

Question on Notice

No. 962

Asked on 22 August 2024

MR T NICHOLLS ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND MINISTER FOR PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (HON Y D'ATH)

QUESTION:

Will the Attorney-General provide a breakdown of the funds expended to date from the government's funding package of \$202.7m in response to the Commission of Inquiry into Forensic DNA Testing in Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Government has committed \$202.7 million over the 6-year period 2022-23 to 2027-28 to implement the findings of the Commissions of Inquiry, reform forensic services in Queensland and support related initiatives, such as increased victim support services.

The investment is distributed across the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG), Queensland Police Service (QPS), Queensland Health (QH) and Forensic Science Queensland (FSQ). On 1 July 2024, new statutory arrangements for the delivery of forensic services commenced and portfolio responsibility for FSQ moved from QH to DJAG, in line with Recommendation 121 of the Commission of Inquiry into Forensic DNA Testing in Queensland.

The package of investment includes \$45.4 million to DJAG directly to deliver a range of initiatives. These include progressive review of active and historical cases, potentially impacted by past deficient forensic practices, by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; delivery of additional victim support services; provision for any increased demand on Legal Aid Queensland services arising from historical case review; and the establishment of new statutory arrangements for the delivery of forensic services under the *Forensic Science Queensland 2024 Act*. As at 31 July 2024, \$4.4 million had been expended by DJAG toward these initiatives.

An additional, approximately \$90 million has been allocated over the relevant period (2022-23 to 2027-28) for FSQ, as follows:

- \$70.2 million in operational funding to support the recruitment of additional scientific and support staff, deliver enhanced quality assurance processes, and to build research and development capacity; and
- \$19.7 million in capital funding to expand and improve Queensland's forensic science facilities, as well as procure and upgrade scientific equipment.

A further \$10 million is also available to FSQ to support testing by external forensic service providers to supplement 'in-house' testing capacity. Approximately \$2.41 million of this funding has been expended to 30 August 2024.

In total, \$15.5 million of the additional funding for FSQ was expended in 2023-24.