other officers of the Parliamentary Service who contributed to the conduct of the estimates process.

Mr Geoff Wilson MP

Chair

August 2003

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr Geoff Wilson MP (Chair)

Mr Ted Malone MP (Deputy Chair)

Mr Lex Bell MP

Mr Bill Flynn MP

Mr Ronan Lee MP

Mrs Desley Scott MP

Mr Kerry Shine MP

### SECRETARIAT

Mr Andrew Timperley (Research Director)

Ms Tamara Vitale (Executive Assistant)

**The transcript of the hearing held on 16 July 2003 is available on the internet via the Hansard site at**

**[www.parliament.qld.gov.au](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au)**

## RECOMMENDATION

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as outlined in the Appropriation Bill 2003 for the organisational units in the portfolios referred to it, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.