



## ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D - 2003

### REPORT

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The sessional orders adopted by the Legislative Assembly on 30 April 2003 established seven estimates committees to consider proposed expenditure under the *Appropriation Bill 2003* and the *Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2003*. Each committee was given the responsibility for scrutinising the estimates for particular ministerial portfolios.

The Legislative Assembly appointed Estimates Committee D to examine and report on the proposed expenditure for the organisational units within the portfolios of the:

- Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy; and
- Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads.

The committee conducted a public hearing on Friday 18 July 2003 to take evidence from these ministers and their respective officers.

For the purposes of examining the proposed expenditure for the organisational units allocated to it, the committee considered information obtained at the public hearing in conjunction with:

- Budget Papers and Ministerial Portfolio Statements (MPS);

- Ministers' written responses to the committee's questions on notice prior to the public hearing;
- Written responses provided by the ministers to questions taken on notice at the public hearing; and
- Additional information provided to the committee by the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Main Roads.

During the inquiry the committee examined a wide range of issues, that are listed in this report. For details on these issues the committee directs readers to:

- the volume of 'additional information' (tabled in the House) that contains the committee's questions on notice, the committee's questions taken on notice at the hearing, the Ministers' answers, additional information provided by the minister and minutes of the committee's meetings; and
- the transcript of the committee's public hearing, which is available on the Hansard web-page at:

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au>

## 2. TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS

The Transport and Main Roads portfolio comprises the Department of Transport (Queensland Transport), the Department of Main Roads and government-owned corporations (GOCs), statutory authorities and other units that report to the minister through these departments.

The estimated total operating budget of this portfolio is over \$3.51 billion. The appropriations provided to these departments by the Queensland Government in the *Appropriation Bill 2003* total over \$3.305 billion – over \$1.273 billion to Queensland Transport and over \$2.032 billion to the Department of Main Roads. Additional sources of revenue include user charges, commonwealth revenue and other revenue.

### 2.1 Department of Transport

Queensland Transport is the principal organisation responsible for improving and overseeing land, air and sea transport environments in Queensland.

Queensland Transport's role includes: policy and planning, managing access and use of the transport system and delivering co-ordinated and integrated transport-related services and infrastructure.

Queensland Transport's projected outputs for 2003-2004 are as follows:

Output	Total Cost \$'000
Rail, Ports and Aviation Systems	427,797
Integrated Transport Planning	32,642
Road Use Management	203,827
Maritime Services	84,087
Public Transport Services	661,478
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,409,831</b>

Source: *State Budget 2003-2004 MPS – Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads p.1-8.*

### 2.1.1 Budget highlights

The MPS lists the following budget highlights for 2003-2004:

- Establishment of TransLink to introduce a more co-ordinated and integrated public transport system within south-east Queensland;
- Investing in key infrastructure to develop the public transport network;
- Evaluation of strategic opportunities presented by a new Queensland driver licence; and
- Implementing the Road Safety Initiatives Package.

### 2.1.2 Issues considered by the committee

The committee considered a range of issues raised in the hearing, answers provided by the Minister to Questions on notice and Questions taken on notice. These included:

- Black box recorder safety technology;
- Bookings by pensioners, concession card holders and Queensland Rail employees travelling on concessions for the Cairns tilt train;
- Need for additional electric suburban rolling stock;
- Caboolture - Maroochydore Corridor Study (CAMCOS);
- Disability access for Queensland Rail's Citytrain service;
- Facilitation of safe public transport services;
- Port of Brisbane Corporation's redevelopment and relocation of the Hamilton port precinct;
- Queensland Rail's contracts for capital works with Queensland, Australian and overseas based companies;
- Cairns Port Authority City Port project;
- Queensland Rail's investment in coal infrastructure and rolling stock;

- Queensland Rail services to Western Queensland;
- Freight and passenger services in the South Burnett district;
- Transport Triangle Investment Club;
- Cairns tilt train;
- Improvements to the Citytrain passenger rail network;
- Cairns airport infrastructure;
- Townsville railway station development;
- Co-ordinated and integrated public transport system in south east Queensland;
- Inner Northern Busway;
- Queensland Transport road safety programs and the road toll;
- Nelly Bay ferry terminal;
- Late vehicle registration fee;
- Concessional registration scheme;
- Changing transport needs in south east Queensland;
- Maritime automatic identification system;
- Transfer of responsibility for pollution response within ports from port authorities to Maritime Safety Queensland;
- Stricter controls on personal watercraft;
- Capalaba bus station;
- School bus upgrade system;
- School transport;
- Motorised scooters;
- Public transport services in rural and remote communities;
- Mooloolaba boat harbour;
- Recreational boating infrastructure;
- School crossing supervisors; and
- Written-off vehicle register.

## 2.2 Department of Main Roads

The Department of Main Roads manages state-controlled roads, the corridors involved in this structure and the operation and provision of projects for the improvement and preservation of this system.

The Queensland Department of Main Roads' projected outputs for 2003-2004 are as follows:

Output	Total Cost \$'000
Road System Planning and Management	1,690,337
Road Corridor Planning and Management	14,709
Road Project Works (Rehabilitation)	22,659
Road Operation	20,783
Road Project Maintenance	230,238
Road System Access Funding	39,190
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,017,916</b>

Source: *State Budget 2003-2004 MPS – Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads p.2-11.*

### 2.2.1 Budget highlights

Budget highlights, listed within the MPS, for 2003-2004 include:

- \$240 million from the Commonwealth and state governments for the Tugan Bypass;
- \$53 million from the Commonwealth and state governments for the Douglas Arteria;
- \$46 million for the duplication of the Commonwealth funded Gatton Bypass;
- \$44 million for the duplication of the Mt Lindesay Highway;
- Widening and sealing sections of the Flinders Highway;
- Continuation of sealing of Hervey's Range Developmental Road;

- \$10 million for the construction of the South Johnstone bridge and approaches on the Innisfail-Japoon Road; and
- \$6.4 million for intersection improvements on Mackay- Bucasia road.

### 2.2.2 Issues considered by the committee

The committee considered a range of specific issues throughout the inquiry. These included:

- Accountability and transparency of internal audits;
- Purchase and disposal of properties;
- Expenditure incurred on seminars and conferences;
- Construction of the Tugun Bypass;
- Capital works planned in association with AMC;
- Whole-of-government public-private partnership involving large infrastructure projects;
- Shared services initiative approach to corporate services delivery;
- Safety guidelines for advertising on main roads;
- Funding for road works throughout Queensland;
- Overtaking lanes on the Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road;
- Main Roads – local government alliance;
- Gatton Bypass;
- Improvement of safety and traffic flow on the Gold Coast Highway through Burleigh Heads;
- Hope Island Road (Oxley Drive);
- Sunshine Motorway planning study;
- Queensland Motorways Limited;
- Roadside advertising fees;
- Roads connecting Queenslanders;
- Revenue budget;
- Second Toowoomba range crossing;

- Traffic controllers;
- Ipswich Motorway;
- Main Roads rest areas and the interests of commercial providers of caravan parks and camping facilities;
- Level of roads expenditure in south-east Queensland versus the rest of Queensland;
- Gladstone port access road;
- Bruce Highway upgrade between the Gateway Motorway and Caboolture;
- Federal government consultation with the states regarding proposed changes under its Auslink proposal;
- Roads Implementation Program;
- Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme;
- Maroochydore Road;
- Brisbane Urban Corridor; and
- Pacific Paradise road network.

### 3. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Queensland Health delivers an extensive range of health services through a network of 182 public hospitals and outpatient centres, 21 residential aged care facilities, and approximately 490 primary and community health care facilities. The Department also ensures access to other appropriate health services through collaboration and development of cooperative partnerships with general practitioners and non-Government service providers.

The Department of Health estimates it will have a total operating budget in 2003-2004 of over \$4.63 billion. The total appropriation provided in the *Appropriation Bill 2003* is over \$2.66 billion. The remaining sources of revenue are user charges, commonwealth revenue and other revenue.

The MPS provides the following output summary.

<b>Output</b>	<b>Total Cost \$'000</b>
Treatment and Management – Acute Inpatient Services	2,347,988
Treatment and Management – Non-Inpatient Services	1,100,296
Integrated Mental Health Services	418,704
Health Maintenance Services	523,121
Public Health Services	241,002
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,631,111</b>

Source: *State Budget 2003-2004 MPS – Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women’s Policy p.1-9.*

### 3.1 Budget highlights

Queensland Health is committing an additional \$1 billion in total expenditure over the next four years. This includes \$300 million in the 2003-2004 financial year for the following four priority areas<sup>1</sup>:

- Investment in quality services to improve the quality, safety and delivery efficiency of health care services;
- Investment in healthy communities to support individuals in the community and recognise the role of non-government partners;
- Investment in world class infrastructure to deliver a world class health service; and
- Investment in people to attract, retain and develop a dynamic health care workforce.

### 3.2 Issues considered by the committee

During the course of its inquiry the committee examined a range of issues including:

- Additional staff and funding for Queensland emergency departments;

- Number of emergency patients seen within clinically accepted timeframes;
- Royal Brisbane and Royal Womens Hospitals burns units;
- Recruitment and retention of radiation therapists;
- Expenditure on cancer services;
- Impact of new enterprise bargaining agreements on service delivery;
- Waiting times for elective surgery;
- Promotion of healthy weight nutrition and physical activity in children;
- State hospital budgets;
- Shared services initiative;
- Funding for staff wage increases;
- John Tonge centre;
- National shortage of dentists;
- Investment in rehabilitation services;
- Intensive care units funding;
- Refurbishment of the Gold Coast Hospital Mental Health Unit;
- Commonwealth offer on the Australian health care agreement;
- Dental waiting lists in the South Burnett region;
- Use of helicopters for providing emergency transportation;
- Home and Community Care (HACC) funding in rural and remote areas;
- Rural mental health;
- Total growth funding and total new initiative funding;
- Effect of the new Medicare arrangements on Queensland public hospitals;
- Accreditation of facilities;
- Quality improvement and enhancement program;
- Measures of Queensland Health service delivery;

<sup>1</sup> Refer to State Budget 2003-2004 MPS – Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women’s Policy p 1-4 – 1-5 for more specific budget highlights.

- Expenditure on oral health services and the number of dental treatments;
- Key diagnostic tests for bowel cancer;
- Surgery on time program;
- Reducing smoking by young people and women;
- Queensland Health skills centre;
- Safety of health care services;
- Safe management of blood and blood products;
- Health of indigenous people;
- Payment of the ambulance levy by health facilities;
- Provision of obstetric and midwifery services in rural and regional Queensland;
- Funding for hospital and health facility upgrades;
- Support for overseas trained doctors;
- Measurement of mental health episodes of care;
- Access to mental health services;
- Programs dealing with illicit drug use;
- Mental health funding;
- Medical Aid Subsidy Scheme;
- Effect of an aging population on the delivery of health care;
- Provision of renal services in North Queensland;
- Quarantining of palliative care dollars in Queensland;
- Number of employees within corporate office paid under the Public Service Award and the number of employees paid under the District Health Services Award (state);
- Number of dedicated alcohol and drug service clinical workers; and
- Meals on Wheels.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditures, as stated in the *Appropriation Bill 2003* for the organisational units within the portfolios referred to Estimates Committee D for examination, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

#### **5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The committee thanks Ministers and their staff for their cooperation and assistance during the estimates process.

Additionally, the committee acknowledges the assistance of the committee's secretariat and other officers and employees of the Parliamentary Service who contributed to the organisation of the estimates process.

Mr McNamara MP  
Chair

18 August 2003

#### **MEMBERS**

- Mr Andrew McNamara MP (Chair)
- Mr Vaughan Johnson MP (Deputy Chair)
- Ms Bonny Barry MP
- Mrs Peta-Kaye Croft MP
- Miss Fiona Simpson MP
- Mrs Christine Smith MP
- Mrs Dolly Pratt MP

#### **STAFF<sup>2</sup>**

- Ms Lyndel Bates, Research Director
- Ms Carolyn Heffernan, Executive Assistant

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<sup>2</sup> The committee also wishes to thank the previous Research Director, Ms Anita Sweet, for her advice and assistance to the committee.

**Estimates D  
Dissenting Report**

**Transport and Main Roads**

**Vaughan Johnson MP  
Shadow Minister for Transport and Main Roads**

Mr Chairman,

Once again this year I find myself in the regrettable position of being compelled to lodge a dissenting report in relation to the Report of Estimates Committee D in relation to the examination of the expenditure of Queensland Transport and the Department of Main Roads and associated entities.

Again, as I stated last year, it is not my usual practice to submit a dissenting report as I am of the belief that the Government should be supported in legitimate expenditure towards the achievement of its policy goals. The operative word here is 'legitimate' expenditure.

I do not support the expenditure of taxpayers' money in a manner, which is not compliant with relevant financial and legislative standards and accountable and transparent Government. I had hoped my comments last year would have motivated the Minister to improve the operations of Queensland Transport and the Department of Main Roads in this regard. Unfortunately, in respect of the instances I have detailed below, my comments appear to have had the opposite effect.

I have detailed my concerns under separate headings listed below.

**Queensland Motorways Ltd (QML).**

I was disappointed at the Minister's criticism of me during the Committee Hearing for asking detailed questions in relation to QML, a wholly owned company of the Department of Main Roads.

In the first instance, I point out that I am under no obligation to advise the Minister as to what I will ask questions about. But, I would like it noted that as a matter of courtesy, I arranged for the Committee Secretariat to be notified that a representative of QML should be present at the hearing. You will note from the transcripts of the hearing that the Minister admitted he knew an hour before the hearing commenced that I had made such a request. You will also be aware that my questions in relation to QML were not asked till the second block of non-Government questions.

This should have provided ample time for a representative of QML, who are located within a short drive of Parliament House, to have been present at short notice. Obviously the choice for this not to happen was one for which the Minister is accountable and I find his personal criticism of me in relation to this matter to be not only factually incorrect, but also unwarranted.

The Minister subsequently took my questions in relation to QML on notice and answers have now been provided to the Committee.

As the Opposition has now referred this issue to the Crime and Misconduct Commission, I do not propose to canvass the adequacy of the Minister's answers in this report. However, I note that in many aspects they are evasive and warrant further investigation.

I am disappointed that the Minister's unwillingness to be accountable to this Committee of the Parliament in relation to these issues concerning QML has required a referral to the CMC.

### **Internal Audits:**

In a similar vein, the Opposition asked specific questions in relation to internal audits, which had been carried out by Queensland Transport and the Department of Main Roads.

Despite a request, which I made at the Committee Hearing, I have been subsequently advised that on the basis of legal advice, the Minister has reported to the Committee that he is not obliged to produce the reports requested.

Whilst the Minister may be able to claim he is not legally required to provide these reports, surely if the Estimates Committee process is to be an appropriate mechanism for the scrutiny of Government the provision of such reports to the Committee would be an appropriate demonstration of an open and accountable Government.

Consequently, I have now made two separate Freedom of Information (FOI) applications seeking access to documents in relation to these internal audit reports for which the Opposition will have to pay the necessary time-based charges, which the Beattie Government has imposed on those who seek to make it accountable.

I look forward to receiving a prohibitive invoice in respect of these FOI charges and an imaginative application of the Freedom of Information Act's exemption provisions protecting these documents from disclosure. I expect Queensland Transport and the Department of Main Roads will soon be hiring extra trolleys to ensure the relevant documents are put before Cabinet in the not too distant future.

### **Seminar, conference and workshop costs:**

The Minister's response to non-Government Question on Notice No. 7 constitutes another example of his unwillingness to embrace the spirit of open and accountable Government during this year's Estimates Hearing process.

Specifically, the question requested:

“What was the purpose, venue, duration and cost of each seminar, conference and workshop conducted for staff of the Departments in your portfolio, broken down as follows: venue, costs, meal costs, beverage costs, cost of presentation staff and any other major costs? What budgetary allocation has been made for similar activities in 2003/04?”

Disappointingly, the Minister's response stated that:

“Queensland Transport’s and Main Road’s financial systems are not configured in a manner that allows reporting on the basis sought. In order to provide a complete and detailed response, information would need to be gathered from each department’s organisational areas across the state including reference to source documentation. This task could not be completed within the time frame without diversion of staff resources.”

Consequently, the Minister relied on Sessional Order 26(6) in refusing to answer the question on the basis that it would place an “unreasonable research requirement(s)” on his portfolios.

Curiously, the Minister made no such arguments in providing a detailed response to my Question on Notice No. 1632 on 7 November 2002, in relation to similar expenditure for training programmes, including duration, number of participants, venue costs, meal costs, beverage costs and other major costs including costs in relation to presentations and consultants for RoadTek, the road building division of the Department of Main Roads.

I am certain the embarrassment suffered by the Minister in my subsequent exposure of RoadTek’s largesse which was reported in The Courier-Mail on 16 December last year has had a considerable influence on the Minister’s reluctance to provide responsive answers on this occasion.

In view of the issues raised, I regret to inform the Committee that the Opposition must dissent from any report endorsing the Beattie Government’s proposed expenditure for Queensland Transport and the Department of Main Roads and associated entities.

Yours faithfully

[Original Signed]

Hon Vaughan Johnson MP  
Member for Gregory  
Shadow Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Statement of Reservation  
by  
Fiona Simpson MP  
Shadow Minister for Health and Women's Policy  
and Member for Maroochydore

Estimates Committee D – Health

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Emergency Departments

One of the most telling failures of the 2003/2004 Health Budget is the lack of funding for any extra emergency department staff throughout the whole of Queensland.

This is despite continuing blow-outs in waiting times for patients in Emergency Departments and major hospitals going into bypass. Queensland Health will receive an extra \$2.2 million which will not meet current demand, let alone the increase through population growth. The existing demand means 30 per cent of emergency patients aren't seen within 10 minutes and nearly half of urgent patients aren't seen within 30 minutes.

In stark contrast with the Queensland Health Budget, New South Wales will target this critical area by spending 14 times the Queensland allocation for new staff in its State emergency departments.

Dental

Despite the Beattie Labor Government's claims of spending 8 per cent more on dental health and boosting staff numbers, there were 51,000 fewer adults and children treated in the last year.

This is a massive failure to meet the oral health needs of Queenslanders. The fact that it cost more to achieve substantially less could not be satisfactorily explained by Health Minister Edmond during the Estimates Hearing.

Qld Oral Health Budget

	Adult	Children	Total
1998/99	\$55m	\$29m	\$84m
1999/2000	\$62m	\$30m	\$92m
2000/01	\$67m	\$35.5m	102.5m
2001/2002	\$74m	\$37m	\$111m
2002/2003			\$120m*

(Source QON 1020 20/8/02) (\*source for 2002/2003, Estimates QON No.9 Non Govt):

## Dental Treatments

	General	Emergency	Children	Total
00-01	130,000	238,000	360,000	728,000
01-02	130,000	250,000	341,000	721,000
02-03	115,000	235,000	320,000	670,000
03-04 aim	117,000	240,000	310,000	667,000

## Unfunded wage rises

The State Treasurer and Health Minister made clearly contradictory comments to their respective Estimates Hearings this year in regard to the latest wage rises for Health.

Treasurer Mackenroth said (July 15, 2003): "Under their enterprise bargaining agreements government departments have been funded for three per cent of their enterprise bargaining agreements. Of 3.5 per cent they have been funded for three per cent. In relation to the extra half a per cent for Police, Education and Health, it is then up to those departments to come back to the budget review committee to put forward a submission for any further funding that they require to meet those costs."

The Health Minister maintained that the wage rises for her department were fully funded yet this was not what the Treasurer said, particularly in regard to the first year of the agreement.

The State National-Liberal Opposition is concerned that this unfunded wage rise for hard-working Health staff will result in the Department having to find unspecified savings of millions of dollars to make up the shortfall which will result in staff reductions or program closure.

## Shared Service Initiative

The Health Minister refused to answer questions in regard to the Shared Service initiative by repeatedly deferring to the Treasurer saying it was his project.

Astoundingly, she admitted she did not know how much the Health Department was expected to save at Treasury's command despite the initiative beginning from July 1 2003.

The State National-Liberal Opposition is concerned by reports that savings required of the Health Budget could be as much as \$30 million. However this could not be confirmed by the Health Minister as she said she "had not been given any figure" by Treasury. This is quite extraordinary considering the Director General of Health is a member of the CEO Governance Committee who has been charged by Cabinet to be the Steering Committee for the implementation of the Shared Services Initiative. Either the Health Minister has not been informed by her Director General, or she chose to avoid in depth questioning on the subject, which resulted in the Committee being left with the outcome that the Health Minister deferred budgetary responsibility to another department, thereby allowing that department to slash costs and potentially jobs in the Health Portfolio. As a consequence the Health Minister has walked away from her executive responsibilities.

## Internal Debt

The Health Minister was asked about reported debts of \$19 million at Royal Brisbane Hospital, \$15 million at Townsville Hospital and \$7 million at Cairns Base Hospital. Specifically she was asked to answer how much of the budget initiatives would only pay off last year's debts and not deliver any extra services.

The Health Minister replied that hospitals were expected to be efficient and usually made up those debt levels during the year.

However, the State Opposition questions the ability of these and other hospitals to meet patients' needs when the financial focus is on managing significant debt rather than planning and meeting growth.

### Cancer Services

The State National-Liberal Opposition has publicly expressed its concern about the breakdown in timely access to radiation therapy for cancer patients and the impact that this has on their chances of survival. The Opposition also has concerns about the lack of timely access to key diagnostic tests for people suffering bowel cancer. This matter was raised this during the Estimates Hearing. While the Minister mentioned the Federal pilot in Mackay providing pre-screening, from her reply there does not seem to be a plan from Queensland Health to address what is still a critical backlog for patients needing access to colonoscopies within the public system.

[Original Signed]

Fiona Simpson MP  
Shadow Minister for Health and Women's Policy  
and Member for Maroochydore