



Estimates Committee B 2009

Report to the Legislative Assembly

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Standing Order 167(3), the Legislative Assembly, by Order made on 3 June 2009, referred to Estimates Committee B for investigation and report certain proposed expenditures contained in the *Appropriation Bill 2009*. Organisational units within the portfolios of the following Ministers were allocated to Estimates Committee B:

- Deputy Premier and Minister for Health
- Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services

The Appropriation summary for 2009–2010 for the units being reported on by the committee is in the table below.

	Budget 2008–09 \$'000	Est. Actual 2008–09 \$'000	Vote 2009–10 \$'000
Department of Health	6 107 294	6 062 361	9 298 564
Department of Police	1 706 486	1 676 501	1 760 448
Department of Community Safety	..	279 961	1 452 591

Source: Appropriation Bill 2009

The committee held a public hearing on Wednesday, 15 July 2009. 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
- 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.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Key funding initiatives for the Department of Health in 2009-10, include:

- total funding of \$125.7 million capital and \$19.5 million operational over three years, to expand emergency departments
- \$13 million additional operational funding (\$69.9 million operational and \$14.7 million capital total funding over four years) to expand rehabilitation and step down facilities
- \$7.9 million total operational funding over three years for more Nurse Practitioners
- \$110 million over three years to provide an additional 20,000 elective operations
- \$12.3 million operational funding in 2009-10 (Total funding of \$37 million operational and \$6.5 million capital funding over three years) to enhance cancer services
- \$4.9 million operational and \$1 million capital funding (Total funding of \$16.7 million operational and \$26 million capital over three years) to improve services for mothers and babies
- \$0.25 million additional operational funding (\$1.1 million over four years) to deliver new

on-line tools to assist doctors and nurses in assessing elderly patients

- continuation of the five major hospital projects that will establish new tertiary hospitals on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, a new Queensland Children's Hospital in Brisbane and redevelop the Cairns and Mackay Hospitals at a cost of \$5.468 billion
- continuation of the Ipswich Hospital expansion and the expansion of the current developments at the Townsville and Rockhampton Hospitals.

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

During the inquiry process the committee sought information on the following matters:

- projections for staff increases
- cancer services
- data on radiotherapy services
- Queensland Health's strategic priorities
- The new Queensland Children's Hospital
- initiatives to make Queenslanders Australia's healthiest people
- waiting times for emergency departments
- the future of aged care in Queensland
- indigenous health – the deadly ears program
- the hyperbaric chamber at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital
- the Sunshine Coast University Hospital
- the employment of additional doctors, nurses and allied health professions
- pandemic planning
- Swine influenza
- travel for patients to receive specialist medical treatment
- the Queensland Plan for Mental Health 2007-2017
- the amalgamation of paediatric oncology and paediatric cardiac services
- bed projections for the Sunshine Coast
- expenditure on health technology equipment
- maternity services
- implementation of the new national registration and accreditation system

- the 13 HEALTH service
- reducing waiting times for specialist outpatient services in public hospitals
- construction of a paediatric emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital
- publication of data about emergency departments on bypass
- upgrade of the Innisfail hospital
- expansion of the surgery connect program
- initiatives to recruit and train nurse practitioners
- physicians' assistants
- Whooping cough
- telemedicine and e-health initiatives
- dental care for children and adolescents
- a new requirement for pharmacists to report in real time all over-the-counter sales of pseudoephedrine

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

Key funding initiatives for the Department of Police in 2009-10, include:

- 203 additional police positions including a further 53 specialist traffic officers
- \$47 million for road safety initiatives
- \$2.3 million to establish an interim QPS telephone interception capability
- \$57 million for capital works
- \$1.2 million for 24-7 police officer coordination in the Metropolitan Traffic Management Centre and throughout the traffic incident response system.

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

During the inquiry process the committee sought information on the following matters:

- orders under the Child Protection (Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2008
- sex offenders under the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act that are unaccounted for or unable to be located at their last known address
- the separation rate for Queensland police officers
- police intakes

- the SCAN process
- contractors employed to work on the QPRIME system
- service delivery and ethical conduct – alleged workplace bullying and harassment
- new and upgraded equipment
- Task Force Argos
- Random roadside drug and alcohol testing
- telephone interception capability
- QPS strategies to address domestic and family violence
- police pay
- percentage of police that are operational
- clear-up rates
- funding allocated to Task Force Hydra
- the new police academy
- funding to secure a police paddock to assist SARCIS
- the bomb squad
- current air wing capabilities and its future priorities
- the delivery of major police infrastructure over the next three years
- graffiti
- strengthening of water police capabilities.
- counterterrorism capabilities
- trialling new technologies, such as automatic numberplate recognition, mobile LiveScan and in-car cameras
- possession of replica firearms

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY

The recently formed Department of Community Safety supports healthy, safe and secure communities through public safety, emergency management, essential emergency response services, and secure and appropriate corrective services.

The Department incorporates Queensland Corrective Services (QCS), Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ), the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS), the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), the State Emergency Service (SES) and Rural Fire volunteers.

Key funding initiatives for the Department of Community Safety in 2009-10 include:

- 50 additional ambulance officers
- \$20.9 million for 150 ambulances
- four new fire stations and six replacement or redeveloped facilities
- \$10.4 million for 23 new or replacement urban fire and rescue appliances
- \$4.4 million for 34 new or replacement rural fire appliances
- \$2.5 million to manage growth in demand for Probation and Parole services and to improve supervision and reparation to the community
- \$164 million for the first stage of the South Queensland Correctional Precinct at Gatton
- \$199 million for the expansion and redevelopment of Lotus Glen Correctional Centre
- \$1.2 million for vehicles, floodboats and trailers for the SES
- \$54.9 million to build, at a total cost of \$78.7 million, a new integrated communication and emergency operations centre at Kedron
- \$0.37 million to develop and implement a QAS Vulnerable Clients Program
- \$1.4 million to continue the Sexual Offender Treatment program
- a one off donation to Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) of a twin-engine EC135 helicopter valued at \$6 million
- \$4.8 million over four years for the provision of fire reflective curtains and the replacement of petrol driven pumps with diesel driven pumps in 965 rural fire appliances

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

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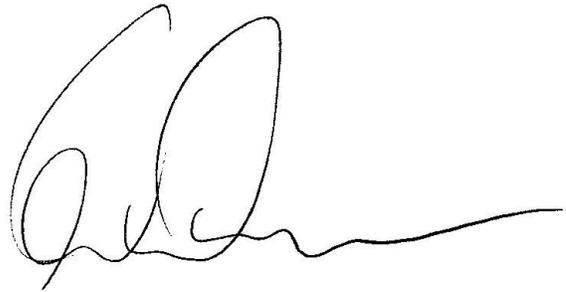
- Indigenous overrepresentation in prisons
- increases in assaults in prisons
- the Staying on Track rehabilitation program
- delivery of Corrective Services infrastructure including the expansion of Lotus Glen

- Correctional Centre and the SEQ correctional precinct at Gatton
- relocation of serious sex offenders to the Capricornia Correctional Centre
- contraband detection
- offender to staff ratios for supervision services
- increasing the number of community volunteers
- funding for emergency management in Queensland
- initiatives and funding to assist in managing the impacts of climate change
- the QAS implementing demand management strategies
- savings produced by the amalgamation of the corporate and executive functions of Corrective Services and Emergency Services
- ambulance service delivery costs in Queensland compared to those in other states
- cessation of QAS community safety programs
- evacuation plans for coastal settlements
- the proposal for an Australia-wide emergency notification process
- increases in firefighter numbers
- bushfire preparedness
- current funding to SES volunteers
- government support to community aeromedical and air rescue helicopter services
- the AgustaWestland 139 choppers
- the Eurochopper (EC135) given to Surf Life Saving Queensland
- budget for equipment to evacuate high-rise residential buildings,
- target estimates for the number of road rescue extractions
- public relations flights in EMQ helicopters
- backup facilities in the event of the catastrophic failure of the Queensland Emergency Operations Centre
- strategies and support mechanisms to reduce reoffending
- the benefits of the new Combined Emergency Services Academy

- enhancements to the clinical practice of Queensland paramedics
- implementation of key demand strategies by the QAS

RECOMMENDATION

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the *Appropriation Bill 2009* for the organisational units and portfolios allocated to it, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.



Mr Wayne Wendt MP
August 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr Wayne Wendt MP (Chair)
Mr Paul Hoolihan, MP
Mr Vaughan Johnson MP
Ms Carolyn Male MP
Mr Ted Malone MP
Mr Mark McArdle MP
Mrs Christine Smith MP

SECRETARIAT

Mr Rob McBride (Research Director)
Mr Jason McNeil (Senior Research Officer)
Ms Marilyn Freeman (Executive Assistant)

Estimates Committee B

2009

Statements of Reservation
from

Mr Mark McArdle

Member for Caloundra
Shadow Minister for Health

Mr Vaughan Johnson

Member for Gregory
Shadow Minister for Police and Corrective Services

and

Mr Ted Malone

Member for Mirani
Shadow Minister for Emergency Services and Northern Development

STATEMENT OF RESERVATION

Health

Secretary of Committee B

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

General comments on the Estimates Process

The Estimates Process is the greatest opportunity for parliamentary scrutiny of Government appropriations in a unicameral system and it is unfortunate the process does not allow for well considered deliberations by parliamentary committees such as this one.

The inherent processes of the Estimates process fail to provide the level of scrutiny of the Government's use of taxpayer's money.

The limited number of questions without notice allocated to each Minister fails to ensure that committee members have the opportunity to prepare adequately for the Committee's hearings particularly in areas where the budget papers provide very little information.

The limiting of information to these Estimates Committees, both in terms of the limited useful information in the Budget Papers, as well as the limited number of questions on notice does not in any way assist the committee's work.

In addition to the information available to the committee prior to the committee's hearings there is limited time for members of the committee to gain detailed information from Ministers during the process.

During this session there has been a continuance of the disturbing trend of Ministers failing to answer specific questions from some committee members, instead giving a very general answer, which had been pre-prepared, about Government directions or policies.

As a result I have very significant reservations about how informed the Committee's report is.

Health

With consideration complete for the Health portfolio the following reservations are held –

- The Minister was vague and irrelevant in his approach to answering many serious questions about the ailing and struggling Health system.
- It is very serious and concerning that the Minister revealed there was an empty and unused hyperbaric chamber at RBH which has cost Queensland taxpayers in excess of \$6 million.
- It was disappointing to hear the Minister ruled out addressing the hospital bed shortfall in Queensland, following discrepancies between supposed bed increases and population growth.

- It is totally astounding that at the Estimates Hearing, the Minister refused to say he would publically release weekly radiotherapy waiting times despite a document being tabled that showed such information can be collected
- The Minister's approach to being held accountable is far from adequate.
- The Estimates process has failed to allow for any real analysis of the expenditures detailed in the Queensland Budget Statements for Health in particular.
- Once again the failure of Estimates Committees to allow direct questioning of Senior Public Service administrators is a serious threat to departmental accountability.
- The appalling avoidance tactics of the Health Minister replying to questions in such a way as to evade the issue being scrutinised was a consistent theme throughout the HEALTH hearings.
- Despite numerous follow up questions and repeating the question the Minister either avoided answering questions completely or simply read prepared unrelated statements on subjects not related to the issues raised in the estimates process.
- The Minister revealed a lack of consistent and adequate reporting by Queensland Health.
- The budget papers were significantly reduced in detail from previous years and were lacking in proper detail to allow for a proper consideration of the budget.
- The Minister indulged in the blame game and refused to accept responsibility for the dire situation our health system finds itself under Labor let alone outline how the Minister would address the problem.
- The Minister used partial statistics in responses to questions on notice that did not allow for an appropriate analysis of available data.

Signed



Mark McArdle MP
Shadow Minister for Health
Member for Caloundra

STATEMENT OF RESERVATION

Police and Corrective Services

Secretary of Committee B

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Police and Corrective Services

With consideration complete for the Police and Corrective Services portfolio the following reservations are held –

- The length of time available for consideration of each of the areas under consideration was unrealistic and too short to allow for a proper consideration of the portfolio areas.
- The grouping of corrective services in with emergency services limited the committee's ability to give proper consideration to the area.
- The Minister was evasive and confrontational in his approach to answering some questions.
- With a \$1.7 billion budget for police alone, it was disappointing to be given only three blocks of non-government questions to examine the budget.
- The budget papers were significantly reduced in detail from previous years and were lacking in proper detail to allow for a proper consideration of the budget.
- The Minister used partial statistics in responses to questions on notice that did not allow for an appropriate analysis of available data.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'V' and 'J'.

Vaughan Johnson
Member for Gregory
Shadow Minister for Police and Corrective Services

STATEMENT OF RESERVATION

Department of Community Safety (Emergency Services)

Secretary of Committee B

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General comments on the Estimates Process

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Emergency Services –

With consideration complete for the Emergency Services area within the Department of Community Safety portfolio the following reservations are held –

- I express my disappointment at the Minister's admission that there are no new community safety programs funded or planned.
- The Minister's answer to my question regarding the additional cost of further modifications to the AW139 helicopters did not include a cost for the additions such as the stretch systems.
- The Minister's answer to my question regarding how much money was allocated to high-rise training for QFRS did not include a cost.
- The Minister's answer to my question regarding the cost of "PR flights" did not include a cost and an explanation as to why these 'operationally important' flights included a television cameraman to film the embarked Minister/Premier.

It is appreciated that the Department Officers present clearly had prepared for many more lines of questioning and it is regretted that the Estimates process does not allow for more of this detail to be raised.

While I know the Minister thinks my questions perhaps trivial and petty, I believe his attitude reflects poorly on his position and shows contempt for the Chair and the Estimates process.

Signed



Ted Malone MP
Member for Mirani
Shadow Minister for Emergency Services and Northern Development