

2021–22 Budget Estimates

Report No. 11, 57th Parliament
Legal Affairs and Safety Committee
August 2021

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee

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Acknowledgements

The committee thanks:

- the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
- the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided by the departmental officers who contributed to the work of the committee during the estimates process.

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Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2021–22 financial year.

Consideration of the budget estimates allows for the public examination of the responsible Ministers and the chief executive officers of agencies within the committee's portfolio areas. This was undertaken through the questions on notice and public hearing process.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2021 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, and the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, and their departmental officers for their co-operation in providing information to the committee throughout this process.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their hard work and valuable contribution to the estimates process, and other members whose participation in the hearing provided additional scrutiny of the estimates.

Finally, I thank the committee's secretariat and other Parliamentary Service staff for their assistance throughout the estimates process.



Peter Russo MP

Chair

August 2021

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee (committee) is a portfolio committee of the Legislative Assembly which commenced on 26 November 2020 under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.¹

The committee's primary areas of responsibility include:

- Justice and Attorney-General
- Women and Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
- Police and Corrective Services
- Fire and Emergency Services.

Section 93(1) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that a portfolio committee is responsible for examining each Bill and item of subordinate legislation in its portfolio areas to consider:

- the policy to be given effect by the legislation
- the application of fundamental legislative principles
- matters arising under the *Human Rights Act 2019*
- for subordinate legislation – its lawfulness.

The committee also has oversight functions in relation to the Electoral Commissioner, Information Commissioner, Queensland Ombudsman and the Queensland Family and Child Commission.

On 15 June 2021, the Appropriation Bill 2021 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility were referred to the committee for investigation and report.²

On 12 August 2021, the committee conducted a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, and other witnesses. A copy of the transcript of the committee's hearing is available on the committee's webpage.

1.2 Aim of this report

This report summarises the estimates referred to the committee and highlights some of the issues the committee examined.

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

- budget papers
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice
- evidence taken at the hearing
- additional information given in relation to answers.

Prior to the public hearing, the committee provided the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence and the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services with questions on notice in relation to the estimates. Responses to all the questions were received.

¹ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, s 88 and Standing Order 194.

² Standing Order 177 provides for the automatic referral of the annual Appropriation Bills to portfolio committees once the Bills have been read a second time.

Answers to the committee’s pre-hearing questions on notice; documents tabled during the hearing; and answers and additional information provided by Ministers after the hearing are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.

1.3 Participation by other Members

The committee gave leave for other Members to participate in the hearing. The following Members participated in the hearing:

- Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, Member for Kawana
- Ms Fiona Simpson MP, Member for Maroochydore
- Mr Tim Nicholls MP, Member for Clayfield
- Ms Amanda Camm MP, Member for Whitsunday
- Mr Dale Last MP, Member for Burdekin
- Mr Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar
- Dr Amy MacMahon MP, Member for South Brisbane
- Mr Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger

2 Recommendation

Pursuant to Standing Order 187(1), the committee must state whether the proposed expenditures referred to it are agreed to.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2021 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

3 Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

This section discusses issues raised during the committee’s examination of the Bill.

3.1 Department of Justice and Attorney-General

The Honourable Shannon Fentiman MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, is the Minister responsible for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG). DJAG has 4 service areas as follows:

- Justice Services
- Legal and Prosecution Services
- Liquor, Gaming and Fair Trading
- Women and Violence Prevention.³

In addition, the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice is responsible for the:

- Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC)
- Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC)
- Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ)
- Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC)
- Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC)
- Prostitution Licensing Authority
- Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ)
- Office of the Queensland Ombudsman (OQO)
- Public Trustee of Queensland (Public Trustee).⁴

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2021 compares the appropriations for DJAG for 2020–21 and 2021–22.

Appropriations	2020–21 \$'000	2021–22 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	624,979	711,479
equity adjustment	(45,458)	(55,323)
<i>Administered Items</i>	460,636	474,308
Vote	1,040,157	1,130,464

Source: Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2, p 10.

The 2021–22 capital acquisitions budget for Justice and Attorney-General (including DJAG, Public Trustee and the CCC) is \$34.7 million.⁵

DJAG’s proportion of that capital budget is \$19.7 million with program highlights including \$7.4 million to expand and upgrade existing audio-visual capacity in the justice system, which incorporates video

³ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 1.

⁴ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

⁵ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, p 66.

conferencing and in-custody court appearances, and \$6.9 million to continue the ongoing program of minor capital works in courthouses.⁶

The 2021–22 capital budget for the CCC is \$2.3 million with program highlights including \$1.4 million to replace computer and other information technology equipment and purchase computer software and \$870,000 to replace vehicles.⁷

The 2021–22 capital budget for the Public Trustee is \$12.7 million with program highlights including \$9.7 million in right-of-use assets for office accommodation lease and \$3 million for refurbishment of existing regional office premises.⁸

3.1.1 Budget highlights – Department of Justice and Attorney-General

2021–22 budget highlights for the department include:

- continued support for an independent wide-ranging review of women’s experiences in the criminal justice system being conducted by the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce
- continued funding to enable domestic, family and sexual violence services to respond to demand including that associated with the impacts of COVID-19
- support for the government’s response to domestic and family violence (DFV) through the rollout of further critical frontline DFV support services and perpetrator interventions in specialist court locations
- addressing COVID-19 related demand through facilitating access to timely and efficient justice for Queenslanders
- continued important initiatives providing specialist support to women in contact with the criminal justice and custodial systems
- increase in court and legal advocacy resources to manage serious recidivist young offenders on bail
- continuation of a second coronial registrar team within the Coroners Court of Queensland to enhance triaging practices and to strengthen case management and structural supports
- continued delivery of an additional specialist Children’s Court magistrate, support staff, security and legal advocates to support an increase of cases heard in the Children’s Court
- continued delivery of key initiatives of the government’s Tackling Alcohol Fuelled Violence policy
- delivery of timely financial assistance to victims and families of crime through increased funding for Victims Assist Queensland
- delivery of activities under the Domestic and Family Violence Engagement and Communication Strategy.⁹

3.2 Queensland Human Rights Commission

The QHRC is an independent statutory body created by the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (ADA). QHRC’s purpose is to protect and promote freedom, respect, equality and dignity.¹⁰

The Service Delivery Statements (SDS) state that in 2021–22, the QHRC will:

⁶ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, p 66.

⁷ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, p 66.

⁸ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, p 66; Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 68.

⁹ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 3.

¹⁰ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 18.

- intervene where appropriate in proceedings involving human rights issues to provide expert assistance to courts and tribunals
- finalise the review of QHRC services to provide a culturally appropriate Commission experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- support the review of vilification law and First Nations health equity in Queensland
- publish reports on unresolved human rights complaints to encourage transparency and promote best practice decision making in government service delivery
- work with key stakeholders within the child protection and juvenile justice systems to urge the embedding of human rights principles within existing frameworks and encourage increased understanding and compliance with human rights obligations
- maintain an effective complaints process to manage the assessment and resolution of complaints under both the ADA and *Human Rights Act 2019*, with a focus on reducing the current backlog of complaints and client waiting times.¹¹

3.3 Crime and Corruption Commission

The CCC is an independent agency established under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* to combat major crime and reduce corruption for the benefit of the Queensland community. The CCC's vision is safe communities supported by fair and ethical public institutions.¹²

Key areas of focus for the CCC in 2021–22 as identified in the SDS include:

- illicit markets of high value or high public impact
- crimes involving risk, or actual loss of life or serious injury, to a person
- crimes against children and vulnerable people
- corruption involving misuse of confidential information, abuse of authority and exploitation of public sector resources
- partnering with stakeholders to achieve outcomes
- critical organisational capabilities including digital, analytics and workforce planning.¹³

3.4 Legal Aid Queensland

LAQ is an independent statutory authority that operates under the *Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997*.

Key deliverables for LAQ in 2021–22 include:

- focusing on delivering services that support clients adversely impacted by the events of COVID-19
- continuing to provide services in line with the requirements of the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020–2025
- delivering new and expanding initiatives with service delivery partners across the state in the most effective and economical way.¹⁴

¹¹ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 18.

¹² Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 23.

¹³ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 23.

¹⁴ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 28.

3.5 Office of the Information Commissioner

The OIC is Queensland’s independent statutory body established under the *Right to Information Act 2009* (Qld) and the *Information Privacy Act 2009* (Qld) to promote access to government-held information, and to protect people’s personal information held by the public sector.¹⁵

Key deliverables for the OIC in 2021–22 include:

- building a Privacy Champions leadership network within and across agency sectors to embed privacy and information security in senior decision-making and enhance cultural change
- addressing key drivers of significant demand for external review, including high numbers of agency decisions made outside statutory timeframes to enable more efficient and effective outcomes for the community
- reviewing training resource and assistance programs, and implement new approaches to meet evolving needs and improve communication and engagement with communities and agencies throughout Queensland
- working with agency experts to ensure information management practices keep pace with rapidly evolving technology environment to build trust and enable safe digital service delivery and initiatives, including artificial intelligence processing of personal information
- reporting to Parliament on audits about administrative release in schools, Sunshine Coast Regional Council compliance and current topics of interest, such as binding contracted service providers to the privacy principles.¹⁶

3.6 Queensland Family and Child Commission

The QFCC was established as a statutory body on 1 July 2014 under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* (QFCC Act).¹⁷ The QFCC’s purpose is to fulfil its obligations under the QFCC Act, building awareness of, and accountability for, the rights, safety and wellbeing of Queensland’s children, within the child and family support system and across the Queensland community.¹⁸

As part of its key deliverables, in 2021–22 the QFCC will:

- share the views and concerns revealed by young Queenslanders in the *Growing up in Queensland 2020* survey to influence policy and decision makers, and undertake initiatives to address issues they raised
- continue to monitor and report on the impact of youth justice reforms on children’s and young people’s rights, safety and wellbeing
- undertake culturally appropriate community conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people about their interactions with the justice system and identify improvement opportunities

¹⁵ Office of the Information Commissioner – Queensland, *About us*, <https://www.oic.qld.gov.au/about#:~:text=The%20Office%20of%20the%20Information%20Commissioner%20%28OIC%29%20is,people%E2%80%99s%20personal%20information%20held%20by%20the%20public%20sector.>

¹⁶ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 33.

¹⁷ Queensland Family and Child Commission, *Our role and how we work*, <https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/about-us/our-role-how-we-work>.

¹⁸ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 38.

- continue its *Talking Families* initiative through providing local-level, family-targeted education to help families and communities understand and fulfil their responsibility to protect and care for children
- deliver the inaugural annual report on the operations of the Child Death Review Board
- provide a more outcomes-based account of the experiences and perspective of children and young people who rely on child protection services to stay safe and well
- influence the direction of the youth justice system towards a more rights and wellbeing focus
- continue *Families are First*, a strengths-based initiative to celebrate thriving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and get Queenslanders talking about the inherent values, beliefs and behaviours that make families strong
- develop a system-wide resource to identify, respond to and share information about 'red flags' to the immediate safety of vulnerable children and young people, specifically where there is a risk of fatal assault
- continue to research factors that contribute to the injury and death of children and young people and in conjunction with key partners, identify system responses to preventing them
- increase organisational and systems-level awareness, accountability and advocacy for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the effective application of the five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle
- collaborate with key stakeholders to develop responses that elevate the behaviours which prevent, recognise and respond to online child sexual grooming.¹⁹

3.7 Prostitution Licensing Authority

The purpose of the PLA is to administer the *Prostitution Act 1999* and the Prostitution Regulation 2014.

The key deliverables for the PLA in 2021–22 include:

- protecting the community from COVID-19 by working with licensed brothels to ensure COVID safe operations, including assessing and enforcing compliance with the COVID Safe Industry Plan: Queensland Sex Industry
- engaging with stakeholders, including representatives of the licensed sector of the sex industry, to enhance the licensing framework for brothels and the scope of regulation of the sector, to underpin the viability of brothel operations, and to further the underlying principles of the Act, as well as contribute to any review of the state's regulatory framework for the sex industry
- continuing to review and improve operations and processes to assist and enable the licensed sector.²⁰

3.8 Electoral Commission of Queensland

The ECQ is an independent statutory authority established under the *Electoral Act 1992* and its vision is to deliver electoral excellence with integrity for Queensland, including delivering accessible, fair and transparent electoral services to all Queenslanders.²¹

¹⁹ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 38.

²⁰ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 44.

²¹ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 50.

The following table from the Appropriation Bill 2021 compares the appropriations for the ECQ for 2020–21 and 2021–22.

Appropriations	2020–21 \$'000	2021–22 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	92,812	28,895
equity adjustment	(37)	615
<i>Administered Items</i>	..	..
Vote	92,775	29,510

Source: Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2, p 14.

According to the SDS, in 2021–22, the ECQ will:

- deliver state and local government by-elections as required
- undertake a comprehensive program of evaluations to capture lessons learnt during the major elections held in 2020 and improve future election delivery
- commence preparations and planning for the state and local government elections in 2024
- complete residual works outstanding for the Election Management System
- carry out a program of compliance to ensure political participants are adhering to funding and disclosure requirements.²²

3.9 Office of the Queensland Ombudsman

The purpose of the OQO is to investigate administrative decisions, help agencies improve their practices, and oversee the system of public interest disclosures (PID).²³

The following table from the Appropriation Bill 2021 compares the appropriations for the OQO for 2020–21 and 2021–22.

Appropriations	2020–21 \$'000	2021–22 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	8,574	8,982
equity adjustment	..	..
<i>Administered Items</i>	..	..
Vote	8,574	8,982

Source: Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2, p 15.

The SDS states that in 2021–22, OQO will:

- continue to deliver services that help people to know how and when to make a complaint

²² Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 50.

²³ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 60.

- provide a free and independent investigation service that reviews administration actions of state government departments and agencies (including state schools and TAFE), local councils and public universities
- help agencies to improve their decision-making, administrative practices and PID management by making recommendations for improvement, delivering training programs and providing advisory services.²⁴

3.10 Public Trustee of Queensland

The Public Trustee's vision is to provide security and peace of mind for Queenslanders through enhancing and protecting the rights, dignity and interests of their customers by:

- providing responsible, transparent, and ethical financial, estate, and trust administration and other essential fiduciary services, together with an enduring power of attorney and will making service
- building a modern, professional and customer focused organisation
- providing value and support to the community.²⁵

In 2021–22, the Public Trustee will:

- undertake a comprehensive review of all the Public Trustee's fees and charges to ensure they are fair, sustainable and transparent
- continue a review of Public Trustee Office locations, with a view to co-locating with other human services providers
- embrace online service delivery by enhancing our customer platforms and digital services
- deliver community education programs to support engagement in financial and life planning
- implement a new Public Trustee complaints management system to support best practice complaints management
- continue the introduction of Easy English materials to support engagement with our customers, stakeholders and the community.²⁶

3.11 Key issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee and visiting Members during the public hearing in relation to DJAG, QHRC, CCC, LAQ, OIC, QFCC, ECQ, OQO and the Public Trustee included:

- use of public resources and polling
- cost estimates associated with CCC investigations
- CCC investigation process into matters relating to the Moreton Bay Regional Council and Logan City Council
- privacy awareness and access to citizens' private data
- the CCC's case management system and expected timeframe for, and cost of, deploying technology
- a Right to Information application relating to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission

²⁴ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 60.

²⁵ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 67.

²⁶ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General, p 68.

- management and associated funding of complaints regarding independent bodies, including the Queensland Ombudsman
- number of applications to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) for guardianship and/or administration made by NDIS service providers in the last 12 months
- number of Queenslanders in long-term crisis accommodation
- prosecutorial success rate of CCC investigations
- delivery of elections during COVID-19 pandemic
- government actions on promoting fair and inclusive communities in Queensland
- regulating political donations
- actions of LAQ, the Public Trustee and the Queensland Ombudsman in supporting Queenslanders
- LAQ's provision of duty lawyer services
- provision of services from the Public Trustee
- LAQ's education program
- work of the OIC
- educational programs of the QFCC
- work of the Public Trustee in relation to Wills Week
- work of the Public Guardian to prevent elder abuse
- research by Ipsos polling
- funding of digital team in ministerial office
- cost to the DPP in relation to the 'needles in strawberries' matter
- costs to DPP of matters relating to the Moreton Bay Regional Council and Logan City Council and reasons for withdrawal of charges
- DPP's assessment process for matters
- appointment of the Under Treasurer
- funding of LAQ
- fees payable to LAQ private practitioners
- date of when rates for private solicitors, barristers, and specialist reports were last increased
- number of private practitioners working for LAQ from 2018 to 30 June 2021
- capacity of LAQ to engage psychiatrists and psychologists
- funding of Coroners Court
- effectiveness of Coroners and Magistrates Courts
- staffing of Coroners Court
- age of criminal responsibility
- capital expenditure funding for financial year
- appointment process for a magistrate
- national partnership of the COVID-19 domestic and family violence response funding
- regional and rote service delivery of services relating to domestic and family violence
- core service delivery funding to ensure sustainability of services for domestic and family violence victims
- process for notifying service delivery providers with existing service agreements of funding extensions

- administrative requirement for complying with practice standards framework for service providers when they receive funding
- long-term housing availability for women and children seeking refuge
- timeframe for expected outcomes of the housing and domestic violence roundtable
- access to pet-friendly refuges for women – government programs
- costs to RSPCA to fund pets in crisis and contribution of government to program
- funding of outreach services in Noosa for domestic and family violence victims
- funding for children in situations of domestic and family violence
- framework for decriminalising sex work – terms of reference and timeframe
- law reform in relation to prohibition of misleading political advertising
- funding for the body corporate and community management commissioner’s office
- government’s response to contraventions of domestic violence orders in 2020–21 in Townsville
- representation of women in public places
- government assistance for artisan liquor industry in Queensland
- additional resources for QCAT
- funding for frontline services to support women and families experiencing violence
- Queensland Government response to COVID-19 and travel related consumer issues
- update on the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce
- update on changes to the Gambling Community Benefit Fund
- contribution of Women on Boards initiative to increasing representation of women and alternative approaches considered
- implementation of recommendations of the *Respect@Work* report
- improving price transparency in the funeral industry for consumers
- reproductive choices for women and available support
- update on consideration of shield laws for journalists in Queensland
- support for Queensland women and girls’ participation in sporting activities
- update on government’s response to domestic and family violence
- support for women and girls through the Investing in Queensland Women’s Grants Program
- consideration of the Queensland University of Technology’s Property Law Review.

4 Minister for Police and Corrective Services

4.1 Queensland Police Service

The Honourable Mark Ryan MP, Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services, is the Minister responsible for the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2021 compares the appropriations for QPS for 2020–21 and 2021–22.

Appropriations	2020–21 \$'000	2021–22 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	2,191,123	2,496,168
equity adjustment	34,188	11,237
<i>Administered Items</i>	725	..
Vote	2,226,036	2,507,405

Source: Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2, p 17.

4.1.1 Budget highlights – Queensland Police Service

The role of the QPS is to work with the community and stakeholders to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate crime and eliminate road trauma.²⁷

The overall budget for the QPS for 2021-22 is \$2.857 billion, consisting of \$2.701 billion operating budget and \$156 million capital budget.²⁸

According to the Capital Statement 2021–22, the QPS capital program of \$156.1 million will support ‘quality frontline services throughout Queensland’, including funding police facilities, motor vehicles, vessels, information and communication technology and other essential equipment.²⁹

The SDS states that 2021–22 budget highlights for QPS include:

- supporting the public health response to the declared disaster situation and public health emergency for COVID-19 to protect the community from the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the safety of all Queenslanders
- focusing on road safety activities including the effective enforcement of safe speeds and driver behaviour, including hooning, to reduce road trauma
- trialling metal detecting wands in the Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach Safe Night Precincts to target knife crime
- continuing the highly successful Project Booyah program, a QPS-led collaborative and transformative early intervention program for disconnected and/or at risk young people
- continuing and expanding initiatives under the Youth Justice Five Point Plan to target serious recidivist young offenders on bail
- implementing the Prevention Together Framework and Strategy to collectively build a community culture of prevention and harm minimisation

²⁷ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Queensland Police Service, p 1.

²⁸ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Queensland Police Service, p 2, 5, 6.

²⁹ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Capital Statement 2021–22, p 86.

- standing up the new Domestic, Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Command and continuing to support both the implementation of the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026* and the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce which is examining coercive control and women's experiences in the criminal justice system
- continuing the roll out of 25 Mobile Police Beats to deliver a highly visible police presence and enable police to swiftly respond when and where they are needed.³⁰

4.2 Queensland Corrective Services

The Honourable Mark Ryan MP also has ministerial responsibility for Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) which has a separate appropriation.

QCS's purpose is to provide safe, modern and responsive correctional services, which rehabilitate prisoners and offenders and prevent crime, making Queensland safer.³¹

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2021 compares the appropriations for QCS for 2020–21 and 2021–22.

Appropriations	2020–21 \$'000	2021–22 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	1,025,723	1,066,466
equity adjustment	57,472	224,035
<i>Administered Items</i>	..	..
Vote	1,083,195	1,290,501

Source: Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2, p 16.

4.2.1 Budget highlights – Queensland Corrective Services

The budget highlights for QCS include:

- \$364.2 million capital program which focuses on correctional centre expansion and enhancements including \$320 million towards the continued expansion of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct and \$20.6 million towards the construction of an additional 398 beds at Capricornia Correctional Centre.³²
- trialling the use of electronic monitoring devices to manage serious recidivist young offenders on bail (\$3.3 million)
- undertaking options analyses for prison capacity and health services (\$2.4 million)
- progressing amendments to compel earlier prisoner cooperation to locate a homicide victim's remains under the 'No Body, No Parole' framework.³³

4.3 Key issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee and visiting Members during the public hearing in relation to the QPS and QCS included:

- rate of youth reoffending as at 30 June 2021 in Queensland

³⁰ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Queensland Police Service, p 2.

³¹ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Queensland Corrective Services, p 1.

³² Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Capital Statement 2021–22, p 71.

³³ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Queensland Corrective Services, p 2.

- eligibility of juvenile offenders for the charge of breach of bail
- reviews of the Rapid Action and Patrol group and Townsville Stronger Community Action group
- value of property and vehicles stolen in Townsville by juvenile offenders in the 2020–21 financial year
- transfer of the Caloundra watch house facility to Youth Justice for a youth detention centre
- appointment process of police to the senior executive service level of inspector
- funding for QPS's computer-aided dispatch system
- QPS support for addressing poor driving behaviour on Teewah Beach and crime in nearby communities
- Weapons licensing renewals
- investigation into policing of Land Forces protest
- funding of SES training initiatives
- update on QPS efforts, including Taskforce Argos, in protecting children from predators
- work of QPS to protect and support victims of sexual violence
- policing infrastructure and resources underway and planned for the electorate of Caloundra to meet and maintain safety
- process for policing outlaw motorcycle gangs and counterterrorism measures in line with the legislation
- locations of youth detention facilities, remand facilities and prisons in Queensland
- number of double-up bunk beds provided under capital program in correctional facilities
- clarification whether a projected 2021–22 increase of full-time equivalent staff includes the staff who have transitioned from the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre
- process for training QCS staff given the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic
- update on implementing recommendations from the Queensland Parole System Review
- Capricornia Correctional Centre workplace culture review
- review into the Townsville Correctional Centre
- QCS action to reduce the rates of prisoner-on-staff assaults in Queensland prisons
- use of OC sprays in correctional facilities
- number of vacancies for correctional supervisors
- restrictions on illicit drugs in correctional facilities
- bed facilities for prisoners in Queensland
- KPMG report into parole board
- new participants using the opioid institution therapy program in prison facilities
- transition to public-private prisons
- QCS support interventions to help prevent domestic and family violence
- action being taken to address prisoner capacity.

5 Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

The Honourable Mark Ryan MP is the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. The Minister’s portfolio comprises Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management (IGEM).

5.1 Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

The purpose of QFES is to deliver contemporary and effective fire, emergency and disaster management services that meet Queenslanders’ needs.³⁴

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2021 compares the appropriations for QFES for 2020–21 and 2021–22.

Appropriations	2020–21 \$’000	2021–22 \$’000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	124,070	135,298
equity adjustment	(6,515)	1,990
<i>Administered Items</i>	..	..
Vote	117,555	137,288

Source: Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2, p 17.

The 2021–22 QFES capital program of \$58.7 million in capital purchases and \$897,000 in capital grants is aimed at supporting the provision of fire, emergency and disaster management services throughout Queensland. Program highlights include \$30.5 million for replacement and new fire and rescue and rural fire appliances and \$8.2 million to continue the replacement of the Maryborough regional QFES headquarters and auxiliary fire and rescue station.³⁵

5.1.1 Budget highlights – Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

In regards to budget highlights for QFES, the SDS states:

QFES will lead Queensland’s response to key priority actions addressing relevant recommendations out of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements. \$10.8 million over 4 years will boost hazard and risk management, the fire danger rating system and emergency warning activities to enhance the natural disaster preparedness capabilities of Queensland communities. The government is holding \$232.3 million centrally to support COVID-19 hotel accommodation, border control and State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC) activities as part of the \$480 million being provided in 2021–22 to continue the COVID-19 response. The government is providing additional funding of \$2.5 million over 4 years and \$500,000 ongoing to QFES as part of a total funding package of \$5 million over 4 years and \$1 million ongoing to implement the recommendations of the IGEM review into the Fraser Island (K’Gari) Bushfire.³⁶

5.2 Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management

The IGEM seeks to ensure best possible disaster management arrangements are in place through collaborative leadership, partnerships and innovation.³⁷

³⁴ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, p 1.

³⁵ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Capital Statement 2021–22, p 73.

³⁶ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, p 2.

³⁷ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, p 9.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2021 compares the appropriations for IGEM for 2020–21 and 2021–22.

Appropriations	2020–21 \$'000	2021–22 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
departmental services	4,126	4,309
equity adjustment	..	..
<i>Administered Items</i>	..	..
Vote	4,126	4,309

Source: Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2, p 15.

The SDS does not identify specific deliverables for the IGEM in 2021–22 but states that IGEM's objectives include providing assurance and building emergency management capability; and seeking collaborative partnerships.³⁸

5.3 Key issues raised at the public hearing

The issues raised by the committee and visiting Members during the public hearing in relation to QFES and IGEM included:

- cost of KPMG review of the structure of QFES and timeframe for release to the public
- amendments to allow Australian-based pilots to operate the large air tankers (LAT)
- funding of QFES and delivery of services
- funding to facilitate the annual state level exercise of the Queensland Bushfire Plan
- average cost of a new urban fire appliance and comparison with previous financial years
- review of interagency protocol for fire management and fiscal protocols
- timeframe for releasing the State Emergency Service (SES) review report and associated funding to implement its recommendations
- funding of SES and proportion allocated to training initiatives for minimal training requirements
- funding to support marine rescue volunteers
- details of agreement with Victoria in relation to the LAT
- current allocated budget for leasing the LAT under the new agreement
- update on the rollout of photoelectric smoke alarms as per legislative changes
- update on support for frontline emergency services, including the Rural Fire Service and SES
- QFES actions to help keep children safe
- building emergency management capability.

³⁸ Queensland Budget 2021–22 – Service Delivery Statements, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, p 9.

6 Statements of Reservation

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee – Budget 2021/22 Statement of Reservation

The LNP agrees with passing the 2021/22 Budget.

However, honest Queenslanders expected more from the Labor Government's budget.

With the health system in crisis, they deserved solutions to fix ambulance ramping and the ever-growing surgery waiting lists.

With small and family businesses going to the wall under the pressure of COVID lockdowns, they expected the Labor Government to step up and provide COVID support payments.

With young criminals running rampant throughout Queensland, they expected action to keep their family and possessions safe.

With double income families struggling to buy or rent a home, they expected action to be taken to release more land.

What they received was a budget which announced funds without funding and \$4 billion cuts to vital infrastructure spending.

Justice and Attorney-General

As occurred in the deliberations of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee in relation to the 2020-21 Budget, issues were raised concerning this year's Budget that indicated the government fell short in relation to important issues of behaviour and in relation to the prudent expenditure of public funds.

The conduct of two cases arising from investigations by the Crime and Corruption Commission – into Logan City Council and Moreton Bay Regional Council - and the "needles in strawberries" prosecution – was the subject of significant questioning. Shortcomings in the prosecutorial process led to an admission by the Attorney General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence that "the Director of Public Prosecutions is always looking at how they can improve their processes and work with the CCC". (*Hansard*, 12 August 2021, p 19)

The fact that these cases took some years before being discontinued, involving the expenditure of public money by either or both the CCC and DPP and potential damage to reputations, is a matter for regret and efforts must be made to ensure that a repeat of such circumstances is avoided.

The Chair of the CCC was also quizzed on the expenditure of public funds amounting to \$560,000 by the government to finance polling into its response to the COVID-19 crisis. The Chair declined to speculate on whether such conduct would be the subject of a complaint and, therefore, subject to CCC assessment.

The Attorney General indicated that she had not been briefed on the polling.

The Chair also responded to questions about the CCC's concerns about the misuse of private information in the public sector. The Chair said:

"... the maximum penalties are sufficient; there is no doubt about that. As I have said in the past publicly, we are disappointed with some of the court outcomes." (*Hansard*, 12 August 2021, p 7)

It was revealed the CCC has issued the vendor of the CCC's case management system with a notice of suspension under the contract as a result of security vulnerabilities which could extend to May 2022, the date by which the system might go live. Again, the government's experiences with information technology systems could only be described as sub-optimal.

The Attorney General gave assurances that, despite funding restraints, support for two critical services – the Coroners Court and Legal Aid Queensland – would be able to function without a loss of essential services to Queensland communities. Support for both organizations is vital, and the government should remain vigilant to ensure that people are not disadvantaged as a result of any funding changes.

Transparency remains a critical challenge for the government, and one which is not always met. Under questioning the Attorney revealed that “one of my ministerial staff works for the government media unit”. (*Hansard*, 21 August 2021, p 18)

At the same time, neither the Attorney nor the Chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission were able to answer questions concerning an inquiry into the appointment of Mr Frankie Carroll as Under Treasurer. This came despite an invitation from the Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet that such questions should be directed to the CCC.

Following on from last year’s Estimates hearings, the Attorney again gave a commitment that “at this stage Queensland has no plans to raise the age of minimum criminal responsibility”. This comes against the background of growing internal pressure to do just this.

Women and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

The LNP exposed the Queensland Government’s shortfall in protecting victims of domestic and family violence compared to other Australian jurisdictions.

Queensland victims of domestic and family violence expect more from the Labor Government - not less support than victims who reside in Victoria and New South Wales.

A lack of funding and housing as well as a lack of innovative policy were the key themes in the estimates hearing.

The LNP quizzed the Minister as to why victims of domestic violence in Queensland receive less support from their Government than Victorians. For instance, on the back of the \$25 million that was allocated to the State by the federal government in response to COVID-19 and domestic and family violence, the state government contributed only \$7.5 million (representing only 29 per cent of the federal government’s contribution). In comparison, their Victorian counterparts committed \$20 million, which equates to 65 per cent.

Unlike Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales are prepared to invest in innovative policies to ensure victims of domestic and family violence have access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing. One such policy is ‘pet-friendly’ refuges. As expressed by the Opposition during estimates, pets can be a legitimate barrier for women who want to escape domestic violence but do not want to leave their pets behind.

New South Wales contributed a \$500,000 one-off grants program for refuges and animal shelters while Victoria committed \$1.3 million aimed at linking refuge and accommodation services with vets, animal shelters and boarding facilities. In stark contrast, Queensland committed less than one-tenth of what Victoria was prepared to fund.

While the LNP applauds the RSPCA’s ‘Pets in Crisis’ Program, the Labor Government’s contribution to this program is simply not good enough. In fact, the RSPCA’s program is at risk. To continue delivering the program, the RSPCA needs \$250,000 annually. Without this, women and children will have less housing options and are more at risk of never escaping their violent relationship.

Police, Corrective Services, Fire and Emergency Services

The evidence produced at the hearing raised serious concerns about the Labor Government's capacity or willingness to reveal important information about their ability to manage aspects of the portfolio.

This has led the LNP to have no faith in the Labor Government to control or reduce crime in Queensland, including in areas like Townsville. Despite a review being completed 'some months ago' into the Rapid Action and Patrols Group and the Townsville Stronger Community Action Group, the Minister would not commit to when the findings of the report would be released.

When asked about whether she had received feedback from operational police officers with regards to making juvenile offenders eligible for the charge of breach of bail, the Commissioner did not address the question. Furthermore, the Commissioner advised that any youth reoffending data is not held by the QPS, and that requests would need to be directed to Youth Justice.

When asked a direct question in relation to what was the value of property and vehicles stolen in Townsville by juvenile offenders in the 2020-21 FY, the Minister and Commissioner stated that this data was not available. The LNP find this extraordinary considering that there is provision on every crime report for the value of property stolen or damaged.

Furthermore, this information would also be provided on Court Briefs (QP9's) in relation to restitution. Information provided to the LNP outside of estimates suggests that values are being provided on many crime reports. Aside from the human cost of crime in Townsville, LNP members of the committee believe that not having values of property included is masking the tremendous financial impact of these crimes.

Of concern, it was established that the proposed Caloundra Youth Remand Centre had been discussed for 12 months with the QPS, well before the last election. This revelation shows the community of Caloundra were kept in the dark on the proposal prior to the last election. The LNP is disgusted at the Labor Government's lack of honesty with the community of Caloundra. The location of this youth jail without community consultation near a childcare centre, school, funeral home, hospital, RSL and retirement village is disgraceful. The people of Caloundra expect better.

In an extraordinary exchange whilst discussing the new Caloundra Youth Remand Centre the Minister spruiked that young offenders are held in watch houses. He further stated, "There are young people held in watch houses all the time." The Minister then went on to list the details of six young people currently being held in watch houses located at Cairns, Brisbane, Pine Rivers, Maroochydore, Mackay and Mt Isa. This appears to be in direct conflict with the Labor Government's own policy of not holding children in watch houses.

In relation to the recent judgment against the QPS by Justice Boddice regarding the appointment of 26 Police officers to the rank of Inspector, the Commissioner confirmed that the appointments would not be set aside. The Commissioner also confirmed that one of the appointments was a Mr Simon Tayler who was the Labor candidate for Mt Isa in the 2015 State Election.

Regarding the current CAD system, the Commissioner admitted that it was a legacy system as identified in the Greenfield Review however believes the system is still functional. There is no money in the budget for a replacement CAD system despite the contract expiring in June 2022, and the QPS is only in 'discussions' with other agencies (QFES and QAS) about 'what the future of CAD looks like.' The LNP holds serious concerns about the QPS's ability to replace the current CAD system in a timely manner and any adverse outcomes as a result of any unacceptable delays.

With respect to COVID operations - in response to a Question on Notice for these estimates hearings detailing the work completed by the QPS directly relating to COVID duties, the LNP has serious concerns about the impact that this has had on the QPS ability to undertake business as usual. An analysis of the work performed confirms, without doubt, there have been significant impacts. Given the ongoing issues with crime across the state it is a realistic assumption that the two issues are invariably linked. There are also serious concerns regarding the impact on the QPS budget.

Corrective Services

The LNP Committee members hold concerns regarding the Labor Government's apparent inability to manage prisoner numbers resulting in consequences including overcrowding and assaults.

The numbers of prisoners being held within correctional facilities in Queensland continues to be an issue. This continues a disturbing trend from previous years with current capacity shown to be 125.8 percent. Despite the history of this issue the Commissioner admitted that there are still prisoners sleeping on mattresses on the floor and that 'we do not want anyone sleeping on the floor.' This is unacceptable and displays an inability by the current Palaszczuk Government to plan for the future.

When questioned in relation to the very disturbing trend of assaults across every category being triple the target, the Commissioner advised that this was taken seriously. However, the LNP members of the Committee believe that this is also linked to the current overcrowding and more needs to be done.

Whilst answering questions, the Commissioner advised that several measures had been introduced including OC spray, load bearing vests and body worn video. When asked how many occasions OC spray been used the LNP is astounded to learn that the answer was unknown. Furthermore, the Commissioner advised that, 'We are in the process of establishing a mechanism to ensure that we record every presentation and every use of OC spray.' This indicates that mechanisms that should have been in place prior to its introduction were not in place. Considering OC spray is classed as a 'category R' weapon, this is of serious concern. Corrective Services could have easily liaised with the QPS on their policy and adopted the same prior to its introduction for inclusion in training.

Regarding the SDS and the increase of 344 full time staff this financial year it was established that this included staff who have transitioned from the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre. This equates to only an additional 104 staff for the financial year. When questioned about how many supervisor vacancies existed across correction centres, the Minister advised that there was 13 and stated that was 'quite low'. The LNP holds concerns regarding the Labor Government's ability to provide adequate staff to ensure the safety of the community, staff and prisoners, particularly given the current overcrowding. With an ever-increasing prisoner population all staffing positions are vital.

When questioned in relation to the Sofronoff Review (QLD Parole System Review) it was established that 36 recommendations have still not been completed. In particular, recommendations 81 (Ensuring information available to Victims Register) and 84 (Procedures regarding DVO) are yet to be completed. When questioned, the committee was advised that these would be completed by the 30 June 2022. The LNP consider that the recommendations of the Sofronoff Review should be implemented as soon as possible.

Following questioning regarding the workplace review of Townsville Correctional Centre the Committee was advised that the findings of the review were not provided to other centres. This is seen by the LNP members of the Committee as a missed opportunity to improve workplace culture at other centres.

In an extraordinary revelation, the Commissioner could not provide details on what assaults on Corrections staff remained unsolved or unfinalised, instead insisting that information is held by the QPS in the Corrective Services Investigation Unit (CSIU). The LNP is very concerned that Corrective Services Managers are not in possession of this information given the importance of providing a safe work environment for their staff.

Fire and Emergency Services

The LNP has concerns regarding crewing for the Large Air Tanker which will be contracted for a period of four years. The LNP would like to see Australian crew used and when seeking assurance from the Commissioner to this regard were informed that ‘...the operator is going to consider ...’ and ‘... it is the intent of the operator to explore the option ...’ which does not provide the LNP confidence that this initiative will be enacted.

With respect to COVID operations, the Commissioner confirmed that costs regarding support to the QLD Police on border operations is being absorbed into QFES operating expenses. The LNP are concerned that there may be shortfalls with respect to other services or functions as a result.

With respect to the allocated \$18 million in the capital program for the purchase of 40 urban fire appliances, the LNP is sceptical that the listed budget will be adequate given the cost of a type three pumper is \$850,000 to \$870,000. The LNP will be monitoring these acquisitions closely.

The LNP questioned the Minister in relation to when the findings of the review into the SES would be released. The review cost taxpayers \$250,000 and was received by the government more than 12 months ago. The Minister would not inform the committee when the findings of the report would be released despite repeated questioning. The LNP is convinced that the Labor Government has something to hide by not releasing the report and will continue to prosecute this issue.

Conclusion

The LNP believes this budget provides little reassurance to honest Queenslanders that ambulance waiting times and hospital waiting lists will drop.

It provides little reassurance that crime rates will fall, or that planning is being done to bring on a supply of housing stock for people to own or rent.

It provides little reassurance on the delivery of infrastructure needed to get people home to their families faster.

Queenslanders deserve more from this third term Labor Government.



Laura Gerber MP
Deputy Chair
Member for Currumbin



Andrew Powell MP
Member for Glass House

Report No. 11, 57th Parliament – Consideration of 2021-22 Budget Estimates

Statement of Reservation

Sandy Bolton MP – Member for Noosa

Whilst I am supportive of Report No. 11 Consideration of 2021-22 Budget Estimates, there are 4 items that need to be brought to the attention of the House, hence this Statement of Reservation.

Firstly, the Budget this year was produced and delivered against the backdrop of ongoing lockdowns due to COVID-19 outbreaks, with its resultant negative impact as government must now deal with an increased debt in endeavours to maintain the economy's momentum.

These lockdowns are having a devastating impact on our small business and residents, with my community as well as broader Queensland facing mental, health and financial consequences that were previously not considered. The provision of small, one-off payments or grants, waiving of fees and tax deferrals are welcome, however do not give the guaranteed level of assistance they need for every day that they may have to close into the future. Many of our wonderful businesses are struggling to climb out of the devastation that COVID lockdowns have delivered.

The big question remains – how is this needed assistance going to be funded over the long-term, when National Cabinet and its participants are still not in full agreement on lockdowns, border closures and vaccination passports?

Secondly, the Queensland Government's Economic Recovery Plan has set the foundations for this Budget. The test will be ensuring that the debt is used to reduce unemployment, counter underemployment, and assist economic growth, whilst maintaining and increasing our essential services as well as addressing our housing crisis and growing health waitlists. Queensland businesses must be supported as the economy attempts to recover from the setbacks of domestic and international travel restrictions and ongoing lockdowns. Trust and confidence can only develop from surety, which is essential as part of this Economic Recovery Plan.

Thirdly, once again during this process, there were examples of where we can improve the efficiency of the Committee and Estimates system, which should be dedicated to progressing lines of questioning that have the stated aim of being able to ascertain where and how Queenslanders' money is being spent.

Lastly, there are difficulties due to time constraints for crossbenchers to adequately address concerns, and our questions regarding independent statutory authorities, their functions and oversights was not able to allay concerns that they have the necessary funding to fulfil their obligations fully. An example is the Electoral Commission of Queensland still not having additional funding to ensure privacy protection of voter information in relation to the postal vote process, or for review of the existing electoral boundaries which engender unequal democratic representation.

In addition, to drill down to the funding commitments for domestic violence packages for women and their children when in emergency refuges could not be fully completed.

Similarly, further questioning was needed to ensure that funding for people's safety and security, whether that be through additional police being activated in crime hotspots, relevant aerial firefighting pilots being available 24/7 to respond to bushfires, or essential training packages for our SES volunteers – the time allocated is insufficient to ascertain the details within.

These four items demonstrate some of the major concerns that non-government members continue to have – that the Committee System process, including the Estimates Committee System process, needs reviewing to become an efficient and effective mechanism.

In this Statement of Reservation, I am therefore once again submitting a recommendation for a way forward which would ensure that both the government of the day, the opposition and crossbenchers are able to present and receive information, be able to properly scrutinise and analyse it, and ensure that Queenslanders' money is being appropriated to their expectations.

RECOMMENDATION:

As the Estimates hearings process and Committee function is impacting the efficiencies required by Queenslanders, the following process for a review is sought:

- i. Request the Committee of the Legislative Assembly to commence a review looking at items previously identified.
- ii. That review should:
 - a. Allow for public input
 - b. Specifically request submissions from sitting Members of the Legislative Assembly
 - c. Provide a comparison with relevant jurisdictions within Australia and overseas

- iii. The review should include the following additions to previous requests:
 - a. Presentation of the Budget Papers in a format that is comprehensive and provides access to all of the relevant information in a format that could be understood by all Queenslanders.
 - b. Estimates Committee hearings should be altered to allow members to ask Questions on Notice to all Ministers, not just the ones allocated to their committee; and these answers should be provided in a timely manner – not the day before the hearing.
 - c. Estimates Committee hearings should have an altered format that allocates additional time for opposition and crossbencher questions.
 - d. Committee functions, scrutiny of subordinate legislation, and oversight of independent authorities should be reviewed to ensure consistency and efficacy.
- iv. The review should be completed within a 12 week timeframe and presented to all Members by way of a detailed Options Paper to allow for the modernisation and streamlining of a parliamentary process that is open, accountable and accessible for all Members representing their communities.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would like to thank my fellow members of this Committee and our invaluable secretariat for the work they have undertaken in such a time-constrained and pressurised situation. In addition, our gratitude to the Ministers, their staff, departmental officers and all others who worked under ongoing COVID duress in preparation for and attendance at Budget Estimates 2021-22.



SANDY BOLTON MP
Member for Noosa

Date: 19 August 2021