



Consideration of 2012-13 Portfolio Budget Estimates

Report No. 10
Education and Innovation Committee
October 2012

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Acknowledgements

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Chair's Foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the Budget Estimates for the 2012-13 financial year.

Consideration of the Budget Estimates allows for the public examination of both the responsible Minister and Chief Executive Officers of agencies within the committee's portfolio area. This was undertaken through analysis of the budget papers, questions on notice and the public hearing process.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2012 for the portfolios of Education, Training, Employment, Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I wish to thank the Minister for Education, Training and Employment and the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts and their departmental officers for their cooperation in providing information to the committee throughout this process.

I would also like to thank the other members of the committee for their hard work and valuable contribution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rosemary Menkens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial 'R'.

Rosemary Menkens MP
Chair

October 2012

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Education and Innovation Committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2012 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

1 Introduction

Role of the committee

The Education and Innovation Committee (the committee) is a portfolio committee of the Queensland Parliament required under section 88 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and established under the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly. The committee was established by resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 18 May 2012 and consists of government and non-government members.

The committee's areas of responsibility are administered by the:

- Department of Education, Training and Employment; and
- Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts.

In accordance with Standing Order 177(2), on 14 September 2012 the Annual Appropriation Bill 2012 was referred to the committee for investigation and report.

On 16 October 2012, the committee conducted a public hearing and took oral evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Minister for Education, Training and Employment; the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts; Directors-General and senior officials of the relevant departments and a Chief Executive Officer listed in Schedule 7 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.¹ A copy of the transcript of the committee's hearing can be accessed at www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Hansard.

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
- oral evidence taken at the hearing
- documents tabled at the hearing
- answers to questions taken on notice during the hearing
- evidence provided after the hearing.

Prior to the public hearing, the committee provided the Ministers with questions on notice in relation to the estimates. Responses to all the questions were received.

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

¹ Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders

Participation by other Members

The following additional Members of Parliament participated in the hearing with leave of the committee:

- Ms Jo-Ann Miller MP, Member for Bundamba, Shadow Minister for Health, Natural Resources and Mines and Housing;
- Mr Bill Byrne, Member for Rockhampton, Shadow Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, Construction and Public Works and National Parks; and
- Ms Jackie Trad, Member for South Brisbane, Shadow Minister for Transport, Environment and Heritage Protection, Small Business, Consumer Affairs and the Arts.

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 Education and Innovation Committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2012 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

3 Education, Training and Employment

The Minister for Education, Training and Employment has ministerial responsibility for the portfolios administered by the Department of Education, Training and Employment.

The Minister's areas of responsibility are administered through the Department and a number of statutory authorities, including the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE, Queensland Studies Authority and the Southbank Institute of Technology. In accordance with Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Executive Officers of these authorities attended the estimates hearing.

The Department has three service areas as follows:

- Early Childhood Education and Care – provides access to quality early childhood education and care.
- School Education – delivers Prep to Year 12 in Queensland state schools and administers funding for non-state schools.
- Training, Tertiary Education and Employment – funds, delivers and ensures quality of vocational education and training and provides advice and support to improve workforce participation.²

² State Budget 2012-13, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Education, Training and Employment, p 10.

Appropriation summary

The following table compares the appropriations for the Department for 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Appropriations	2011-12 \$'000	2012-13 \$'000
Controlled Items		
departmental services	7,425,300	7,626,802
equity adjustment	(79,714)	(107,222)
Administered Items	2,409,922	2,611,162
Vote	9,755,508	10,130,742

Source: Appropriation Bill 2012, Schedule 2, p 9.

In 2012-13, budgeted capital purchases for the Department and statutory authorities total \$461.7 million.³ This includes \$450.6 million for the Department, which is made up of \$382.4 million for the construction and refurbishment of educational facilities and purchases of other property, plant and equipment; \$21.5 million for kindergarten services and \$46.6 million for TAFE training facilities.⁴

Budgeted capital purchases for statutory authorities total \$11.1 million which is made up of \$7.8 million for the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE; \$1.4 million for the Southbank Institute of Technology and \$1.9 million for the Queensland Studies Authority.⁵

Budget highlights

2012-13 budget highlights for the Department include:

- Provision of education services in 1,239 state schools in 2012, to more than 496,100 students;
- Establishment of 129 kindergarten services in areas of need, on state and non-state school sites by the end of 2012;
- Investment of an additional \$4 million over four years to implement the *Step Up Into Education* program, to better prepare children for school;
- Investment of \$11.5 million to construct four children and family centres to cater for the needs of Indigenous children from birth to eight years at Logan, Mackay, Palm Island and Rockhampton, as part of a joint initiative with the Australian Government;
- Provision of up to 270 additional teachers, teacher aides and support staff;
- Continuation of the South East Queensland (SEQ) Schools Public Private Partnership project to build, operate and maintain seven new schools in SEQ;
- Investment of \$62.1 million to continue the implementation of the introduction of Year 7 as the first year of secondary school from 2015;
- Investment of \$51.9 million to replace and enhance facilities at existing state schools;

³ State Budget 2012-13, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 32.

⁴ State Budget 2012-13, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, pp 39-40.

⁵ State Budget 2012-13, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, pp 41-42.

- Investment of \$6.5 million to state and non-state schools to enable principals to select tailored literacy and numeracy programs as part of *Preparing our Children for Future Success – Getting the basics right*;
- Implementation of the national Curriculum in English, maths and science from 2012 and history from 2013;
- Continuation and support of the Independent Public Schools initiative, with the first 30 schools to be identified in 2012-13;
- Investment of \$1.4 million as part of additional \$10.9 million over four years to expand support for students with disability in state and non-state schools;
- Investment of \$3.5 million to provide every State Special School with 20 tablets;
- Investment of \$2 million, as part of \$4 million over three years, to establish the Queensland Schools Plan Commission. The Commission will streamline and coordinate the processes for the planning, establishment and expansion of government and non-government schools.
- Delivery of vocational education and training (VET) services to over 288,000 students;
- Reform of the VET system through working with the Skills and Training Taskforce;
- Investment of \$24.1 million to continue the development of the Central Queensland major trade and technical skills campus at Mackay;
- Investment of up to \$86 million over six years to support 10,000 additional apprentices; and
- Investment of \$10 million to fund 500 university scholarships for women in traditionally male dominated fields or in areas experiencing skills shortages administered by Skills Queensland.

Issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee in relation to budget estimates for the Education, Training and Employment portfolio include:

- Travelling show school funding – protest against the lack of funding, Ministerial consultation on closure of the school, legal processes (and timing) for the closure of the school and transition of these students to the State School of Distance Education;
- Actions to protect students from bullying, abuse and sexual abuse;
- School autonomy;
- Additional resources being provided for Prep classes;
- Resources to support the transition of Year 7 into secondary school;
- Resources to assist literacy and numeracy of students in early years;
- Resources to assist children transition to school;
- Celebration by students of the ANZAC Centenary;
- Reduction in staff levels at the Department, including loss of front-line staff;
- Future funding and centralisation of the School of the Air;
- Reduction in funding to community education programs, including the Pyjama Foundation and the Ready Readers Book for Bubs Program;
- Reduction in funding for the Public Private Partnership program;
- Review of the Grammar Schools Act, Queensland Studies Authority and the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board;
- Planning for the future growth of the student population;
- Assistance provided to children with special needs through the use of technology;

- Funding cuts - consultation with organisations and program providers that had funding cut and the number of people who lost their jobs as a result of the cuts.
- Sale of Blackstone State School and Dinmore State School site;
- Roll-out of the Australian Curriculum;
- Diversity Unit and the Indigenous Education and Training Futures division of the Department of Education, Training and Employment;
- Skilling Queenslanders for Work evaluation, funding and timing of a decision to stop funding the program;
- Maintenance backlog in schools;
- Delivery of *Families as First Teachers* and measurement of the success of the initiative;
- NAPLAN results;
- Enterprise Bargaining Agreement with Queensland teachers;
- Parental involvement in school communities;
- Employment programs and targets for long-term unemployed, projected unemployment levels and unemployment target rate;
- Reduction in payroll tax, red tape and regulation;
- Djarragun College overpayments;
- 'Closing the Gap' COAG targets;
- Employment of graduate teachers in 2013;
- Referral of powers to the Australian Skills Quality Authority;
- Matching training and skills to where jobs are needed;
- Strategies to improve future enrolments in the VET sector;
- Training Ombudsman – level of activity, consultation on the decision to end the role of the Training Ombudsman and the new complaint process;
- Utilisation rates and infrastructure footprint of TAFE campuses and the financial performance of TAFE in 2011-12;
- Merger of the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE with Central Queensland University, including the future disposal of assets;
- Supporting Women Scholarships;
- Review of Skills Queensland and the Skills and Training Taskforce;
- Incentives to attract and keep apprentices;

4 Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

The Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts has ministerial responsibility for the portfolios administered by the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts (DSITIA).

The Minister's areas of responsibility are administered through DSITIA and a number of statutory authorities and entities. The statutory authorities are the Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland Museum, Queensland Performing Arts Trust, Queensland Theatre Company and the State Library of Queensland (Library Board of Queensland). The two entities are the Queensland Government Chief Information Office and the Office of the Queensland Chief Scientist. The four companies supported by the Arts portfolio are the Aboriginal Centre for Performing Arts, Major Brisbane Festival, Screen Queensland and the Queensland Music Festival.⁶

In accordance with Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Executive Officers of the statutory authorities attended the estimates hearing.

DSITIA has four service areas as follows:

- Science delivery services;
- Innovation and science development services;
- Queensland Government information and communication technology services; and
- Arts and culture services.⁷

Appropriation summary

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2012 compares the appropriations for the Department for 2011-12 and 2012-13.

Appropriations	2011-12 \$'000	2012-13 \$'000
Controlled Items		
departmental services	90,051	382,639
equity adjustment	15,664	(67,740)
Administered Items	27,111	153,418
Vote	132,826	468,317

Source: Appropriation Bill 2012, Schedule 2, p 12.

In 2012-13, budgeted capital purchases for DSITIA, statutory bodies, Commercialised Business Unit and shared service providers total \$29.2 million and budgeted capital grants total \$15.9 million.⁸ This includes \$7.1 million for the capital program for DSITIA; \$17.2 million for CITEC; \$1.7 million for the Library Board of Queensland and \$3.3 million for Queensland Shared Services.⁹

⁶ State Budget 2012-13, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Science, Information Technology, Information and the Arts, p 1.

⁷ State Budget 2012-13, Service Delivery Statements – Department of Science, Information Technology, Information and the Arts, p 3.

⁸ State Budget 2012-13, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 94.

⁹ State Budget 2012-13, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 95-96.

Budget highlights

2012-13 budget highlights for DSITIA include:

- Support of the establishment of the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine;
- Establishment of an Arts Grants Advisory Board;
- Coordination of reef science projects to monitor and evaluate land management practices and water quality impacts on the Great Barrier Reef;
- Development and maintenance of online information systems, databases and websites;
- Mapping, assessment and monitoring of various environments;
- Extend and build collaboration between industry; research and education; and innovation within Government;
- Lead a whole of Government approach to digital archiving;
- Plan the one-stop-shop for the Queensland public for access to Queensland Government information and services;
- Implementation of the Arts for All Queenslanders initiatives, including the SuperStar Fund; and
- Implementation of standardised finance and HR processes and services across all client departments.

Issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee in relation to budget estimates for the Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts portfolio include:

- Costs associated with the establishment of the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts;
- The Minister's meetings with lobbyists,
- Multifactor productivity in Queensland;
- Funding of PhD grants, scholarships and fellowships;
- Funding of innovation programs, including the Brisbane Innovation Scorecard;
- Queensland's Science and technology capability and strengthening of links between Queensland scientists, industry and the broader community;
- Assessment of government science capability;
- The use of innovative science data networks to assist scientists to map Queensland's resources and land use;
- Funding of monitoring and modelling programs, including Paddock to Reef monitoring program;
- Scientific coordination and projects of Great Barrier Reef programs;
- 2012-13 cyclone season obligations to provide information and advice on waves and storm tides;
- SLATS program for monitoring tree and land cover across the state;
- Land use map in the reef catchment areas;
- Agricultural land audit;
- Tropical health research;
- Funding cuts to arts grants programs;
- Arts investment advisory board;
- Premier of Queensland's sculpture commission;

- Support provided to Queensland writers;
- The Cairns Indigenous Art Fair;
- Prado exhibition;
- Effectiveness and efficiency of ICT investment; and
- The Government's fiscal repair agenda.

APPENDIX

Education and Innovation Committee

Statement of Reservation

Minister for Education, Training and Employment

Education

After a series of questioning in relation to the closure of the Queensland Travelling School for Show Children the Minister was either unable or refused to answer simple questions. The Minister made it clear that he did not understand the process for amalgamation or closure of a public school pursuant to the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*.

The lack of consultation and of the considerable distress this has caused has had a significant impact on the affected parents and children. On top of this lack of clarity and information, the families also had to deal with hostile language from the Minister's Chief of Staff.

The Minister throughout Opposition questioning seemed unable to explain the rationale for the decision to close the school.

In response to one of the questions from non-government members in relation to universal access to education, the Minister said:

"But it is also important to note that we have circumstances in Queensland that are different to other states in Australia. We have the most decentralised state of course, and in fact we make sure that students all over the state do get access to that high-quality education, even though on many occasions we have to spend a lot more money to do it. That is one of the things that I am very proud of in the state education system—that is, even though they may be in the Torres Strait or in rural and regional Queensland and even with special circumstances here in Brisbane and in metropolitan areas, that is our commitment."

This "commitment" by Minister Langbroek does not seem to be consistent with his decision to cut funding to the Queensland School for Travelling Show Children. We do not support the closure of the school.

The Committee would not dispute that the most desirable scenario would be for all students to have access to face to face in person education provided by qualified teachers. This is exactly the service that is at the moment provided by the Travelling Show School.

The Minister however has a contrary view saying *"we believe that these children will get a better education through the distance education school"*

The fact is, having direct face to face education provided by qualified teachers is what the Minister is cutting for the children of travelling show families.

The Minister also noted the NAPLAN results of the school as a factor in determining the closure of the school. The Minister should note however that in the reading category for the Year 3 cohort the Queensland School for Travelling Show Children received a higher score than nine schools. The Opposition is not suggesting that these schools should have their funding cut and neither is the Minister. Therefore it is highly hypocritical and disingenuous of Minister Langbroek to use the NAPLAN score as an excuse for closing the school.

Section 18 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* provides that *"If the Minister proposes closing a State school or amalgamating 2 or more State schools, the Minister must publish a notice about the proposal in the gazette."* Section 20 requires that the closure cannot take place less than 6 months after publication in the gazette. When asked about publication in the gazette, the Director-General responded that the closure has not yet been gazetted, but that the school will cease operating at the beginning of the 2013 school year. Even if the notice were published in the gazette this week, it is less than 6 months until the beginning of the 2013 school year.

The Minister advised the Committee that, despite the legislative requirement for at least 6 months to lapse between gazettal of the closure and the actual closure of a school taking place, it is his view that a school can 'cease to operate' prior to the closure date, but within this 6 month period. This is a clear attempt to circumvent the requirements of the legislation, which are there for the protection of students, parents and the wider school community. Non-Government members of the Committee would be interested to know whether the Minister has sought Crown Law advice on whether the proposed 'cessation of operations' within the 6 month period complies with the legislation.

During the Estimates hearing the Minister was asked some very simple questions regarding community organisation and programs and if he knew what work they carried out. On multiple occasions the Minister was unable to explain to the committee the work of organisations such as the Pyjama Foundation, Ready Readers Books for Bubs program and Triple P.

The Minister was asked on four separate occasions to outline to the Committee what work the Pyjama Foundation actually does and each time the Minister was unable to answer.

When asked about the Ready Readers Books for Bubs Program, the Minister responded in the following way:

"I can advise the honourable member that when my wife was in hospital having our three children she was not sitting their reading books to our babies and saying, 'This will turn you into a reader.'"

This shows a fundamental lack of understanding of what the program sets out to achieve. It is not the intention that the books be read to the babies in the hospital only, and they thereby develop a love of reading. The books are meant to be taken home and read to the

children over an extended period of time, and once this ritual has been established, the love of reading and the potential for the educational benefits will be developed.

The importance in asking these questions and receiving an appropriate answer is, that if the Minister doesn't know or appreciate the work that an organisation or program carries out then it's much easier to cut their funding. However if the Minister had a better understanding of the programs, he may have had a second thought about his decision to cut funding.

This lack of answers, which was either due to incompetence or contempt for the Committee, is an insult to hard working staff and volunteers of those 43 organisations that have had their funding cut.

The Minister was also asked whether he had met with any of the affected organisation or spoke to them before the decision was made, to which the Minister responded "*we certainly would not meet with them*".

Above all it is the disdain with which the Minister has approached these cuts to services and staff that is a concern to the Opposition.

The Minister also failed to have any appreciation of the effect that the funding cuts to community organisations would have on employment within those organisations. He didn't seem to think it was a matter that his government should be concerned with. And yet, with a target of 4% for unemployment, to disregard the effect of these funding cuts in the wider community is a recipe for disaster for unemployment in this State.

The Minister also failed to adequately address the concerns of the Member for Bundamba in relation to the cancellation of the leases to the Ipswich Historical Society, the Ipswich Genealogical Society and the Bundamba Naval Association at the former Blackstone State School site, and also the Dinmore State School site, which is occupied and leased by the Samoan Advisory Council.

His flippant response that the community organisations could purchase the sites if they wish to continue operating from the premises was heartless and an insult to the hardworking members of those volunteer organisations. The Minister is well aware that the cost of purchasing a school site is well outside the means of all of these community organisations.

Non-government Members also continue to hold concerns about changes to the diversity Unit within the Department of Education and Training, and the closure of the Indigenous Education and Training Futures division. Just as improvements are being made in educational outcomes in remote Indigenous communities, and school attendance rates are on the rise in communities such as Aurukun, the very division of the department that can be credited with much of the improvement is being axed. The Minister failed to adequately outline how the outcomes will continue to be delivered once this division ceases to operate.

Employment

The removal of a three minute time limit on answers from the standing orders removed the ability for Non-Government Members to ask as many questions as the previous year in certain sessions.

The Minister was caught out providing inaccurate information and refused to take a Question on Notice in the hearing in order to avoid having to answer the question which is detailed further below.

When asked what employment programs were still being run other than a phone line for retrenched public servants the Minister was not able to outline any. This follows cuts to employment programs including Skilling Queenslanders for Work of \$287.7 million over four years.

The Minister could only point to the LNP's 4% unemployment target which is not included as a Budget target anywhere in the Ministers' Service Delivery Statement.

When asked about why there was no 4% unemployment target set out in the Budget Papers the Minister went on a tirade against the previous Government without providing an answer.

In response to questions from the Opposition Leader the Director-General of Education advised that the Deloitte Access Economics report entitled *Evaluation of Skilling Queenslanders for Work* was received one week after making a decision to cut the program.

The Director-General confirmed that there was knowledge of the report being prepared prior to the decision to axe the program.

This is symptomatic of a rushed policy process under the LNP which is based on ideology rather than evidence.

The Minister in an answer to Non-Government Question on Notice 1 even highlighted the achievements of the program including having assisted 116,836 disadvantaged job seekers into employment from July 2007 to 30 June 2012.

The Minister further stated that *"no-one questions the worthiness of the programs"*.

The Minister's only justification provided for cutting employment programs was that he believed the Commonwealth to be responsible for 'Employment' while maintaining it in his Ministerial title.

The Minister repeatedly told the Committee that the participation rate in the workforce had increased. This is despite the participation rate in September being the lowest since April 2006 as set out on the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Queensland Treasury websites.

When asked about this, the Minister pointed out he was referring to the national

participation rate and not Queensland despite his previous comments being in the context of Queensland.

The Minister was then asked what Treasury's projected employment growth is for this financial year and the projection for unemployment rate in four years' time. Both these figures are clearly set out on page 34 of Budget Paper 2.

Despite the public availability of these figures and how crucial they are to understanding employment and the LNP's 4% unemployment target, the Minister was unable to answer either of these questions or even direct to where the figures are located in the Budget Papers.

The Minister was asked to provide advice on how many jobs would need to be created within the final two years of the LNP's 4% unemployment target for it to be met. Treasury currently project an unemployment rate in four years' time of 5¼%.

The Minister responded by refusing to take the question on notice and then referring to a report by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations which contained employment forecasts over the next five years.

The LNP's unemployment target is over six years and the number of jobs that would need to be created to lower unemployment from 5¼% to 4% over the final two years remains a mystery.

The Minister was asked what plan he had to lower unemployment beyond hoping for the factors outlined in the Budget of a weakening Australian dollar and a global economic recovery. The Minister was unable to provide any practical solutions beyond hollow rhetoric about how much he talks to the Treasurer after earlier saying he didn't know unemployment figures because that was the Treasurer's responsibility.

Training

Opposition questioning of the Minister highlighted an inherent contradiction in his decision to cut the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. The Minister said that *"employment programs which we have made decisions about are programs that the federal government should be contributing to."*

The Minister also said *"skilled and business migration is something that is part of my portfolio."*

The Minister was questioned about the hypocrisy of saying skilling programs are Commonwealth responsibility yet the Queensland Government was going to become involved in immigration assistance and visas for employment in the mining industry, which are unquestionably are Commonwealth responsibility.

The Minister seemed very confused about his responsibilities, which was evidenced by his lack of understanding of the Training and Employment parts of his portfolio.

During questioning in relation to the Ministers responsibilities for employment the Minister said *"I am not the minister for employment for everyone who is employed in the Queensland employment system."*

That statement symbolises the value that both the Minister and the Newman Government in general places on the dignity of work and the importance of keeping Queenslanders in jobs.

This is further compounded by the Ministers decision to abolish the Office of the Queensland Training Ombudsman. The Training Ombudsman provided real support to apprentices and employers, by being an impartial source of information and mediating between parties. This however will now lead to a situation where, in the case of the employer being the Department of Education, Training and Employment, it will be 'Caesar judging Caesar'.

This is simply an attack on an independent body that has in the past found against the Department, this is the reason the Minister wants it abolished. This is in line with the general attitude of the Newman Government towards accountability and transparency.

The office cost \$393,000 per annum to operate and considering there are approximately 100,000 apprentices in Queensland, this works out to a cost of \$3.93 per apprentice.

The Training Ombudsman has in the case of the sports and recreation traineeships saved the Government more than twice of the cost of running the office of the Ombudsman, it has a positive return to the Government yet it has been cut by the Minister.

The Minister was also unable to answer if there would be an average cost increase as a result of complaints having to go through QCAT and the QIRC, which otherwise may have been resolved by the Training Ombudsman.

In relation to his the Minister admitted *"that is something we acknowledge we will look into."*

Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts

Science, Information Technology, Innovation

The Estimates hearing into the portfolio of Science, IT, Innovation and the Arts (SITIA) highlighted that the Minister charged with managing these important areas of responsibility is either ignorant of or incapable of understanding the major issues.

It should be noted that the Budget Papers, including the SDS for SITIA, were vague, lacked information and contained errors. By the Minister's own admission, the SITIA SDS contained typographical errors. It is reasonable to expect that the budget papers – which are some of the most important documents produced by Government – would be prepared with sufficient care and attention so as to avoid simple and obvious errors.

The Minister's answers to Questions on Notice revealed cuts of more than \$25m in 2012-13 to grants programs in her department. The majority of cuts came in programs designed to boost innovation.

The Minister failed to provide the requested information in response to non-Government Question on Notice 4. In contrast to some other Ministers who did manage to provide a list of job titles and regions for positions abolished in their own departments, the Minister's answer was typical of an attempt to hide from proper scrutiny by providing inadequate information. This answer calls into question the Minister's personal commitment to the Government's stated intention to be open and accountable.

The Minister was unable to answer basic questions about issues affecting innovation in Queensland. When asked what Queensland's multifactor productivity was, the Minister could not answer and seemed to not understand the term. Multifactor productivity is a key measure of innovation. The Minister tried several times to stall questioning and referred to matters entirely irrelevant to the examination of her portfolio in an attempt to distract attention from her own ignorance of multifactor productivity.

When the same question was asked of the Director-General it became clear that the Minister's Director-General was also unable to answer and had not familiarised himself with multifactor productivity. It is extremely concerning that the Minister and Director-General responsible for Queensland's innovation were unaware of and could not explain an important measure of innovation in Queensland.

An attempt was made to excuse this ignorance by shifting the focus to the Office of Economic and Statistical Research (OESR) which keeps track of multifactor productivity. It then became apparent that neither the Minister, the Director-General or anybody else in the Department had sought briefings from the OESR about multifactor productivity. For the responsible Minister and Director-General to not be aware of this issue and not seek to familiarise themselves with it is of great concern and does not bode well for innovation in this state.

The Minister has overseen significant cuts to programs designed to drive innovation whilst at the same time claiming Queensland was suffering from low innovation and productivity. Despite the Minister's consistent claim during the estimates hearing that productivity in Queensland was the lowest in the country, she was forced to retract her statements and confirm that this was not the case in a subsequent letter to the committee.

The Minister's responses to questioning regarding her Department's coordination of science relating to the Great Barrier Reef exposed the Newman Government's inability to adequately manage its responsibility as caretaker of one of our greatest environmental assets. The Minister could not provide a coherent answer in relation to programs and funding for the scientific monitoring of the Great Barrier Reef which is a matter of some concern.

The Minister's comments regarding IT demonstrated a willingness on her part to play politics but not to engage seriously with the issues. When asked simply if she was the sole Minister

responsible for IT in the Government, Minister Bates filibustered for a considerable period before finally agreeing that she was the Minister responsible.

The Minister's new responsibilities relating to the Premier's 'Government 2.0' vision were also questioned. As the Minister responsible for providing the technological capability for the policy, Minister Bates is an integral part of the delivery of this policy. Unfortunately, the Minister's commitment to open government as evidenced by her answers at the estimates hearing, as well as her past track record on providing information under Right to Information requests calls into question whether these responsibilities would best be managed by another Minister. Given Assistant Minister Stevens has recently been promoted to assist in the delivery of this policy, it would seem appropriate that he oversee the policy implementation, including the technical aspects.

The Arts

Throughout the 2012 estimates process, the Arts Minister was quick to denigrate the arts and artists. The Minister's lack of detail meant she often reverted to talking down the arts sector in Queensland, while waiting for pre-written scripts from her Department to be handed to her.

Throughout the hearing and in response to Questions on Notice, the Minister was asked to outline, in detail, the organisations that had lost funding as a result of the Newman Government's \$12.4 million cut to community arts grants programs.

The Minister has repeatedly referred to "duplication" in arts grants programs as a reason for the cuts; however, she refused to provide any specific or detailed information in relation to which arts grants and programs were considered duplication, either in funding input or artistic outcome.

Given the Minister's constant references to 'duplication' and 'waste' in grants programs it was incumbent on her, during the estimate process, to provide the supporting evidence – something she was unwilling or unable to do.

The Opposition also holds serious concerns about the cuts to funding Queensland's major arts institutions, including the Queensland Museum, Queensland Performing Arts Trust and the Queensland Art Gallery, including the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA).

During questioning, a department spokesperson did not support the Minister's claim that "there have been no cuts to the majors at all". In fact, it was indicated that the budget for the majors did not allow for any expansion or growth.

Indeed, it has become clear that lack of funding and leadership from this Minister has resulted in an arts policy that aims low and lacks ambition. In 2011-12 there were 67 exhibitions in regional locations, 45 are planned for 2012-13. The Art Gallery had 41 exhibitions in 2011-12, the LNP have budgeted for 25 in 2012-13. There were 1427 performances at QPAC in 2011-12 and the Minister is now scaling it back to 970 in 2012-13.

Cuts to community arts programs and Queensland's major cultural institutions are in direct contradiction to the promises made by the LNP prior to the March 2012 election. The then Shadow Arts Minister Mr Scott Emerson MP stated prior to election:

"Our commitment is not to cut funding for the arts at all; we're committed to maintaining the funding for the arts".

Minister Bates also used the estimates process to degrade and ridicule a sculpture commissioned for GOMA in celebration of its 5th birthday and the 20th anniversary of the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art.

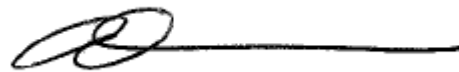
The Minister repeatedly referred to the sculpture as a 'waste' and indicated that it was inappropriate for the Queensland Government to buy artwork designed and created by an international artist.

Arts policy and spending in this state should not be dictated by the Minister's subjective taste, but should instead be focussed on ensuring Queenslanders have access to world-class arts institutions that exhibit local, national and international artists. This is not only important for our own cultural diversity, but ensures Queensland does not lose its status as an internationally renowned emerging arts destination with a thriving cultural city. Queenslanders should be proud to live in a state with a vibrant cultural scene. The Queensland arts community deserves a Minister who does not denigrate their work, degrade their value and dismiss their importance.

We would encourage all Members to note our reservation in relation to the estimates for the Education and Innovation Committee.



Tim Mulherin MP
Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Member for Mackay
Deputy Chair



Annastacia Palaszczuk MP
Leader of the Opposition
Member for Inala