



# Estimates Committee F

## 2007

### Report to the Legislative Assembly

#### INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Standing Order 167(3), the Legislative Assembly, by Order made on 23 May 2007, referred to Estimates Committee F for investigation and report certain proposed expenditures contained in the *Appropriation Bill 2007*. Organisational units within the portfolios of the following Ministers were allocated to Estimates Committee F:

- Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women;
- Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism; and
- Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland.

The committee held a public hearing on Wednesday, 18 July 2007. A transcript of the committee's hearing is on the Internet at: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Hansard/>

Prior to the public hearing, the committee put 20 questions on notice to each Minister. Responses to all the questions were received.

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

- the budget papers;
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice;
- oral evidence taken at the hearing;
- documents tabled at the hearing; and
- answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing.

Answers to questions on notice and questions taken on notice at the hearing, together with minutes of the committee's meetings, are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.

#### MINISTER FOR TOURISM, FAIR TRADING, WINE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN

The Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development provides a contemporary regulatory framework in the areas of fair trading, consumer affairs and the responsible supply of liquor. The Department encourages the responsible and sustainable expansion of the tourism and wine industries and provides fair access to dispute resolution services and is responsible for the Government's policies and strategies on issues relating to women.

The following table sets out details of the proposed appropriation for 2007-08 compared to the previous financial year.

	2006-07 \$'000	2007-08 \$'000
Departmental Outputs	45,114	65,464
Equity Adjustment	(68)	738
Administered Items	47,074	49,788
<b>Vote Total</b>	<b>92,120</b>	<b>115,990</b>

*Source: Queensland State Budget 2007-08 MPS – Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women, p. 1-7*

The Department's projected outputs for 2007-08 are as follows:

	Total cost 2007-08 \$'000
<b>Departmental outputs</b>	
Fair Trading Services	41,210
Liquor Industry Services	13,857
Dispute Resolution Services	8,136
Policy Coordination and Services for Queensland Women	4,789
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,992</b>

*Source: Queensland State Budget 2007-08 MPS – Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women, p. 1-8*

Key funding initiatives in 2007-08, include:

- Ongoing funding of \$48 million, which commenced in 2006-07, to implement the Queensland Tourism Strategy;
- Ongoing funding of \$4.1 million to Queensland's 14 Regional Tourist Organisations (RTOs), and a further \$1.9 million for the six RTOs with convention bureaux;
- Appointment of 10 Destination Management Officers to enhance the partnership between industry organizations and government agencies;
- The Office of Fair Trading will continue to promote fair trading in the marketplace to build consumer and business confidence and economic growth in Queensland;
- Funding of \$6.6 million over four years to provide for the development of increased protection in relation to the security industry;
- \$2 million a year to enhance service delivery across the State through Smart Service Queensland;
- The Liquor Licensing Division will continue to focus on harm minimization through a number of state-wide and community-based initiatives to promote the responsible service and consumption of alcohol;
- Support for the State's maturing wine industry will continue with additional funding of \$500,000; and
- \$1.6 million over four years to implement the *Women in Hard Hats* initiative.

The committee considered a range of issues including:

- Departmental staffing in Queensland Tourism;
- The Queensland Tourism Strategy;
- Key performance indicators in the licensing agreement of Sunlover Holidays to Australian Outback Travel;
- 'Where Else But Queensland' marketing campaign;
- Queensland's Aviation Strategy;
- Promotion of a sustainable tourism industry;
- Appointment of a Queensland Tourism Marketing Manager in Mumbai;
- Regional Tourism Investment and Infrastructure Plans;
- Funding for the RTOs;
- International Study Tourism Plan;
- Queensland Drive Tourism program;
- Benefits to Queensland with the hosting of the 2007 Australian Tourism Exchange;
- Investment in tourism infrastructure in regional Queensland;
- Queensland Traveltrain subsidy program;
- Initiatives to help sustain and grow the Japanese tourist market in Queensland;
- Co-operative investment funding by industry for marketing campaigns;
- Cape York and Torres Strait Tourism Development Action Plan;
- Delivery of the Wine Industry Development Strategy action items;
- Staffing levels in the Wine Industry Development Division;
- Out of court settlements negotiated by the Department and its agencies;
- Investigations and penalties for breaches of fair trading legislation;
- Targeted compliance monitoring program;
- Review of the *Manufactured Home (Residential Parks) Act 2003*;
- Amendments to the *Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997*;
- Review of the *Security Providers Act 1993*;
- Targeting rogue traders in the inbound tourism industry;
- 'Fair Go Strategy';
- Queensland Consumer Protection Awards;
- Complaints received by the Liquor Licence Division;
- Liquor Licensing Flying Squad;
- Harm minimisation initiatives;

- Initiatives to reduce alcohol-related harm in Indigenous communities;
- Health and welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women;
- Smart Women – Smart State strategy; and
- Women’s Infolink Service.

## MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND MULTICULTURALISM

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is committed to protecting Queensland’s natural and cultural heritage; promoting sustainable use of Queensland’s natural capital; ensuring a clean environment; and incorporates the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS); and Multicultural Affairs Queensland.

The following table sets out details of the proposed appropriation for 2007-08 compared to the previous financial year.

	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
	<b>\$’000</b>	<b>\$’000</b>
Departmental Outputs	258,406	290,395
Equity Adjustment	6,656	1,677
Administered Items	..	..
<b>Vote Total</b>	<b>265,062</b>	<b>292,072</b>

*Source: Queensland State Budget 2007-08 MPS – Environmental Protection Agency, p. 1-6*

The Department’s projected outputs for 2007-08 are as follows:

<b>Departmental outputs</b>	<b>Total cost</b>
	<b>2007-08</b>
	<b>\$’000</b>
Protecting our Natural and Cultural Heritage	169,465
Promoting Sustainable Use of Our Natural Capital	92,257
Ensuring a Clean Environment	63,536
Multicultural Affairs Queensland	6,981
<b>Total</b>	<b>332,239</b>

*Source: Queensland State Budget 2007-08 MPS – Environmental Protection Agency, p. 1-7*

Key funding initiatives in 2007-08, include:

- \$20 million over four years to improve the health of South East Queensland waterways;

- Additional funding of \$30 million until 2008-09 to negotiate the purchase of new land for the environment in Queensland;
- \$7 million for infrastructure maintenance on the Parks estate;
- A further \$6.5 million over four years in More Great Walks in Queensland with an additional four walks in the concept design stage (Whitsundays, Noosa/Cooloola, Carnarvon, and Conondale);
- \$5 million in grants to help restore buildings of heritage significance, including churches;
- Additional funding of \$5 million to commence an Enhanced Compliance Program for industries that are regulated by the EPA to focus on inspecting Level 1 (higher risk) Environmentally Relevant Activities;
- Funding of \$2 million each year from 2007-08 to continue fire, pest animal and weed management on the Parks estate;
- Additional funding of \$0.5 million in 2007-08 (supplementing existing funding of \$1 million) for Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning Plan review to assist with collecting data, conducting research and delivering communication activities; and
- Up to \$0.3 million each year to reimburse local governments for cleaning up orphan chemical pollution incidents where the polluter cannot be identified.

The committee considered a range of issues including:

- Grants and subsidies;
- Regulatory fees and charges;
- Environmental prosecutions and sanctions to deter environmental harm;
- Management of Queensland’s five recreation areas declared under the *Recreation Areas Management Act 1988*;
- Assistance to Queensland businesses through the Queensland Sustainable Energy Innovation Fund;
- Reducing the use of departmental six and eight-cylinder fleet vehicles;

- Land Acquisitions program;
- Remediation by EPA of state and local government-owned land adjacent to the Binary factory on the Narangba Industrial Estate site;
- Integrated Searches and Licensing project;
- Nature Refuge and NatureAssist program;
- Conservation status of the hairy-nosed wombat;
- Fire, pest animal and weed management on the Parks estate;
- Benefits to industry and the community with the additional funding for the compliance program for industries regulated by the EPA;
- Compliance Inspection programs;
- Commercial activity permits for activities on national and conservation parks and in state forests;
- EPA's air quality monitoring network;
- EPA's initiatives to reduce its own carbon footprint;
- More Great Walks in Queensland project;
- Management of motorcycle riding in parks and forests;
- Camping area visitation levels at Inskip Peninsula and Teewah Beach at Cooloola;
- Initiatives to provide adequate infrastructure in National Parks to accommodate camping area visitations levels;
- Revenue recorded by Access Queensland for managing campsites;
- Conservation of Queensland's cultural and historic heritage sites;
- Land Management for Expanded Estate program;
- Community involvement in the review of the Moreton Bay Marine Park Zoning Plan;
- Release of the draft Crocodile Conservation Plan for the management and use of crocodiles in Queensland for the next 10 years;
- EcoBiz rebate program;
- Monitoring of the water quality of South East Queensland waterways;

- Tweed River Entrance Sand Bypassing project;
- Provision of a predesign conferencing service to support and promote sustainable developments;
- Negotiation of Indigenous land use agreements over national parks and other state lands to ensure the cultural values of Queensland's biological and cultural diversity are protected;
- Assistance for owners of heritage listed properties through the Living Buildings and Places Heritage Grants program;
- Out of court settlements negotiated by the department and its agencies;
- Initiatives to nurture a more culturally inclusive community; and
- Multicultural Affairs Queensland's cross-cultural training programs.

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND MINISTER FOR ASSISTING THE PREMIER IN WESTERN QUEENSLAND**

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General is the lead agency for Queensland's criminal, civil and human rights justice services, and is the sole provider of services for births, deaths, and marriages registration, justices of the peace and penalties enforcement.

The following table sets out details of the proposed appropriation for 2007-08 compared to the previous financial year.

	<b>2006-07 \$'000</b>	<b>2007-08 \$'000</b>
Departmental Outputs	232,653	261,389
Equity Adjustment	56,808	73,794
Administered Items	128,481	145,940
<b>Vote Total</b>	<b>417,942</b>	<b>481,123</b>

*Source: Queensland State Budget 2007-08 MPS – Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p. 1-8*

The Department's projected outputs for 2007-08 are as follows:

	<b>Total cost 2007-08 \$'000</b>
<b>Departmental outputs</b>	
Justice Services	217,820
Law and Justice Reform	12,023
Legal and Government Services	72,566

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**Total**

**302,409**

*Source: Queensland State Budget 2007-08 MPS – Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p. 1-9*

Key funding initiatives in 2007-08, include:

- Allocation of \$11 million to progress the design of a new Supreme and District Courts complex in Brisbane. Funding has also been provided for the construction of courthouses in Ipswich, Pine Rivers, Mareeba and Sandgate;
- Implementing the recommendations of the review of the *Mental Health Act 2000* (the Butler Review);
- Allocation of \$3 million to fund initiatives including additional sittings of the Mental Health Court and provide additional resources for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to ensure victims are informed and involved in proceedings against offenders in the Mental Health Court and Mental Health Review Tribunal;
- Continuation of the Queensland Illicit Drugs Court Diversion Program and the Drug Court;
- \$1.4 million funding for the Murri Court;
- \$2.4 million over three years towards a pilot program to trial the use of judicial registrars to address the growing workload of Queensland magistrates; and
- Additional funding of \$12.5 million to Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ) and \$1.1 million to Community Legal Centres from the Legal Practitioners Interest on Trust Account Fund.

The committee considered a range of issues including:

- Departmental staffing levels;
- Criminal injury compensation process;
- Queensland Illicit Drugs Court Diversion Program and the Drug Court;
- Role of the Queensland Community Foundation in supporting charitable organisations and individuals in Queensland;
- Calculation of general damages under Section 62 of the *Civil Liability Act 2003*;
- Out of court settlements negotiated by the department and its agencies;

- The construction of courthouses in Ipswich, Pine Rivers, Mareeba and Sandgate;
- Integrated Justice Information Strategy initiative;
- Appointment of judicial officers to assist in the administration of justice in Queensland;
- Appointment of Justices of the Peace (Magistrates Court) in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- Recording of births in Queensland;
- Amendments to the *Statement Penalties Enforcement Act 1999* to assist in the recovery of unpaid fines;
- Services provided by the State Reporting Bureau;
- Independent review of decisions made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1992*;
- Office of the Information Commission's staff professional development program;
- Queensland Ombudsman's Good Decisions Training program;
- Civil confiscation activities carried out by the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC);
- How the CMC is investigating and combating paedophile activities;
- CMC's Crime Reference Committee;
- Contribution made by the CMC to prevent crime and misconduct in Queensland since its establishment 20 years ago as the Criminal Justice Commission;
- CMC's Witness Protection Unit;
- Outcomes of a stakeholders survey taken on the CMC's intelligence services;
- Joint intelligence and investigative initiatives at state and national levels to combat outlaw motorcycle gangs;
- Increase in LAQ's funding to reflect the demand for grants of aid for criminal law and child protection services;
- The provision of additional funding for LAQ and community legal centres to improve access to justice in Queensland;
- LAQ's Regional Solicitor program;

- Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland's (ADCQ) Rebranding project;
- ADCQ's provision of harassment free sport training for the Australian Sports Commission;
- ADCQ's state-wide complaint management system; and the proportion of complaints accepted by ADCQ about the introduction of the Queensland Prep year;
- Steps the Electoral Commission of Queensland has taken to encourage Queenslanders to register as voters and to keep their enrolment details current;
- Progress of the redistribution of the state electoral boundaries and the Brisbane City Council boundary redistribution; and
- Services delivered by the Public Trustee of Queensland to meet community service obligations.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the *Appropriation Bill 2007* for the organisational units and portfolios allocated to it, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

**Mrs Dianne Reilly, Chair**

August 2007

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Mrs Dianne Reilly MP (Chair)  
Member for Mudgeeraba

Mr Mark McArdle MP (Deputy Chair)  
Member for Caloundra

Hon Dean Wells MP  
Member for Murrumba

Mrs Rosemary Menkens MP  
Member for Burdekin

Mr Timothy Nicholls MP  
Member for Clayfield

Mrs Desley Scott MP  
Member for Woodridge

Mr Ronan Lee MP  
Member for Indooroopilly

#### **SECRETARIAT**

Ms Rachelle Stacey (Research Director)  
Ms Carolyn Heffernan (Executive Assistant)



# Estimates Committee F

2007

## Statement of Reservations

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**Mark McArdle MP**

Shadow Attorney-General and Minister for Justice  
and Shadow Minister for Fair Trading

**Rosemary Menkens MP**

Shadow Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism  
and Shadow Minister for Women

Ms D Reilly  
Chair  
Estimates Committee F

Dear Ms Reilly

We refer to the draft report for Estimates Committee F and submit a statement of reservations on the report and some general comments on the process of Estimates Committees hearings.

The Estimates Committee process this year again highlights the significant weaknesses in this process as a mechanism for proper scrutiny of the expenditures of Government Departments and agencies. In particular, we express the following general reservations in relation to the Estimates Committee Process:

Regarding the portfolios scrutinised by the Committee, the following reservations are raised:

- The entire structure of the whole Estimates Committee process does not allow detailed analysis of the expenditures provided for in the Queensland Budget.
- There is simply not enough time provided to enable proper and detailed consideration of individual Ministerial Program Statements given the number of programs and expenditure. An entire day per portfolio would still not provide sufficient time given the breadth of some portfolios.
- The limited number of Questions on Notice allowed to be asked on each Ministerial Portfolio Statement prevents the pursuit of important issues.
- Receiving responses to Questions on Notice less than 24 hours prior to the actual commencement of Committee hearings severely limits the capacity to further research the completeness and accuracy of answers provided.
- In addition to limited time provided for questions, the avoidance tactics of Ministers who reply to questions in such a way as to evade the issue being scrutinised was a consistent theme throughout the hearings. Despite numerous follow up questions, Ministers either avoided answering questions or simply read prepared briefing notes on subjects not related to the issues raised in the questions.
- The structured nature of the Committee proceedings into blocks of questions with set times from Government and Non-Government Members prevent Members being able to follow a line of questioning in a logical and consistent manner to finality.
- The inability of Estimates Committees to directly ask questions of Senior Public Service administrators.
- The pedantic nature of some Ministers in the interpretation of standing orders to avoid scrutiny of the portfolio they represent.
- The integrity of the Estimates Committee process is grossly compromised due to amendments made to the Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld) in June 2006, which abolished the crime of knowingly providing false evidence to the Legislative Assembly or a committee.

### **Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women**

Shadow Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Shadow Minister for Fair Trading, Mr Mark McArdle MP, notes the following:

- The Ministerial Portfolio Statement reports of the enlarged jurisdiction that the Tribunal will assume during this budgetary year.<sup>1</sup> This increased responsibility and workload has, however, not be supported by a commensurate increase in funding, but rather a marked decrease. Such raises serious questions about the ability of the body to “deal with matters in a way that is just, fair, informal, cost

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<sup>1</sup> Queensland State Budget 2007-08 – Ministerial Portfolio Statement: Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women, 2007, p.1-28.

effective and timely.”<sup>2</sup> Moreover, with Queensland’s increasing elderly population, and the growing emphasis placed on quick, low-cost dispute resolution, greater demands on the Tribunal’s services should be anticipated by the Minister, and adequately planned and provided for.

- The Minister’s refusal to answer questions requiring a comparison of the 2007-08 Ministerial Portfolio Statement with performance outputs or budgetary allocations from previous years<sup>3</sup> was a clear demonstration of the Minister’s unwillingness to submit to the Estimates process. The intent of the Estimates Committee hearing is to scrutinise the Minister regarding the expenditure and performance of the Departments and agencies within her portfolio responsibility. This cannot be done with any sufficiency or legitimacy if the Minister refuses to answer questions comparing current figures with those of preceding Budgets.
- The Minister’s unwillingness to detail what attention she had given to a memorandum dated 21 August 2006, signed by 13 Compliance Officers in the employ of the Liquor Licensing Division of the Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development, and, more specifically, to addressing the inadequate staffing arrangements of the Division, was both an arrogant and ignorant refusal to deal with serious Departmental concerns. In post-script, the memorandum noted that despite the overwhelming concerns expressed therein, no new staff had been employed in the Brisbane Compliance Unit since its distribution in August 2006. No obvious allocations have been made in the current Ministerial Portfolio Statement to address staff shortages. Questions asking why this situation had not been addressed in the Budget were, therefore, not only appropriate, but necessary.
- Further to the memorandum dated 21 August 2006, signed by 13 Compliance Officers in the employ of the Liquor Licensing Division of the Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development, it is apparent that despite reporting in the Ministerial Portfolio Statement, the Liquor Licensing Division has been placed under considerable strain due to the increase in the number of liquor licences in Queensland and the associated increased workload. Given the state-wide focus of the Flying Squad, such officers cannot be relied upon to undertake compliance duties in Brisbane at all times. Based on the serious concerns raised in the memorandum, and the fact that compliance is critical to the success of the liquor licensing regime in this State, immediate attention should be given by the Minister to ensure that the staffing arrangements of the Liquor Licensing Division are adequate to meet the rising demands and workloads placed on such officers.
- Regarding the Minister’s comments that there are 10,000 police officers in Queensland who are able to assist liquor licensing officers with their enforcement duties<sup>4</sup> it is concerning that the Minister seemed to suggest that significant resources can be diverted from the already stretched Queensland Police Service to alleviate the inadequate staffing arrangements of her own Department.

Concerning the Queensland Office for Women, Mrs Rosemary Menkens MP, Shadow Minister for the Environment and Multiculturalism, and Shadow Minister for Women observes:

- In the initial allocation of time to question Ministers in Estimates Committee F, no allocation was given to question the activities of the Office of Women. While permission was ultimately granted to ask such questions, it is regrettable that detailed questioning was prevented by insufficient time.
- Through the Ministerial Portfolio Statement’s reporting of the Office of Women, and the few questions that time permitted be asked during the hearing, it became apparent that the funding and resources of the Office are either inadequate or not appropriately directed to issues of real concern to women, such as domestic violence and maternity services.

## **Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, and Minister assisting the Premier in Western Queensland**

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2 Ibid, p.1-26.

3 See, for example, the question asked in relation to the ‘Extent of complying businesses’ output measure on page 1-14 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement, reported on Queensland Parliament, Hansard – Estimates Committee F – Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women, Wednesday, 18 July 2007, p.17.

4 Queensland Parliament, Hansard – Estimates Committee F – Tourism, Fair Trading, Wine Industry Development and Women, Wednesday, 18 July 2007, p.22.

Mr Mark McArdle MP, Shadow Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Shadow Minister for Fair Trading, notes the following reservations:

- The general reservation expressed above that Ministers avoided answering Non-Government questions by reading briefing notes was clearly demonstrated in the hearing time allocated to the scrutiny of the Department and agencies within the portfolio responsibility of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice. The Attorney-General deliberately avoided answering questions by reading extensive and irrelevant briefing notes prepared by his Ministerial Office and Department. As the highest law officer of this State, it is regretful that the Attorney-General chose not to answer questions relating to the output and funding arrangements of his crucial Department and of the agencies within his responsibility, most of which were established to improve accountability in this State. The Attorney-General's reading of scripted replies, which were frequently irrelevant to the question asked, indicated that the Attorney-General had no apparent independent knowledge of the workings and funding allocations of his own Department and agencies.<sup>5</sup> Frequently, briefing notes, or portions of them, were repeated,<sup>6</sup> taking away valuable time from the hearing, and overtly disregarding the intent of the Estimates Committee process.
- Also of serious concern, was the Attorney-General's failure to clarify the inconsistent reporting of performance targets. Figures reported in the Ministerial Portfolio Statement, particularly relating to the performance of the Office of the Information Commissioner, were significantly different from those recently reported in other forums.<sup>7</sup> The Attorney-General failed to provide satisfactory explanations as to these inconsistencies, and failed to clarify which of the figures were in fact accurate.
- The Attorney-General also failed to sufficiently explain why almost all of the capital works projects committed to in the 2006-07 Budget suffered an overwhelming underspend, and what services or projects in the current budgetary year will suffer in an attempt to compensate for the lost progress and funding of those works.
- Very real concerns exist about the administration of justice in this State. The Ministerial Portfolio Statement for the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice clearly reports that a high number of performance targets of Queensland courts and tribunals are not being met.<sup>8</sup> Rather than committing increased funding and resources to the courts in 2007-08 to assist them in clearing their backlog, the Attorney-General has instead lowered the performance targets for the current budgetary year. Law and order is critical to the effective operation of this State and to the safety of the Queensland community. Such should not be sacrificed by bureaucratic cost-cutting or the apparent lowering of standards.

### **Minister for the Environment and Multiculturalism**

Mrs Rosemary Menkens MP, Shadow Minister for the Environment and Multiculturalism and Shadow Minister for Women, notes the following specific reservations:

- The environmental double standards of the Government were highlighted when it was revealed that only 25 vehicles out of a fleet of more than 500 were hybrid; that more than 50% of the fleet were still comprised of six and eight cylinder vehicles; and that the leases for executive six and eight cylinder vehicles had, in fact, been extended for another 12 months.
- The Minister stated that, with the full cost of clean-up from the Binary Industries fire, which spewed highly toxic chemicals and pesticides across Narangba in Brisbane's north in 2005, estimated to cost

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5 See, for example, comments in relation to the Crime and Misconduct Commission's Report to the Australian Crime Commission on page 56 of Queensland Parliament, Hansard – Estimates Committee F – Attorney-General and Justice, Wednesday, 18 July 2007.

6 See, for example, comments in relation to the Office of the Information Commissioner on page 49-52 of Queensland Parliament, Hansard – Estimates Committee F – Attorney-General and Justice, Wednesday, 18 July 2007.

7 Queensland Parliament, Hansard – Estimates Committee F – Attorney-General and Justice, Wednesday, 18 July 2007, pp. 49-52.

8 See, for example, the number of civil law matters finalised in the Trial Division of the Supreme Court on p. 1-19 of Queensland Government, Queensland State Budget 2007-08 – Ministerial Portfolio Statement: Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister Assisting the Premier in Western Queensland, 2007.

\$15 million to \$16 million, Queensland taxpayers would be left with the clean-up costs. Moreover, none of the \$10 million to \$11 million cost for public land clean-up would be recovered from the Binary owners.

- The Government is continuing to drastically underspend on pest and weed management in our State parks. Despite acquiring another 100,000 hectares, and underspending \$5 million on essential maintenance in 2006-07, there has been no allocation of extra funds to combat the increasing spread of invasive pest and weeds in parks or to maintain increasingly rundown existing park infrastructure.
- The Minister failed to give a credible explanation for the purchase of existing businesses, including resorts and vineyards, as part of the \$40 million allocated to purchase supposedly pristine land to enable the expansion of the Springbrook National Park.
- The Department's priorities regarding funding allocations are seriously questionable when up to \$40 million can be spent purchasing less than 1,000 hectares of degraded and commercial-use land at Springbrook, but only \$4.5 million will be spent to stop the degradation caused by pests and weed on approximately 7 million hectares of parks and land already under the Department's control.
- Concerning the Multiculturalism portfolio, it is regrettable that insufficient time was allocated to enable greater questioning of the Minister as to Multiculturalism Affairs Queensland's activities.

**Mark McArdle MP**

Shadow Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Shadow Minister for Fair Trading

**Rosemary Menkens MP**

Shadow Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism and Shadow Minister for Women