



2021-22 Budget Estimates

Volume of Additional Information

Report No. 8, 57th Parliament
Education, Employment and Training Committee
August 2021

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Stephen Andrew MP

State Member for Mirani

Colonial Corner
PO Box 56
SARINA QLD 4737

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Mirani@parliament.qld.gov.au

28 June 2021

Committee Secretary
Education, Employment and Training Committee

Email: eetc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Hansen,

RE: **REQUEST TO ATTEND EETC ESTIMATES COMMITTEE HEARING FROM MR STEPHEN ANDREW, MP**

We refer to the Education, Employment and Training Committee Estimates Hearing scheduled to take place on **29 July 2021**, at the Legislative Council Chamber, Parliament House, Brisbane.

Mr Stephen Andrew, Member for Mirani, seeks leave from the Committee to attend at the **EETC Estimates Hearing** and to ask questions.

We look forward to receiving your response to this request in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Ms Patricia Monteath
**Parliamentary Policy Officer –
(Crossbench) Mirani
For Mr Stephen Andrew
Member for Mirani**

Email: patricia.monteath@parliament.qld.gov.au
Ph: 0431772222



David Crisafulli MP

Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Tourism

6 July 2021

Education, Employment and Training Committee
Attention: Ms Kim Richards MP, Chair

By email: eetc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Richards

I refer to your committee's consideration of 2021/22 portfolio budget estimates.

Pursuant to section 181(e) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, I seek leave for the following Members to attend the public hearing scheduled for Thursday, 29 July:

1. David Crisafulli MP
2. David Janetzki MP
3. Jarrod Bleijie MP
4. Fiona Simpson MP
5. Dr Christian Rowan MP
6. Tim Mander MP
7. Brent Mickelberg MP
8. Steve Minnikin MP

Should you have any queries, please contact my office.

Yours sincerely

David Crisafulli

DAVID CRISAFULLI MP
Leader of the Opposition
Shadow Minister for Tourism
Member for Broadwater

CC: Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP
Mr James Lister MP



Jon KRAUSE MP

Member for **Scenic Rim**

9 July 2021

Ms Kim Richards MP
Chair
Education, Employment and Training Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
eetc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Richards,

I'm writing in relation to the Committee's consideration of the 2021/22 portfolio budget estimates.

Pursuant to section 181(e) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, I seek leave to appear and ask questions at the public estimates hearing of the Committee, scheduled for Thursday 29 July.

Should you have any queries, please contact my office.

Yours sincerely

Jon Krause MP
Member for Scenic Rim

From: Amy MacMahon
Sent: Wednesday, 14 July 2021 10:31 AM
To: Education, Employment and Training Committee
Cc: South Brisbane Electorate Office
Subject: Request for leave to attend and ask questions at estimates hearing

Categories: Save in Objective and add to corro register

To the chair,

I write in relation to the Committee’s hearing for consideration of 2021/22 portfolio budget estimates scheduled for 29 July 2021. I would like to seek leave of the Committee under SO 181(e) to attend and ask questions in the hearing.

I look forward to your earliest advice on the decision of the Committee.

Best regards,
Amy

Amy MacMahon

MP for South Brisbane

Pronouns: She/her

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W: www.amymacmahon.com | **F:** www.facebook.com/AmyMacSouthBris

Sign up for updates: www.amymacmahon.com/keep_updated

Amy MacMahon MP
Member for South Brisbane

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South Brisbane Electorate is located on the land of the Jagera, Yugara, Yugarapul, and Turrbal Nations.
We pay respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging. Sovereignty has never been ceded.

Carolyn Heffernan

From: Michael Berkman
Sent: Tuesday, 13 July 2021 3:34 PM
To: Education, Employment and Training Committee
Cc: Maiwar Electorate Office
Subject: Request for leave to attend and ask questions at estimates hearing

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Categories: Save in Objective and add to corro register, CS for action

To the chair

I write to seek leave under SO 181 to attend and ask questions at the Committee's estimates hearing on 29 July.

I look forward to your earliest advice on the decision of the Committee.

Best regards
Michael

Michael Berkman MP
Member for Maiwar

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I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which I work. I pay respect to Elders, past and present, and recognise that sovereignty has never been ceded.

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**Questions on notice and responses – *Minister for Education,
Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing***

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 2 of the Department of Education SDS, can the Minister advise the total infrastructure budget for 2021-22 and how this funding will be used to build, maintain, improve and update our schools, and support Queensland jobs?

ANSWER:

In the 2021–22 State Budget, the Palaszczuk Government is investing almost \$1.9 billion in state school infrastructure to maintain, renew and build new facilities, including 10 new schools and other facilities supporting more than 4100 jobs across Queensland.

As well as new school halls, performing arts centres and new classroom blocks, the work also includes smaller projects such as refurbishments to amenities blocks, playground upgrades, security fencing and improved facilities to ensure our schools are accessible for all students.

This investment is in response to the growing demand for families seeking to educate their children in our world-class state schools and will continue to ensure Queensland families can access quality education, regardless of their life circumstance.

This investment will continue to give our kids a great start, engage them through school and at the same time, create jobs to drive our economic recovery post-COVID-19 and in the longer term, is an investment in Queensland's future workforce.

This investment of almost \$1.9 billion in infrastructure across Queensland builds on more than \$5.2 billion the Palaszczuk Government has put into school infrastructure since 2015.

Some Budget highlights include:

- \$560 million investment in 2021–22 towards new schools to open in 2023 and 2024, in addition to the previously announced school for Brisbane's inner west;
- \$540.9 million will be used for around 300 new classrooms as well as administration and amenities in existing Queensland state schools, delivering 1600 jobs;
- Around \$445 million to maintain, improve and upgrade our schools;
- Almost \$134 million to install, replace and maintain air conditioning and to install energy saving devices including solar panels; and
- Over \$103 million for new and upgraded halls, Shovel Ready projects and Local Schools Local Jobs projects.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 2

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 2 of the Department of Education SDS, can the Minister inform the Committee of the 10 new state schools to be opened in 2023 and 2024, as well as provide an update on progress of the 2022 schools?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is proud to be investing more than \$2.6 billion (GST exclusive) through the Building Future Schools (BFS) program to deliver world-class learning environments for Queensland students.

We are delivering new state schools and major expansion projects for students in fast growing communities across the State.

As part of the 2020–21 State budget, the Queensland Government allocated \$346.2 million (GST exclusive) to deliver three new schools for 2022 and a new primary school in Brisbane's inner west for 2024.

I am pleased to confirm a further \$913.7 million (GST exclusive) was announced in the 2021–22 State Budget to deliver 10 new schools in South East Queensland. This includes four new schools for 2023 and six new schools to open in 2024 in growth corridors (excluding the new Inner West Primary School funded in the 2020–21 Budget).

This is a significant investment in state school infrastructure—ensuring all students have access to high-quality learning facilities within their local communities.

2022 new schools

In 2022, the Queensland Government will deliver three new schools, including two new primary schools in Caloundra South and North Maclean Greenbank, and a new special school in Coomera.

F.K. Gardner and Sons was appointed as the building contractor in late 2020, to construct the three new schools.

Construction on each site is continuing at a rapid pace and on track to open for the start of school in 2022.

2023 new schools

The Queensland Government will deliver four new schools in 2023.

This includes three new state primary schools at Augustine Heights, Ripley and Yarrabilba and a new state secondary school in Palmview.

2024 new schools

In 2024, four new state primary schools will be delivered in:

- Brisbane's inner west;
- Bellbird Park;
- Shoreline (Redland Bay); and
- Logan Reserve (Park Ridge).

Three new secondary schools will also open for the start of school in 2024 at:

- Logan Reserve (Park Ridge);
- Redbank Plains; and
- Springfield.

To allow the department sufficient time, planning, infrastructure designation, schematic design and community consultations are already underway for the 2023 and 2024 new schools.

These new schools add to the 18 new schools this Government has delivered since 2015.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 3

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS, can the Minister advise how the Palaszczuk Government is supporting students and families through the introduction of homework centres in Queensland schools?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is investing \$8 million over four years to deliver up to 120 Homework Centres in state schools across Queensland.

Homework Centres will support families by providing a supervised and suitable learning environment where students from any year level can complete their homework before they go home from school. Homework Centres aim to support good study habits and provide additional learning time for students with their peers.

Homework Centre sessions are held for up to three hours per week, for 30 weeks per year. Principals manage the Homework Centres, and teacher aides supervise the students. Student participation is voluntary.

The days and times that a Homework Centre operate are determined by each school in order to meet the needs of the school community. Each school also plans their Homework Centre sessions to ensure they consider the age, learning and development needs of the children attending.

The funding provided to host schools will go towards teacher aide wages and extra resources to support each Homework Centre's operations, including the provision of a healthy snack for participating students.

A list of Queensland state schools hosting a Homework Centre is available on the Department of Education's website at www.education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/initiatives/homework-centres.

Homework Centres will commence operations during Term 3, 2021.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 4

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 5 of the SDS, can the Minister update the Committee on the progress of implementing the 17 recommendations of the Queensland Disability Review and advise on next steps?

ANSWER:

As at 30 June 2021, the Department of Education has implemented 16 of the 17 recommendations from the Queensland Disability Review. The final recommendation to be implemented—the resource allocation review—has commenced.

Many of the Queensland Disability Review recommendations addressed complex issues, involved implementing multiple initiatives, required stakeholder engagement and changes to the department's systems.

Some of the highlights of implementation include:

- the release of *Every student with disability succeeding* plan in response to the Queensland Disability Review's 17 recommendations;
- establishment of a dedicated Assistant Director-General, State Schools Disability and Inclusion, position to drive reform across state schools and the department;
- the release of the *Inclusive education* policy, which has been recognised internationally, receiving the *Zero Project Innovative Policy Award* at the United Nations in 2020;
- building the capability and confidence of schools to provide supports to students with disability through localised capability packages and scholarships to 36 school principals to undertake a Masters of Education (Inclusive Education); and
- engaging the Community Resource Unit to provide support to parents of students with disability.

The department acknowledges the need to continue work to improve outcomes for students with disability.

The *Every student with disability succeeding plan 2021–2025* (the new plan) setting out the next phase of reform will be released by the department on 28 July 2021.

The new plan aims to support the success and wellbeing of every student with disability through each stage of learning in an inclusive education system. It includes actions to ensure every student with disability and their families are welcomed at their school, are heard and supported by confident and capable staff with high expectations that, with the right support, every student with disability can succeed.

Actions include a focus on student wellbeing, engagement and supports as children commence Prep, as students move from primary to secondary education, and as students transition into work, training or further education.

The department has commenced implementing the final Queensland Disability Review recommendation to review the resource allocation model for students with disability. The new plan commits to transitioning to a revised resource allocation model for students with disability. It is anticipated the department will transition to a new resource allocation model for the 2023 school year.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 5

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 4 of the SDS, can the Minister update the House on the purpose and operation of Early Years Places in locations across the state?

ANSWER:

Early Years Places (EYPs) are 'one-stop-shops' located in more than 50 communities where families can access multiple services, or referrals to specialist services, for their children and themselves. EYPs range from large multi-site services to small services co-located with another service (such as a neighbourhood centre) in urban, rural and remote locations.

EYPs support families with children aged from birth to eight years of age and are place based and highly flexible, responding to the needs of their local communities. Depending on local community need they may offer:

- early childhood education and care (for example kindergarten and long-day care);
- parenting support (for example, home visits, playgroups, parenting programs, music and play therapy and counselling services); and
- access to child and maternal health services (for example child health screening and allied health support such as speech therapy and immunisation).

During the July to December 2020 reporting period, 7257 children and 5622 parents/carers accessed EYPs. Approximately 93% of parents/carers reported having improved engagement with their child because of the programs and activities provided and 82% reported that the EYP assisted them to access other support services they needed.

I am pleased to advise the Committee that in 2021–22, the Palaszczuk Government will invest \$28.3 million to support the operation of EYPs.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 6

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 7 of the SDS, can the Minister advise how the Palaszczuk Government on the status of the five-yearly review into the Industrial Relations Act, including industrial protections being investigated for workers subject to sexual harassment?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government has welcomed the renewed national focus on gender equality and improving women's economic security arising from the Australian Human Rights Commission's landmark *Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces report* (the Respect@Work report).

The Palaszczuk Government has urged the Australian Government to ensure it engages appropriately and meaningfully with states and territories on the Respect@Work report's recommendations within its jurisdiction that will have implications for states and territories.

Despite the clear intent for genuine consultation on proposed amendments impacting the national workplace relations system pursuant to the Intergovernmental Agreement for a National Workplace Relations System for the Private Sector, the Australian Government has afforded limited and inadequate consultation with the states and territories to date. For example, the Australian Government allowed for only two business days of consultation with states and territories prior to the introduction in the Federal Parliament concerning the Sex Discrimination and Fair Work (Respect at Work) Amendment Bill 2021, which seeks to implement part of the *A Roadmap for Respect: Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces* (the Roadmap) response by amending the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

The Queensland Government looks forward to the opportunity to work with other states and territories to support the Australian Government in progressing the proposed Roadmap.

Since the release of the Respect@Work report, the Palaszczuk Government has announced that:

- a five-year review of Queensland's *Industrial Relations Act 2016* (IR Act review) would be undertaken to ensure Queensland's industrial relations laws provide contemporary industrial protections and keep pace with changes in work, including investigating protections for workers subject to sexual harassment; and
- the Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC) would undertake a review of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (the AD Act), the primary legislative scheme in Queensland providing for the prohibitions, protections and enforcement mechanisms with respect to sexual harassment.

I am pleased to advise the Committee that I have appointed two independent reviewers to undertake the IR Act review:

- former member of Parliament and Queensland's first female Attorney-General, Ms Linda Lavarch; and
- former Queensland Industrial Relations Commissioner, Mr John Thompson.

As well as a key focus on the recommendations of the Respect@Work report and protections for workers subject to sexual harassment, the review will also consider protections for workers in precarious and short-term employment arrangements, including independent courier drivers; prevailing standards in the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth), including recent changes to casual employment; and the operation and effectiveness of the provisions of the IR Act since its introduction.

The review commenced on 28 June 2021, with the IR Act review report to be provided to me by no later than 25 October 2021.

In addition to the IR Act review, the QHRC review of the AD Act will also specifically consider relevant work in other Australian jurisdictions in implementing the recommendations from the Respect@Work report, and include options for legislating for a positive duty on all employers to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate sex discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation as far as possible.

I understand that the QHRC is due to complete its review of the AD Act and report to the Honourable Shannon Fentiman MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, by 30 June 2022.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 7

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 7 of the SDS, can the Minister advise on the workers' compensation premiums payable for 2021-22 and how Queensland businesses are being supported through low premiums and premium related incentives?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government has a proud record of ensuring the workers' compensation system is financially viable, sustainable and affordable for Queensland's employers.

WorkCover Queensland's strong financial management means injured workers and their dependants are looked after, while keeping the cost to business low. The current board, two thirds of whom are women, has continued with strong performance and oversight.

This has resulted in Queensland having the lowest average workers' compensation premium rate of any state or territory. In fact, 2021–22 will be the eighth year in a row that Queensland employers will enjoy the stability and predictability of a low average premium rate of \$1.20 per \$100 of wages, as well as ongoing discounts for early payment of premium and for hiring apprentices.

The 5% discount for early payment and the waiving of premiums for apprentice wages have saved Queensland employers up to \$209 million and \$105 million respectively (\$314 million in total) since they were introduced in 2017.

WorkCover Queensland's sound equity position has enabled premium rates to remain stable. This also meant WorkCover was well prepared for the economic uncertainty during the COVID-19 health pandemic. Financial relief was extended to Queensland businesses including offering to adjust estimated wages declarations and reducing or refunding premium as appropriate. These premium reassessments resulted in total refunds of \$19.3 million to around 4900 small and medium-sized businesses, which were forced to reduce their workforce or close due to COVID-19.

The simplest measure of efficiency in any insurance scheme is the proportion of premium paid for the direct benefit of claimants versus the proportion expended on administration. Of the centrally funded schemes, Queensland also remains the most efficient scheme with the highest proportion of total expenditure (87.2%) paid directly to, or in care of injured workers, and the lowest proportion (12.8%) going on administration and insurance operations.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 8

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 7 of the SDS, can the Minister advise the Committee of any review into the effectiveness of the current trading hours' arrangements?

ANSWER:

In 2016, an independent review of Queensland's retail trading hours' arrangements (the 2016 Review) was established in response to concerns raised by business and the community that Queensland's trading hours' arrangements were complex and difficult to navigate.

The 2016 Review's taskforce was chaired by former Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Queensland Minister, Mr John Mickel. That review considered more than 170 public submissions lodged in response to an issues paper released to guide the 2016 Review. The reviewer made 13 recommendations to improve trading hours' regulation to promote business growth and employment while balancing the interests and concerns of workers and the community and meeting the needs of consumers.

These recommendations were in the most part adopted by the Queensland Government as proposed and delivered significant reform by making trading hours' arrangements in Queensland less complex for business and consumers while balancing the interests of workers and the community.

The reviewer also recommended a five-year moratorium on further trading hours' applications to amend the allowable trading hours for non-exempt shops with a commitment to further review prior to the end of the moratorium period.

In accordance with section 46B of the *Trading (Allowable Hours) Act 1990* (Trading Hours Act), the Minister must review the effectiveness of the Trading Hours Act within five years from the commencement. The timing for the next review corresponds with the end of the five-year moratorium.

I am currently considering the process and terms of reference for the review, which will commence later this year. The review will consider the effect the current trading hours' arrangements has had on employment and business growth; the economy; regions; small and medium sized business; and workers and their families.

The review will consider the impact of the existing framework, and any alternative models, for the regulation of trading hours in Queensland. Following consultation, the review will provide advice and recommendations to the Government to ensure trading hours' arrangements support business and consumers while balancing the interests of workers and the community.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 9

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 2 of the SDS, can the Minister outline the new funding model that will guarantee the racing industry receives 35 per cent of revenue from the state's Point of Consumption Tax on wagering?

ANSWER:

Since 1 July 2021, the Palaszczuk Government is delivering 35% of revenue from the State's Point of Consumption Tax (POCT) back into the racing industry.

This new funding model is supporting the Queensland racing industry to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 health pandemic and is an important part of our economic recovery plan.

It is estimated that over the next two years, the Queensland racing industry will receive an extra \$41.3 million in additional funding. This increase will benefit almost 40,000 Queensland participants.

Linking the POCT to industry funding means that every time someone places a bet in Queensland, the racing industry benefits.

The racing industry supports thousands of jobs across Queensland with over 80% of racing and breeding occurring in regional Queensland.

With more than 12,500 Queenslanders now employed in racing, an increase of more than 1000 over the past two years, the Queensland racing industry continues to make a significant contribution to the State's economy, providing more than \$1.6 billion every year.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 10

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 9 of the SDS, can the Minister advise how Country racing is a central part of social and economic life in regional Queensland, and how the Country Racing Program supports regional Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to the Country Racing Program (CRP) in recognition of the vital role racing plays in creating community and social cohesion right across Queensland.

The most recent Size and Scope of the Queensland Racing Industry report published in October 2020, found that racing's value-added contribution to the Queensland economy is more than \$1.6 billion a year, with 46% of this economic contribution occurring in regional communities.

The Palaszczuk Government continues to back country racing with additional funding of \$35.2 million over the next two years, on top of the original commitment of \$70.4 million over four years; totalling a package of almost \$106 million over six years to country racing and the people of regional Queensland.

The CRP provides \$15 million a year to support prize money and bonuses, club meeting payments, jockey riding fees, superannuation and WorkCover expenses. There is an additional \$2.6 million a year for infrastructure projects.

In 2021–22, a total of 1125 non-TAB races are scheduled at 225 meetings offering a total CRP base prize money allocation of more than \$9.1 million.

A further 21 non-TAB meetings are scheduled as Country TAB meetings where Racing Queensland (RQ) is effectively more than doubling the direct financial benefits flowing into those regional communities.

Participants and clubs benefit as the CRP base prize money is boosted to TAB levels, generating greater wagering returns and showcasing regional Queensland in a broadcast around Australia and the world.

RQ continues to work with all clubs and the Country Racing Advisory Panel to achieve better outcomes for country racing participants, regional communities and the broader industry.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 11

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

In relation to Budget Paper 3, Capital Statement 2021, 3.4 Education why have demountable buildings been in use for each year since 2017-18 in 23 schools (as recorded in the answer to Question on Notice No 258) and what steps are being taken to replace them with permanent structures?

ANSWER:

The Department of Education is committed to providing fit-for-purpose infrastructure in state schools across Queensland to support learning outcomes, as well as maximising the utilisation of its educational infrastructure.

Governments of all political persuasions have used temporary leased buildings to deal with issues like fluctuating enrolments or fires etc.

Only a small percentage of classrooms in Queensland schools are temporary leased buildings.

Temporary leased buildings are used in state schools in Queensland to provide additional accommodation and facilities for a number of circumstances, including:

- to manage enrolment during the design and construction of permanent facilities where growth occurs faster than forecast;
- to manage enrolment during construction of new schools;
- to manage temporary, short-term peaks in enrolments above school capacity; and
- for emergency response purposes, e.g. after a fire in a classroom block.

When new buildings are planned on school sites, the existing building stock is assessed and, where possible, older relocatable buildings are removed and replaced with new permanent facilities.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 12

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE, ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

In relation to SDS Education, Controlled Income Statement, Employee expenses, at page 11 how many students have been (a) expelled and (b) suspended in 2020–21 and in respect of each category how many such decisions have been overturned by the Department of Education?

ANSWER:

Preliminary data for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 indicates 40,739 students received a short or long suspension and 1254 students received an exclusion.

Only a small proportion of students receive a suspension or exclusion in any given year. In percentage terms, around 7% of all Queensland state school students received a suspension in 2020–21, and most of these were short suspensions of 10 days or less. Only 0.2% of all students received an exclusion in 2020–21. The vast majority of state school students never receive a student disciplinary absence throughout their time at school.

Principals have the autonomous power to suspend or exclude the enrolment of any student enrolled at their school. This power cannot be delegated to other staff in the school.

Students, parents and/or carers can appeal long suspensions (11–20 school days) and exclusions. These appeals are managed by the local regional office, with the Regional Director delegated as the authority to make decisions on the appeal. There is no right of internal review for short suspensions (1–10 school days) under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*.

Data provided by regional offices indicates there were 112 appeals in 2020–21:

- 31 for long suspensions;
- 77 for exclusions; and
- Four for cancellation of enrolment.

Of these, six were set aside – one suspension, three exclusions and two cancellations of enrolment. Outcomes for five appeals are still outstanding.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 13

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

In relation to Service Delivery Statement 'Education, Early Childhood Education and Care' at page 4, how does the state funding contribution per child in Queensland compare to contributions by governments in other states and territories, and what steps are being taken in this budget to lift the state funding contribution for early childhood education and care in Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to ensuring all Queensland children, regardless of their location or circumstances, participate in a kindergarten program prior to Prep. It is well known that attending a quality kindergarten program, led by an early childhood teacher, provides lifelong benefits for our children, especially children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

In 2019–20, the Queensland Government's investment in kindergarten programs on a per child enrolled basis was \$3231. Figures for other states and territories are available in the Report on Government Services 2021, which is available at www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services.

The differences in preschool expenditure by jurisdiction reflect in part the different service delivery arrangements in each jurisdiction. Some states, like Western Australia and Northern Territory, provide free preschool through their state school system, which has a higher per child service cost as these jurisdictions pay for 100% of the cost.

By contrast, in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria the majority of families access kindergarten in centre-based long daycare services and contribute to the cost of preschool delivery through tuition fees. Almost 70% of these long daycare services in Queensland are for-profit organisations. Subsidies are provided to families to offset costs and ensure cost is not a barrier to access.

Queensland has increased overall kindergarten participation from only 29% in 2008 to over 95%. Kindergarten participation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has more than trebled, rising from 26% in 2008 to also exceed the target of 95% in 2020.

The Palaszczuk Government has improved access for children in remote parts of Queensland through the State Delivered Kindergarten initiative and supports the inclusion and increased participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children with disability.

The Department of Education commissioned an independent review of kindergarten funding and delivery arrangements in 2019 and is considering the findings and options to improve participation and outcomes for children.

The Palaszczuk Government has committed funding of \$202.9 million over four years from 2021–22 to 2024–25 and \$64 million per year ongoing to support the continued provision of universal access to early childhood education in the year before school. In 2021–22, this will result in a total kindergarten investment of \$187 million.

The Palaszczuk Government will continue to work closely with early childhood stakeholders to improve outcomes for all children.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 14

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

In relation to Service Delivery Statement Education, Staffing at page 2 how many teachers have been the subject of assault by (i) students and (ii) visitors to schools in the 2020-21 year?

ANSWER:

Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, 320 WorkCover claims were lodged by teachers where the mechanism of injury was recorded as either assault by person or exposure to occupational violence. 288 of these claims were accepted by WorkCover.

The figure of 288 total WorkCover claims accepted represents 0.52% of the teaching workforce (headcount).

Within this dataset it is not possible to code according to the perpetrator; therefore, an accurate systemic breakdown of assault by (i) students and (ii) visitors to schools is unable to be provided.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 15

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

In relation to Service Delivery Statement Education, staffing at page 2 what is the estimated shortfall in the number of teachers in the fields of (i) mathematics, (ii) technology and (iii) science and what steps are being taken to remedy this situation?

ANSWER:

The Department of Education employs more than 54,000 teachers (head count), including more than 19,000 in state secondary schools.

Each school determines the most appropriate distribution of teachers across subject offerings and teacher specialities. The department works closely with each secondary school to develop a tailored three-year workforce action plan that identifies subject demand and the teaching workforce required.

The department regularly monitors the future supply and demand of teachers to ensure that it has enough teachers to support our schools. Based on current modelling and forecasting, it is anticipated there will be no statewide shortfall of teachers in Queensland over the coming years.

However, from time to time, there will be teacher supply pressures in specialist areas (such as STEM), and certain geographic areas. For this reason, the department works closely with schools to ensure teachers are placed where they are most needed.

Since 2019, the department has successfully filled over 2000 STEM vacancies across the State by undertaking a range of specific actions taken to avoid potential teacher shortfalls in specific areas such as STEM that include:

- significant workforce planning each year in every state secondary school;
- far-reaching public advertising and recruitment campaigns to attract the very best applicants to teach in Queensland; and
- targeted strategies to recruit specialist teachers in areas of high demand, such as STEM, in the geographic locations where they are needed the most:
 - o Queensland has provided discipline-specific online STEM training to more than 3100 state school teachers to support them building their capability in subject areas including digital technologies, science and mathematics.
 - o In addition to STEM training, the department provides targeted professional development courses for the identified priority areas in the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority General Senior Syllabuses including Digital Solutions and Design.

- The department also offers Rural and Remote Graduate Teacher STEM Scholarships, which provide \$15,000 (each) to support high-achieving individuals, and permanent employment in a Queensland state school. Since 2018, 103 Rural and Remote Graduate Teacher STEM scholarships have been offered.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 16

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the Department of Education SDS which relates to creating safe and inclusive workplaces and Work Health and Safety (WHS) Inspectors, will the Minister advise, between 2019/20 and 2021/22 to date, (a) the current total number of employed FTE Inspectors (reported separately by year); (b) the total number of site inspections conducted by WHS Inspectors each year; and (c) of those, which of those sites have been (i) non-union Enterprise Agreements and (ii) union Enterprise Agreements?

ANSWER:

The total number of employed full-time equivalent (FTE) Work Health and Safety (WHS) Inspectors (reported separately by year) is provided in the table below.

Pay period ending	WHS Inspectors
5 July 2019	216.67
3 July 2020	221.04
2 July 2021	224.46

The total number of site inspections conducted by Work Health and Safety (WHS) Inspectors each year is provided in the table below.

Period	Number of WHS site visits (*)
2019–20	37,652
2020–21	32,807

** Includes the Injury Prevention and Management program.*

There were fewer WHS site visits during 2020–21 due to the impact of the COVID-19 health pandemic. The Office of Industrial Relations (OIR) introduced remote compliance monitoring to triage complaints and incidents, using a risk matrix. OIR also introduced virtual activities which allowed for continued service delivery, supporting and upholding community safety and wellbeing.

The applicable enterprise agreement at a workplace is not a matter for consideration when it comes to WHS compliance and enforcement. In addition, enterprise agreements are negotiated and enforced under the Federal Government Fair Work legislation.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 17

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the Department of Education SDS which relates to creating safe and inclusive workplaces - Will the Minister advise, between 2019/20 and 2021/22 to date (reported separately), (a) the total number of employees within Office of Industrial Relations (b) the total number who have taken stress leave (c) the total length of time taken for each employee who has taken leave?

ANSWER:

OIR's leave system does not have separate categories for types of sick leave. 'Stress' or 'anxiety' may be attributed to different factors, which are both private and confidential to the individual.

As there is no separate category for stress leave, the table below provides the number of employees within OIR and the total number of mental health claims that were lodged/accepted with WorkCover Queensland.

	1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020	1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021 (and to date)
Total number of employees within OIR	873.3 FTE	885.33 FTE
Total number of mental health claims (WorkCover) lodged	8	9
Total number of mental health claims (WorkCover) accepted	1	Nil

OIR provides its employees with an Employee Assistance Program, which provides free and confidential counselling to workers and their immediate family.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 18

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the Department of Education SDS which relates to creating safe and inclusive workplaces - Will the Minister advise, between 2018 and 2021 to date (a) the total number of times the Commissioner dealt with a dispute about a right of entry under s 142 of the Work Health and Safety Act (b) of those which resulted in arbitration, the total number of orders made to (i) suspend and (ii) revoke a WHS entry permit (c) the total number of contraventions under s 143 of the Act?

ANSWER:

- (a) Between 1 January 2018 and 16 July 2021, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) dealt with five disputes under section 142 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act).
- (b) Of these five disputes, one resulted in arbitration, *ENCO PRECAST PTY LTD v Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union & Ors* [2020] QIRC 188. In this matter, the application was dismissed. The decision was subsequently appealed by ENCO in November 2020, in relation to both the decision and the jurisdiction, with a hearing that followed on 3 February 2021. As of 19 July 2021, no decision has been handed down. No orders were made during this time period in respect of suspending or revoking a WHS permit.
- (c) The jurisdiction of the QIRC is enlivened in relation to section 143 of the Act for matters concerning contravention of an order issued under section 142(3). As detailed above, between 2018 and 2021 the QIRC did not issue any such orders.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 19

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to the SDS, can the Minister outline what funding has been allocated in the 2021/22 budget to assist families in rural and remote Queensland who are affected by the transition of Year 7 to high school in the instance where a child has had to relocate to attend high school or a boarding high school?

ANSWER:

Through implementation of the *Advancing rural and remote education in Queensland state schools* action plan, the Palaszczuk Government is committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of where they live in Queensland, have access to high-quality learning opportunities within their local communities and beyond. Since Year 7 became the first year of high school in 2015, schools across Queensland have continued to develop and refine local programs using allocated staffing and available funding to help support the successful transition of students from primary schooling.

This commitment includes the provision of a state school service to geographically isolated students through the Department of Education's seven Schools of Distance Education and access to three state school operated residential boarding facilities located in Weipa, Mount Isa and Dalby. In 2021–22, the State will provide a contribution of \$5.1 million to subsidise the running costs of these facilities: \$1.3 million at the Western Cape Student Residential College, Weipa; \$1.2 million at the Spinifex State College – Mount Isa Student Residential Facility; and \$2.6 million at the Dalby State High School – Bunya Campus Residential Facility.

In addition, the department supports families whose homes are geographically isolated through the Living Away From Home Allowance Scheme (LAFHAS) through four potential allowances under LAFHAS:

- Remote Area Tuition Allowance – helps pay tuition fees charged by non-state boarding schools (up to a total maximum of \$3873 per year for Years 1 to 6 and \$5576 per year for Years 7 to 12);
- Remote Area Travel Allowance – helps pay a student's travel costs between home and boarding school during holidays (maximum allowance \$1786);
- Remote Area Allowance – contributes to the cost of boarding at a Queensland Australian Agricultural College campus or a state high school campus (\$2435 per student per year); and
- Remote Area Disability Supplement – helps with additional boarding costs for students with disability (up to a total maximum of \$7921).

Historically, LAFHAS has been adjusted each year in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). There was no increase to LAFHAS for 2021 because the relevant 2020 CPI figure for indexation purposes was negative one percent (-1%) due to COVID-19. However, to ensure no disadvantage to families in regional Queensland, the 2020 LAFHAS allowances were maintained into 2021 and have not decreased.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

2021 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 20

THE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON GRACE GRACE MP)

QUESTION:

With reference to regional race clubs' prize money, can the Minister outline what funding the State Government has provided in 2021–22 budget and is this sufficient to ensure the success and sustainability of regional racing in Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government has backed the Country Racing Program (CRP) for a further two years until 2022–23 with a funding package of an additional \$35.2 million on top of the original commitment of \$70.4 million over four years.

This is in recognition of the vital role racing plays in creating community and social cohesion right across Queensland.

The CRP provides \$15 million a year to support prize money and bonuses, club meeting payments, jockey riding fees, superannuation and WorkCover expenses. There is an additional \$2.6 million a year for infrastructure projects.

In 2020–21, Racing Queensland contributed almost \$6 million extra to support country racing prize money and operational costs.

In 2021–22, Racing Queensland has allocated a total of \$9.6 million in base prize money and breeding bonuses that will benefit county racing, ensuring regional Queensland remains attractive for all participants.

The 2021–22 budget also returns 35% of the Point of Consumption Tax (POCT) revenue back into the racing industry, equating to an estimated \$41.3 million in extra funding over the next two years.

Racing Queensland is responsible for the allocation and distribution of prize money from the additional POCT revenue, including at the grass roots level.

These investments support the Palaszczuk Government's objective to provide a more sustainable future to the racing industry.

Every \$1 invested in the racing industry generates \$1.56 in benefits for the broader Queensland economy with over 80% of racing and breeding occurring in regional Queensland.

**Questions on notice and responses – *Minister for
Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training
and Skills Development***

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

QUESTION:

Can the Minister please update on the implementation of the \$140M Big Plans for Small Business program, especially in regards to the rollout of new grants?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government's Economic Recovery Plan is underpinned by more than \$14.2B in recovery initiatives to support the COVID-19 response and deliver economic growth and job creation.

The Big Plans for Small Business package encompasses \$140 million of further support for Queensland small businesses including:

- \$100M for a Business Investment Fund to invest in small and medium enterprises to support them to grow and expand into new markets (administered by QIC);
- \$30M to increase small business skills and capability; and
- \$10M to make it easier to do business

Grants totalling \$25 million were designed to help businesses at different stages of the business lifecycle and to ensure more businesses bounce back better following the impacts of COVID-19. Grant programs are:

- Business Basics grants offering \$5,000 to support new and emerging businesses to increase core capabilities and adopt current best practice.
- Business Boost grants of up to \$15,000 to help small businesses to improve their efficiency and productivity through organisational development and upgrades of automated software and CRM systems; and
- Business Growth grants of up to \$50,000 which will allow businesses to buy highly specialised equipment to seize and accelerate growth opportunities.

The Business Basics grant launched on 17 May 2021 with published program guidelines, terms and conditions, a preview of the application form and frequently asked questions for businesses to prepare their application. Business Basics opened on 31 May 2021 and experienced exceptional up-take with applications closing on the same day. This demonstrated both its need in the small business community and the success of providing information about grants to businesses in advance allowing us to get money to them sooner.

Applications are currently undergoing competitive assessment and a complete list of successful grant recipients will be publicly available via www.desbt.qld.gov.au in due course.

The Business Boost Grant launched on 14 July 2021 utilising the same application tool suite as Business Basics. The Business Boost Grant will open on 30 July 2021 at 9am.

The Business Growth Fund grants opened 11 May 2021 for registrations to complete a mentoring session through the Mentoring for Growth program and closed on 2 June 2021. 399 registrations for a mentoring session were received and sessions are now complete. Stage 2 requires the completion of the application from those businesses who have completed the mentoring sessions. Stage 2 will close for applications on 16 August 2021.

As a result of the Small Business Roadshow feedback, we have ensured there is more assistance with the grant application process and greater lead in time after the release of criteria for each grant program, allowing small business owners time to plan and prepare. Re-designed grant documentation has also improved business' ability to quickly and easily understand which program best meets their needs.

Further rounds of each small business grant program will be undertaken in 2022.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 2

QUESTION:

Can the Minister please provide an update on the implementation of the budget initiative to make the Queensland Small Business Commissioner permanent, and the assistance that has been given to Queensland small businesses to date from the Commissioner's Office?

ANSWER:

Making the Queensland Small Business Commissioner a permanent position was one of the commitments in our Big Plans for Small Business Package, and I am pleased to say the process is well underway.

The Palaszczuk Government has extended the temporary Queensland Small Business Commissioner while work is ongoing to establish this office permanently so it can continue to save small businesses time and money.

This means Queensland will have permanent small business commissioner who can act as a single point of information and advice, particularly in relation to dispute resolution services for small businesses.

The temporary QSBC was implemented in May 2020 to assist small businesses to manage the impact of COVID-19. The temporary QSBC has played a critical role in avoiding lengthy and costly leasing disputes during the pandemic through the provision of easily accessible information, advice and mediation services for small businesses and landlords.

In 2020-21, the QSBC carried out 4505 activities for small businesses, commercial tenants, and landlords including: 3346 enquiries; 683 disputes; 329 outreach activities; and 147 advocacy activities. The small business commissioner has successfully resolved 66% of accepted leasing disputes either by informal resolution or mediation, reducing the need for these matters to progress to the court system.

Similar to other jurisdictions in Australia which have small business commissioners, it is proposed that the role and functions of the permanent QSBC will be established through standalone legislation.

Consultation is well underway with a broad array of stakeholders on this legislation, which is intended to be introduced in Parliament later this year.

The Palaszczuk Government's implementation of a permanent Queensland Small Business Commissioner is in stark contrast to the former LNP government. Under the former LNP government the Small Business Commissioner was abolished so there was no dedicated role to support Queensland small businesses.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 3

QUESTION:

Can the Minister please provide an update on the progress made in regards to the implementation of the 'On Time Payment' policy for small businesses?

ANSWER:

The On-time Payment Policy (OPP) came into effect on 1 July 2020 and further demonstrates the Palaszczuk Government's commitment to supporting small business by making sure they get paid on-time and in-full when supplying to government.

Under the policy, small business supplying to government are paid within 20 calendar days on receipt of a correct, undisputed invoice. Should a small business be paid late, they are eligible to submit a claim for penalty interest. All departments are required to publish data on their performance under the OPP on the Queensland Government Open Data website.

The OPP has been successfully implemented and is now fully operational. For the period from 1 July 2020 to 31 March 2021, 89.2% of small business invoices were paid on time.

This is an excellent result considering some of the biggest agencies like Health and Education have been heavily impacted by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT), 98.5% of payments to small businesses were made on time during this period. This represents 635 payments, with a total value of approximately \$17.7M. The average processing time for DESBT was 11.4 calendar days.

The OPP is a key deliverable of the Queensland Small Business Procurement Commitment Action Statement that commits to making it easier for small businesses to supply to the Government, and for the Queensland Government to be a model payer by paying small businesses on time and in full.

DESBT will keep working with agencies on continual improvements to this policy including increasing the rate of on time payments and making small businesses aware of their rights to claim penalty interest.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 4

QUESTION:

As part of the \$140M Big Plans for Small Business Package and the Strategy, can the Minister please advise how the reinvigorated Queensland Small Business Advisory Council will be established?

ANSWER:

An Expression of Interest (EOI) process seeking 8 to 10 small business owners, to join the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council opened 14 July and will close 5pm 27 July 2021.

This was advertised through a media statement issued to statewide and local/regional news outlets, posts on the Minister's and department's social media pages, engagement with peak stakeholders, and direct email messages to the department's relevant mailing lists to tens of thousands of small business owners.

The EOI process encourages women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander business owners, culturally and linguistically diverse business owners, young and regional business owners, and owners of social enterprises to apply.

The Council will be comprised from priority industry sectors including construction and building; retail and e-commerce; hospitality and accommodation; tourism; agriculture, forestry and fishing; health care and social assistance; transport, postal and warehousing; manufacturing and export; as well as emerging industries like cybersecurity.

Council members will be selected based on their:

- Skills and lived experiences as a small business owner and their ability to advocate for their industry and community;
- Influence and action in their community with a focus on achievements that show support for local small business issues and solutions; and
- Connection to their nominated industry.

Following the closure of the EOI process, the selection and appointment process will be a priority, with timeframes subject to external factors including due diligence checks. The first meeting of the new Queensland Small Business Advisory Council will be convened as soon as possible following the finalisation of the appointments.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 5

QUESTION:

Can the Minister please provide an overview of support provided for small businesses since the beginning of the global COVID-19 pandemic?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan is underpinned by more than \$14.2 billion of initiatives to support Queenslanders, drive economic recovery and create jobs.

The Palaszczuk Government's response provided a range of support to small business during the height of the pandemic and there continues to be ongoing support for small businesses.

Significant COVID-19 support has been already provided directly to small businesses. This includes:

- \$1 billion in Jobs Support loans to almost 7000 Queensland businesses. These low interest loans of up to \$250,000 helped businesses to retain employees and maintain operations. 86% of businesses approved for a loan were small businesses.
- Small Business COVID-19 Adaption Grants which provided grants of up to \$10,000 to prepare for the safe resumption of trading, access new technologies and transition to a new way of doing business. To date, more than \$180 million has been provided to more than 20,000 businesses.
- Payroll tax relief with more than 17,000 registered businesses receiving a payroll tax holiday or refund, and more than \$500 million worth of refunds were paid.
- A \$500 million utility relief package as direct financial assistance to households and small businesses to help offset their utility costs. Almost 200,000 small businesses and sole traders benefitted from a \$500 rebate on their power bill at a time when they needed it most.
- Free online COVID Safe Training was provided to support businesses in high-risk industries such as hospitality and beauty. There have been more than 212,000 completions of COVID safe training.
- The Business Queensland website provided a single source of truth for business on a wide range of COVID-19 related issues. The website achieved its largest number of customers in 2020-21 with over 7.1 million users, an increase of 11.7%.
- Over 400 free online courses for businesses and their employees through the Small Business Skills Hub.
- The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Business Assistance Finder web page provides tailored responses for business owners, with links to the support available from Federal, State and local governments.

- Tailored support through the one-on-one Mentoring for Growth program. Since 2020 614 sessions have been held with 599 unique businesses.
- The #SupportSmall campaign, in collaboration with CCIQ, encouraged all Queenslanders to shop locally.
- Support from the Queensland Small Business Commissioner's Office, particularly with COVID-19 leasing disputes. Over 4500 activities for small businesses, commercial tenants, and landlords were carried out, including: 3346 enquiries; 683 disputes; 329 outreach activities; and 147 advocacy activities.
- Business Launchpads, which are a one-stop-shop online tool for small businesses to see all the Federal, State, and local government regulatory requirements to start a residential construction or hospitality business and to provide assistance in meeting these requirements. These were first launched in Logan and Townsville and have now been extended to the Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and Cairns, with more to be announced
- Expansion of the Regional Jobs Committees which bring together a host of local stakeholders such as businesses, training organisations and employers to make sure that we are creating the best opportunity for businesses to grow and reduce unemployment. We have eight in total, with two recently announced for Bundaberg and the Gold Coast and another to be announced in the near future.
- The Small Business Hotline, which provided extensive advice on the full range of state and commonwealth support available.
- Personalised text alerts and tutorial videos about training contracts and obligations to make it easier for small businesses to employ apprentices and trainees through the VETIC initiative.

The \$140 million Big Plans for Small Business program announced in the budget including:

- \$100 million Business Investment Fund to invest in small to medium sized businesses that have a significant growth potential and will create Queensland based jobs.
- \$30 million to increase skills and capability. This includes the small business grants, tailored support through the Mentoring for Growth program, and guidance on everything from starting a business to employing staff on the Business Queensland website.
- \$10 million to make it easier to do business. This includes making the Queensland Small Business Commissioner permanent in order to provide information and advice to small businesses.
- There is also a targeted engagement framework that includes reinvigorating the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council. EOIs for this recently closed and the new membership will be announced in due course.

Three new grant programs worth \$25 million over two years are currently rolling out, with the first successful applicants to be announced in August.

- The Business Basics grant program is providing grant funding of \$5,000 to new and emerging businesses to increase core skills and adopt best practice.

- The Business Boost grants program will provide grants of up to \$15,000 to support small business investing in advancing their operational efficiency and increasing productivity. The guidelines for the Business Boost grants were published on 15 July 2021 and will open for applications 9am on 30 July 2021.
- The Business Growth Fund program is providing grants of up to \$50,000 to small and medium sized businesses experiencing high growth to buy specialised equipment to unlock their growth potential, increase production, expand the workforce and maximise economic returns.

The Palaszczuk Government is also targeting a \$1 billion investment in training and skills to focus on training for in demand jobs and increase the availability of skilled workers including:

- \$320 million over four years to continue the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative that assists disadvantaged Queenslanders to gain skills and qualifications and experience to enter and stay in the workforce. This program has also been made permanent with an ongoing annual commitment of \$80 million.
- \$140 million over four years for a revitalised Back to Work program that has already helped more than 25,000 people get into work. Over 80% of employers benefitting from the Back to Work program are small businesses.

In July 2020 the Queensland SME procurement target came into effect to help SMEs maximise opportunities and make it easier for small business to supply to the Queensland Government:

- all agencies are subject to the Queensland Procurement Policy and are required to collectively source 25% of procurement spend from Queensland SMEs. This target will increase to 30% by 30 June 2022.
- In the first 6 months since the target commenced (July to December 2020), 29% of every government procurement dollar is going to Queensland SMEs. This equates to approximately \$2.7 billion.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 6

QUESTION:

Can the Minister please update on how the Government is providing Queenslanders access to free and subsidised training?

ANSWER:

Investing in training and skills is at the heart of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan, and this includes ensure Queenslanders have access to free and subsidised training.

The Palaszczuk Government invests in vocational education and training (VET) based on industry advice to provide Queenslanders with the skills they need to gain meaningful and sustainable employment.

Government funding is directed to priority skills with a focus on training for jobs that are in demand in our critical industries.

The number of VET students supported through Queensland Government funded programs has increased by over 10% in 2020-21 to over 230,000 students.

Free and low cost training opportunities are available to eligible Queenslanders across a range of industry sectors under the Certificate 3 Guarantee Program, Higher Level Skills and User Choice Apprenticeship and Traineeship Program, targeting a range of priority cohorts that may face barriers to skilling and training pathways.

Priority skill areas available for training under the VET investment programs (including fee-free) include community services, health, construction, hospitality, horticulture and agriculture. These priorities are identified through consultation with industry networks.

Priority cohorts participating in Queensland's VET investment programs include young people, veterans, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, individuals from a non-English speaking background and individuals with a disability, impairment or long-term condition. Concessional rates are prioritised for students who are disadvantaged to make access to training more affordable.

Importantly, to provide further support to help young people into work, the Palaszczuk Government offers free training in high priority areas through our free training programs.

Under the Free apprenticeships and Free TAFE for under 25s initiative, eligibility was extended for fee-free training to young people under the age of 25 years from January 2021. This initiative extends the 'Free apprenticeships for under 21s' initiative to eligible apprentices or trainees under the age of 25 years and will cover the cost of training for Queensland apprentices or trainees who commenced or are undertaking

one of the 139 high priority apprenticeship or traineeship qualifications from 1 January 2021 to 30 September 2022.

In addition, Free TAFE for under 25s will allow young people and school leavers up to the age of 25 years to choose to undertake one of 26 priority certificate III qualifications for free through TAFE Queensland or CQUniversity.

As at 30 June 2021, 35,236 Queenslanders have accessed free TAFE and free apprenticeships.

Additionally, the JobTrainer Fund is a joint initiative between the Queensland Government and the Federal Government to deliver additional no or low fee training places in accredited short courses and qualifications in priority areas, with currently over 40,000 Queensland enrolments, to support jobseekers, school leavers and young people.

We have also supported important training delivery in relation with the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, COVID Safe training has been developed by TAFE Queensland for the hospitality and beauty sectors. In addition, free online micro-credentials and skill sets were also made available, along with infection control skill sets to support the reopening of customer facing businesses.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 7

QUESTION:

Given the impact of COVID-19 on higher education providers, can the Minister please provide an update on impacts to TAFE and the importance of their role as a public provider operating statewide?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government continues to back TAFE Queensland as the single largest educational institution in the state.

Through this commitment to TAFE Queensland, the Palaszczuk Government is able to provide quality education and training in rural and remote communities across the state and reacting to emerging industry needs (such as aerospace and defence industries). This commitment comes at a cost not shared by other service providers.

TAFE achieves high quality outcomes for students and employers with competency completion rates of 89%, student satisfaction rates of 89.5%, and employer satisfaction of more than 91%.

TAFE has also been successful in winning major commercial contracts including the Guardian Patrol Boat training tender with the Australian Department of Defence. This contract is worth \$36 million and means a relocation of the program from Tasmania to Cairns, supporting Queensland jobs.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact TAFE Queensland, particularly the extended international border closures which is affecting both the international student market and the training of migrants and refugees.

In 2020-21, TAFE Queensland posted a balanced budget.

In 2021–22, TAFE Queensland's international student enrolments are forecast to decline by a further 30% and the Commonwealth's Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) student enrolments are forecast to be approximately 40% lower than the previous year.

At the height of COVID in 2020, TAFE Queensland:

- developed and delivered free COVID Safe training modules for workers in the hospitality industry, and beauty, nail, tanning, spas and tattooing sectors. To date, more than 250,000 Queenslanders have accessed this training;
- delivered 80 free Business Resilience webinars supporting small and medium businesses to improve resilience, attended by 800 businesses;
- delivered free skill sets and micro-credentials to 12,250 Queenslanders whose livelihoods were impacted by COVID.

TAFE Queensland continued to deliver COVID-safe training throughout the state during the pandemic. This included training over 1,800 educators in digital literacy in order to deliver training via online or virtual formats.

Practical and essential trade training were still undertaken on campus in over 60 locations under COVID safe conditions to ensure Queensland students completed their qualifications and were job-ready.

Skilling and training are critical drivers in our COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan and the Palaszczuk Government is proud to have restored TAFE and continued to invest in growing its footprint.

Under the former government, this level of responsiveness to the pandemic would have been hampered by their own cuts to TAFE, including the closure of 5 campuses.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 8

QUESTION:

Can the Minister please provide an update on the Palaszczuk Government's investment in TAFE infrastructure and how it will help prepare young Queenslanders for jobs in emerging industries?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is dedicated to ensuring Queenslanders have access to world-class training in cutting-edge facilities.

Since 2017, our Government has made capital investments of over \$220M to upgrade, renew and revitalise TAFE campuses to ensure we support a skilled workforce and prepare young Queenslanders for jobs in emerging industries.

Delivery of high-quality training that meets the needs of industry, underpinned by our state's training infrastructure, is essential to ensuring Queenslanders have the skills required to get a job or start a business.

Over the next three years, \$100M will be invested through the Equipping TAFE for our Future (ETFOF) program to enhance TAFE facilities. This will support delivery of 19 projects across 15 locations across Queensland to ensure future training meets the needs of industry and the post-COVID economy.

This builds on the outcomes of the Advancing Our Training Infrastructure Program which provided \$112.5m for investment across six TAFE sites and regions to revitalise the state's training portfolio.

This infrastructure investment is part of the Palaszczuk Government's plan to restore TAFE after the cuts of the former LNP Government, who presided over the closure of 5 campuses.

DESBT is also investing in industry led projects for training facilities in key industries. This includes construction of a new Renewable Energy Training Facility, and the second stage upgrades to the Queensland Apprenticeship Centre at Beenleigh, incorporating a new Hydrogen Training Centre of Excellence. These projects have a combined total value of \$43M (including a \$6M industry contribution).

This investment in training infrastructure is timely with the Department's focus on emerging industries workforce development to plan for the skills and workforce needs of the future. The \$3.34 billion Queensland Jobs Fund will create jobs across a variety of sectors including advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, hydrogen and new minerals mining.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to providing students with access to state-of-the-art training facilities and equipment to ensure they are job ready. For our teachers and trainers, it will provide them with contemporary training spaces to ensure training delivery is at the cutting edge.

The Equipping TAFE for our Future (ETFOF) program includes the following projects:

Project	Funding	Commencement	Completion	Status
CQU Rockhampton Consolidation Business Case and Rockhampton Training Centre of Excellence	\$8.4M	2021	2022	Preliminary planning underway including business case
CQU Mackay Ooralea Trade Training Centre Expansion	\$7.5M	2021	2022	Preliminary planning underway including business case
New Robina TAFE Campus - Fitout	\$10M	2021	2022	Campus construction commenced with business case for fitout underway
Yarrabilba Community TAFE Learning Centre pilot	\$1.5M	2021	2022	Pilot planning underway
Southbank Cyber Security Training Operation Centre	\$2M	2021	2022	Design work underway
Southbank Robotics Lab	\$0.95M	2021	2022	Design work underway
Mooloolaba Cyber Security Training Operation Centre	\$2M	2021	2022	Design work underway
Bowen Agricultural Centre of Excellence	\$3.4M	2021	2022	Design work underway
Cannonvale Aquaculture Training Centre	\$2M	2021	2022	Design work underway
Toowoomba Rural Centre of Excellence Stage 2	\$1M	2021	2022	Design work underway
Hervey Bay Nursing and Allied Health Upgrades	\$1.2M	2021	2022	Design work underway
Bohle Advanced Manufacturing Skills Lab	\$3.6M	2021	2023	Preliminary planning underway
Bundaberg Agriculture and Horticulture Centre	\$3.35M	2021	2023	Preliminary planning underway
Bundaberg Maker Space	\$1M	2022	2023	Preliminary planning underway
Bundamba Metal Trades, Manufacturing and Robotics Centre	\$7M	2021	2023	Preliminary planning underway

Cairns Cyber Security Training Operation Centre	\$2M	2022	2023	Preliminary planning underway
Cairns Advanced Manufacturing Hub	\$3.6M	2022	2023	Preliminary planning underway
Bohle Hydrogen and Renewable Energy Training Facility	\$10.6M	2022	2024	Preliminary planning underway
Eagle Farm Robotics and Advanced Manufacturing Centre	\$28.9M	2022	2024	Preliminary planning underway

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 9

QUESTION:

Can the Minister advise how the Palaszczuk Government has invested in skills to increase the number of apprentices and trainees in Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is investing in equipping Queenslanders with the right skills that will lead to the jobs now and in the future. Apprenticeships are critical pathways to growing the state's skilled workforce needed to support its economic recovery.

In 2020-21, over 45,700 apprentices and trainees commenced in Queensland, a significant increase of 56.6% on the previous financial year.

Growth in apprenticeships and traineeships was experienced across all industry areas, particularly in Construction, up by 61.5%, and Hospitality, up by 56.7%.

The Palaszczuk Government's Free apprenticeships for under 25s has also supported more young people into apprenticeships and traineeships.

As at 22 July 2021, the total number of people that have benefitted through the Free Apprenticeships initiative is 32,742.

Through the Palaszczuk Government's Future Skills Fund, a new \$25m Pre-Apprenticeship Support Program is funding pathways to support more Queenslanders to become the workers of the future by:

- working with Group Training Organisations to support more young Queenslanders into a trades pathway;
- supporting apprentices on the Out of Trade Register to find a new employer to continue their training; and
- investing to support more experienced workers gain their trade qualification.

Implementation of these initiatives is underway, with applications for the GTO Pre-apprenticeship Program recently closing and SchoolTech negotiations underway for an extension of the program.

Further, additional funding for the Registered Trade Skills Pathway Program; Trade Skills Assessment and Gap Training; and the Out of Trade Register will provide expanded support across these programs during 2020-21.

These expanded arrangements will continue in 2021-22 with further expansion currently being negotiated.

Other apprenticeship and traineeship support initiatives include:

- extension of the Apprentice and Trainee Payroll Tax Rebate of 50% to 30 June 2022, providing an incentive for businesses to take on apprentices;
- the \$100 million Equipping TAFE for our Future program is investing in TAFE campuses so world class training can be delivered from fit for purpose facilities;
- the Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy, supporting employment and skills development by requiring 10% of the total hours on eligible building and civil construction projects (15% on major projects over \$100 million) to be undertaken by apprentices and/or trainees and through other workforce training
- the Rebuilding QBuild program, which includes a commitment to employ 60 apprentices over three years
- WorkCover Queensland giving employers a discount on their premium if they employ an apprentice, applied by removing the apprentice wages from the employer's premium calculation
- a travel and accommodation subsidy, providing financial assistance to eligible Queensland apprentices and trainees for travel expenses incurred attending off-the-job training at the closest registered training organisation, where travel incurred is a minimum of 100 kilometres return from their usual place of residence.

Queensland continues to be the national leader in apprenticeship completion despite a steady national decline over the last seven years under the Federal LNP Government.

The Palaszczuk Government is investing to support more apprentices and trainees to ensure that Queensland has the skilled workforce it needs as the economy recovers and grows.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 10

QUESTION:

Can the Minister provide an update on how Skills Assure is giving Queenslanders more confidence in the state's subsidised training and skills programs?

ANSWER:

Through our Skills Assure initiative, Queenslanders can be confident that state government-subsidised training is provided by quality registered training organisations with a focus on employment outcomes for students.

Queenslanders will be able to easily recognise Skills Assure suppliers that have met the rigorous requirements to deliver state government subsidised training, through display of the Skills Assure logo on their webpages and marketing materials.

Skills Assure was implemented from 1 July 2020 and included the following measures:

- a new agreement for Skills Assure Suppliers with strengthened provisions relating to financial viability, compliance history and previous training and assessment activities as well as the location of head office in Queensland. This includes a minimum of 12 months delivery of training and assessment services and outcomes in Queensland in the relevant qualification or industry area;
- a requirement to submit details about sub-contractors that suppliers intend to use to deliver training and assessment; and
- a range of system enhancements to improve our data validation.

In 2020–21, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training has also undertaken compliance checks on existing Skills Assure suppliers against the following risk indicators: fees; training duration; failure rates; qualification completions; recognition of prior learning rates and student satisfaction.

As part of Skills Assure and to continue to enhance the quality of training and skills in Queensland, registered training organisations will only be approved as a Skills Assure supplier where the department assesses that the training market is in undersupply.

I am also pleased to advise that the Queensland VET Quality Forum was established December 2020 in order to support quality in vocational education and training, with strong collaboration occurring between regulators in this Forum.

In 2021–22, Skills Assure agreements and policies have been further strengthened. Skills Assure suppliers will be required to provide the department with further details of delivery by third parties or subcontractors, including a requirement for suppliers to deliver at least 50% of training and assessment themselves, and being unable to subcontract to a related entity. This is important to close a loophole and ensure that the integrity of the SAS system is intact and that contracted training organisations are delivering the bulk of training.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 11

QUESTION:

Could the Minister please advise the average government subsidy for each course on the Priority Skills List?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is subsidising training in priority skills that are in-demand so we can get more Queenslanders into jobs.

The Priority Skills List and User Choice Price List each identify the qualifications and skill sets that attract a government subsidy under vocational education and training (VET) investment programs in Queensland. These lists and the set amount of government subsidy for each course is publicly available on the department's website at <https://desbt.qld.gov.au/training/providers/funded/priority-skills-list>

The sectors with the highest demand currently are community services, construction, electrical, engineering, health, automotive, hospitality and childcare.

The Priority Skills List outlines the subsidies for a total of 394 qualifications and 62 skill sets available for delivery of:

- Certificate 3 Guarantee qualifications, inclusive of:
 - o foundation skills courses and lower-level vocational qualifications, which are funded to support the Certificate 3 Guarantee qualifications
 - o qualifications available for VET in Schools (VETiS)
 - o qualifications available for Free TAFE for under 25s
- Higher Level Skills qualifications and skills sets
- JobTrainer Fund only qualifications and skill sets.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 12

QUESTION:

Regarding the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training's 2020-21 budget savings of \$55.557m (as per Budget Strategy and Outlook page 78), could the Minister please provide a breakdown by workstream which may include accommodation, advertising and marketing, data and ICT, workforce, government corporate support services, grants administration, procurement, and any other significant category?

ANSWER:

On 9 July 2020, the Government announced a range of savings measures that aim to prioritise functions and deliver savings of \$3B over four years.

The Queensland Government has fully achieved the 2020-21 savings target of \$750M. This has been achieved through a range of Savings and Debt Plan measures and agency savings efforts, and include reductions in expenditure on travel, contractors, consultants and other supplies and services.

This was able to be achieved while maintaining essential services and supporting the Government's focus on economic recovery and commitment to public service employment conditions.

The Department does not report its budget against Savings and Debt workstreams, as it does not align with the whole of government chart of accounts or the Department's cost centre structure.

A review of the Department's budget identified the following savings, in alignment with the whole of government chart of accounts:

- \$1.285M of employee related expenditure relating to the return of funding for 11 funded and vacant FTEs.
- \$6.998M of supplies and services expenditure relating to savings across a number of expenditure categories including travel, motor vehicle costs, accommodation, contractors and consultants, consumables, and office administration expenditure.
- \$47.274M of grants and subsidies expenditure relating to savings from programs with uncommitted funds.

In relation to the grants and subsidy savings, an extensive review of the 2020-21 grants and subsidies funding identified \$47.274M of uncommitted funds, which is less than 4% of the total budget allocation. Due to the uncommitted nature of this funding, it was agreed that this could be initially returned to government, with the Department able to

request this funding to be returned in the event of commitments exceeding current forecast expenditure levels.

The detailed summary of the grants and subsidies savings included:

- \$45M in uncommitted funding from the Back to Work program. During 2020 there was reduced demand for Back to Work which was impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic and other factors including JobKeeper. Back to Work continued to be available with only uncommitted funding returned as a saving.
- \$1.574M in uncommitted funding from the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016-2020. The impact of this saving was mitigated by nearly \$200 million rolled out in COVID-19 adaption grants to small business across the state.
- \$0.7M from the Training Apprentice Travel and Accommodation subsidies as a result of restrictions on travel due to COVID-19.

STIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 13

QUESTION:

Could the Minister please advise if in 2020/21 the Department became aware of any Registered Training Organisations providing inducements to attract prospective students, and the actions taken by the Department in each case?

ANSWER:

The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) investigates all complaints received regarding training providers that receive Government subsidies, known as Skills Assure Suppliers (SAS).

The Department has not become aware of any registered training organisation (RTO) that has provided inducements to attract prospective students throughout 2020–21.

Importantly, the SAS Agreement prohibits funded registered training organisations (RTOs) from engaging in marketing practices not consistent with departmental policies, including inducements or false and misleading advertising.

The Department has strong risk mitigation measures in place and undertakes regular compliance monitoring in accordance with the SAS Agreement. This includes monthly reviews of claims for payment, data analytics, compliance checks and contractual audits.

Any concerns or complaints about the behaviour of an RTO should be referred to the Department and/or the Queensland Training Ombudsman. RTOs that do not operate as a SAS may be referred to appropriate bodies for further action, including Office of Fair Trading or the national regulator Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA).

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 14

QUESTION:

Could the Minister please provide a breakdown of expenditure of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work by month in the 2020/21 financial year?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government has made the highly successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) initiative permanent, with a commitment of \$320M over four years and \$80M ongoing annual funding. The implementation of permanent funding for SQW, which was reinstated in 2015, is the final reversal of the former LNP government's decision to cut this vital program.

SQW plays a critical role in increasing workforce participation and the overall performance of the Queensland economy by improving skills development and work opportunities for disadvantaged Queenslanders who generally face barriers in their participation in skills training and the labour market.

SQW also provides wider benefits beyond those experienced by the participants, with many SQW projects providing upgrades to community facilities such as sports clubs.

With 73 per cent of participants going onto employment or further training, it is one of the most successful programs of its type. Since 2015 SQW has helped more than 37,000 people into jobs.

The table below outlines the breakdown of expenditure of SQW by month in the 2020-21 financial year. Total expenditure in 2020-21 was \$73.38M.

Month	Expenditure
July 2020	\$3,208,072
August 2020	\$6,637,360
September 2020	\$14,671,821
October 2020	\$10,175,081
November 2020	\$3,384,766
December 2020	\$6,211,727
January 2021	\$6,076,374
February 2021	\$1,360,073
March 2021	\$7,446,279
April 2021	\$6,392,637
May 2021	\$6,020,720
June 2021	\$1,797,404
Total	\$73,382,314

There are currently 551 active contracts across all SQW programs with staggered delivery periods ending up until 30 June 2022. The standard delivery period for projects is 12 months, with participants recruited over several intakes.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 15

QUESTION:

For grants programs that ended in 2020/21, or grant rounds that closed in 2020/21, could the Minister please provide a table showing:

- Grant (and round) name
- Date that the program ended or round closed
- Total available grants in dollar value
- Total allocated funds in dollar value?

ANSWER:

The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) administered a range of grants programs in 2020-21 across the employment, small business and training portfolios. As a collective, these programs have a strong focus on connecting Queenslanders and small businesses to skills, employment and business opportunities so they are better equipped to participate in the state's workforce or grow their business.

Most grants programs will cross over or be delivered across multiple financial years and the table below details departmental grants programs that either ended in 2020-21 or conducted a funding round that had a closing date in 2020-21. Included in the table is the total dollar value available for grants for each program or program round conducted in 2020-21 and the total dollar value of the allocated funds from the program or funding round conducted throughout the financial year. Please note that payments of these allocated funds may be over multiple financial years.

Program/Grant	Date ended/round closed	Total Available Grants	Total Allocated Funds
Skilling Queenslanders for Work 2020-21 – Round 2¹ <i>Funding round heavily oversubscribed. Additional projects approved due to unused funds in Work Start incentives and BAU return of unused funds from 2019-20 projects</i>	08/10/2020	\$13,379,500	\$13,758,900
Skilling Queenslanders for Work - Work Start incentives 2020/21 <i>Program is demand-driven, reliant on employers engaging former SQW participants as trainees and apprentices. Budget allocation is notional – unused funding re-allocated to SQW Round 2</i>	30/06/2021	\$4,000,000	\$3,730,000
Queensland Hardship Payment <i>Initiative superseded by Australian Government's Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment scheme released in October 2020. Unused funds were returned to Queensland Treasury.</i>	30/06/2021	\$1,000,000	\$7,500

Small Business Online Training Program <i>Demand driven program with milestone payments based on course enrolments. Suppliers paid in 2020-21 and 2021-22 as milestones met.</i>	30/06/2021	\$3,040,000	\$2,960,573
Queensland Group Training Program <i>Slight underspend due to the liquidation of a Group Training Organisation which resulted in apprentices being re-engaged by other Group Training Organisations (GTOs) or directly with other employers.</i>	30/06/2021	\$3,250,343	\$3,208,905
Gateway to Industry Schools Program <i>No grants have been awarded under the latest round as applications are currently being assessed</i>	3/06/2021	\$7,650,000	N/A
Business Basics <i>No grants have been awarded under the latest round as applications are currently being assessed</i>	31/05/2021	\$10,000,000	N/A

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 16

QUESTION:

Could the Minister please provide the completion rate for apprenticeships broken down by year since 2015/16?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government continues to invest in apprentices and trainees in Queensland. Since August 2018, our Free apprenticeships program has supported 32,742 apprentices and trainees (22 July 2021) under the age of 25.

This has contributed to the growth in apprenticeship commencements which have risen to over 45,700 in the year to June 2021, a 56.6% rise compared to the previous year.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to increasing completion rates for apprentices and trainees. Unfortunately there is a national trend in declining completion rates being experienced under the Federal LNP Government. Contract completion rates in Queensland have been consistently higher than the national average.

In addition to a range of measures to support both apprentices and employers, the Palaszczuk Government also amended the *Further Education and Training Act 2014* to reduce apprenticeship cancellations and suspensions, introduce cooling off periods and introduced a permanent transfer process to allow an apprentice or trainee to transfer their training contract to another employer.

Queensland saw a reduction in the number of cancellations and withdrawals from apprentice and trainee contracts in 2020 compared to 2019, decreasing by 6.9%.

The Palaszczuk Government is also investing \$25 million into a Pre-Apprenticeship Support program as part of the Future Skills Fund. This program adds new pathways for people interested in starting an apprenticeship, and expands current initiatives supporting Queenslanders to become skilled workers.

There are a number of elements to this program which will offer participants tailored support which may include a mix of career advice, job preparation skills, foundation skills, work experience and any other assistance that enhances the likelihood of success once they start their apprenticeship.

The completion rates for apprenticeships in Australia is reported by NCVET and are based on the training contract commencement date. The following table provides completion rates in the last 6 years.

Contract Completion Rate (Queensland vs National)

Nominal Completion Year ⁺	QLD Contract Completions (%)	Australia Contract Completions (%)
2015-16	55.7	53.3
2016-17	58.5	55.4
2017-18	55.8	53
2018-19	52.6	49.4
2019-20	51.2	49.7
2020-21	52.5	48.3

⁺Nominal Completion Year is the expected year that an apprenticeship training contract would be completed. Apprenticeship training contracts can take up to 8 years (part-time) to complete from commencement date.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 17

QUESTION:

Regarding the Small Business Cocktail event held at Parliament House on 12 May 2021, Could the Minister please provide:

- The total event cost with a breakdown of the costs by venue hire, catering costs, staging and equipment hire, photography/ videography and any other significant category
- The list of individuals invited to the event (including role and organisation), and
- The list of attendees at the event (including role and organisation)?

ANSWER:

A reception was hosted by the Honourable Minister Farmer on 12 May 2021 at Parliament House to celebrate Queensland Small Business Month 2021 and to recognise the vital contribution small businesses make to our state's economy. The reception was one of more than 200 activities and events held across the state for Queensland Small Business Month which delivered a range of opportunities for small business owners to network, connect and learn skills to help them bounce back better from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is a regular annual event budgeted for as part of Queensland Small Business Month and is held every year at Parliament, with 2020 being an exception due to the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

A list that identifies any guests is unable to be provided as this would intrude on their privacy. However, the following high level breakdown can be provided.

There were limited places available due to COVID-19 restrictions. A total of 155 guests accepted the invite to this event, and 124 registered their attendance on the night with security. This included 87 small business owners and operators from across Queensland. Representatives from peak industry bodies, Members of Parliament and staff from the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training also attended.

The total cost of this event represents only 0.11% of the Department budget and was as follows:

Item	Cost (including GST)
Equipment Hire	\$1,357.62
Editing of case study films used to promote Love Your Small Business Day (May 15) to audience	\$440
Venue hire and catering (basic package)	\$9,250
Audio visual equipment	\$4,020
Photographer	\$522.50
Totals	\$15,590.12

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 18

QUESTION:

Could the Minister please provide a breakdown of the grants and subsidies expense item listed on page 7 of the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training SDS and an explanation for the budgeted reduction from \$1.2bn in 2020-21 to \$1bn in 2021-22?

ANSWER:

The budgeted reduction from \$1.2B in 2020-21 to \$1B in 2021-22 is predominately due to the additional funding in 2020-21 for the extraordinary response to COVID-19, including \$188M for the Small Business Adaption grants program.

A listing of the 2021-22 grants and subsidies budget is provided below:

Service Areas	Includes	2021-22 Budget (\$M)
Training and Skills	Training and Skills grants and subsidies includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate 3 Guarantee• Higher Level Skills• User Choice• Skilling Queenslanders for Work• Payments to Public Providers• Future Skills Fund• National Partnership Job Training Fund• Other programs worth less than \$10M	949.1
Employment	Employment related grants and subsidies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Back to Work• Other programs worth less than \$10M	46.5
Small Business	Small Business related grants and subsidies	15.0

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 19

QUESTION:

In regards to public liability insurance in Queensland, can the Minister outline what efforts are being made by the State Government to assist small businesses that are required to hold public liability insurance, particularly in regional Queensland?

ANSWER:

As this issue falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Treasurer and Minister for Investment, this question should be referred to the Treasurer and Minister for Investment for response.

ESTIMATES QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 20

QUESTION:

Can the Minister advise what support the State Government has provided in the 2021-22 budget to establish an incentive scheme to encourage people to work in regional Queensland, particularly in the areas of skills shortages?

ANSWER:

COVID-19 has had a broad impact on demand and supply for skills and workers, with international border restrictions leading to reduced numbers of temporary workers, such as backpackers, in regional areas.

The Palaszczuk Government has made connecting workers to jobs a priority. In the 2021-22 State Budget, the Government allocated funding to multiple initiatives to encourage and sustain employment in regional Queensland.

The revitalised \$140 million Back to Work employment program will support thousands of Queenslanders and businesses across regional Queensland.

Back to Work gives eligible businesses the confidence to take on new employees, especially Queensland jobseekers.

Since 2016, the Back to Work program has supported more than 20,400 people in regional areas get into jobs with more than 8,900 employers. These workers make up over 80% of the total people who have gained employment through the program.

The revitalised Back to Work program will provide greater access to financial and on the ground support for employers and workers facing disadvantage in the labour market, particularly in regional Queensland.

The Skilling Queenslanders for Work program has achieved great results to date, with 73% of the participants in employment or further training 12 months after exiting a SQW program. The SQW suite of programs will continue to assist disadvantaged Queenslanders each year to gain skills, qualifications and experience to enter and stay in the workforce, with a strong focus on local community needs.

The Skilling Queenslanders for Work program was reintroduced in 2015 after it was abolished by the former LNP government. It has assisted over 32,000 disadvantaged job seekers outside of the Metropolitan and South East region. Skilling Queenslanders for Work has now been made permanent with \$320 million over four years and \$80 million each year in ongoing funding.

The Regional Jobs Committees have been expanded to undertake important engagement activities and determine regional skills and workforce needs. These Committees bring together local industry, training providers, employers, unions, and

councils, to identify local industry trends and skilling opportunities. Committees are located in Townsville, Mackay, Fraser Coast, Springfield, Toowoomba and Redlands, with two new Committees recently established on the Gold Coast and in the Bundaberg Region. A third new Committee will be announced in the coming weeks.

The Palaszczuk Government is continuing to provide training pathways in high demand industries with Free TAFE for under 25s providing access to fully subsidised training across 139 priority apprenticeships or traineeships qualifications. Over 19,000 people have received free training or apprenticeships outside of the Metropolitan and South East Queensland Region.

Skilled labour is essential to our economic recovery plan, and attracting and retaining workers with the right skills is vital for the growth of Queensland businesses. The Palaszczuk Government has announced a Workforce Summit which will bring together industry and business leaders, major employers and training providers to identify strategies and partnerships to assist industry to access the workforce they need.

In addition, there will be a series of satellite events in the lead-up, including with Jobs Queensland, the Regional Jobs Committees and Industry Skills Advisors to help inform and shape the Workforce Summit and sharpen the focus on place based solutions to deliver real outcomes.

These significant initiatives supporting skilled workforce development in the regions are supplemented by sectoral initiatives such as the \$7.5 million Work in Paradise Incentive program, led by the Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe MP, Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport, and implemented by the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport. This program is encouraging jobseekers to take up jobs in Northern and Western Queensland's tourism industry.

This incentive program, available from July 2021, provides a maximum payment of \$1500 to jobseekers to take up employment in the sector provided they have been offered and commenced in employment with an eligible business after 20 May 2021. The Palaszczuk Government is also participating in the recommenced Federal Seasonal Worker Program and Pacific Labour Scheme to address the shortfall of workers in horticultural growing areas.

**Answer to questions taken on notice at the hearing -
*Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and
Minister for Racing***

In accordance with SO 192, the following question was taken on notice by Minister Grace during the committee's estimates hearing held 29 July 2021:

Will the minister be able to outline the number of [Office of Industrial Relations] employees in regional Queensland and the number in metropolitan Queensland if there is a split? (proof transcript p 39)

Minister Grace provided the committee the following response to the question:

In terms of the numbers, member for Hinchinbrook, there are 885 full-time equivalents and 293 are in the regions, so around 300 are in regional Queensland in our very good offices around the state. (proof transcript p 47)

Documents tabled at the hearing

Documents tabled at the hearing	
1.	Copy of email advertising material from Navig8Biz Queensland tabled by James Lister MP, Member for Southern Downs

Tabled by: MR LUTIN
At: ESTIMATE ESTIMATES HEARING
Time/date: 3:00pm 29 July 21
Signature: _____



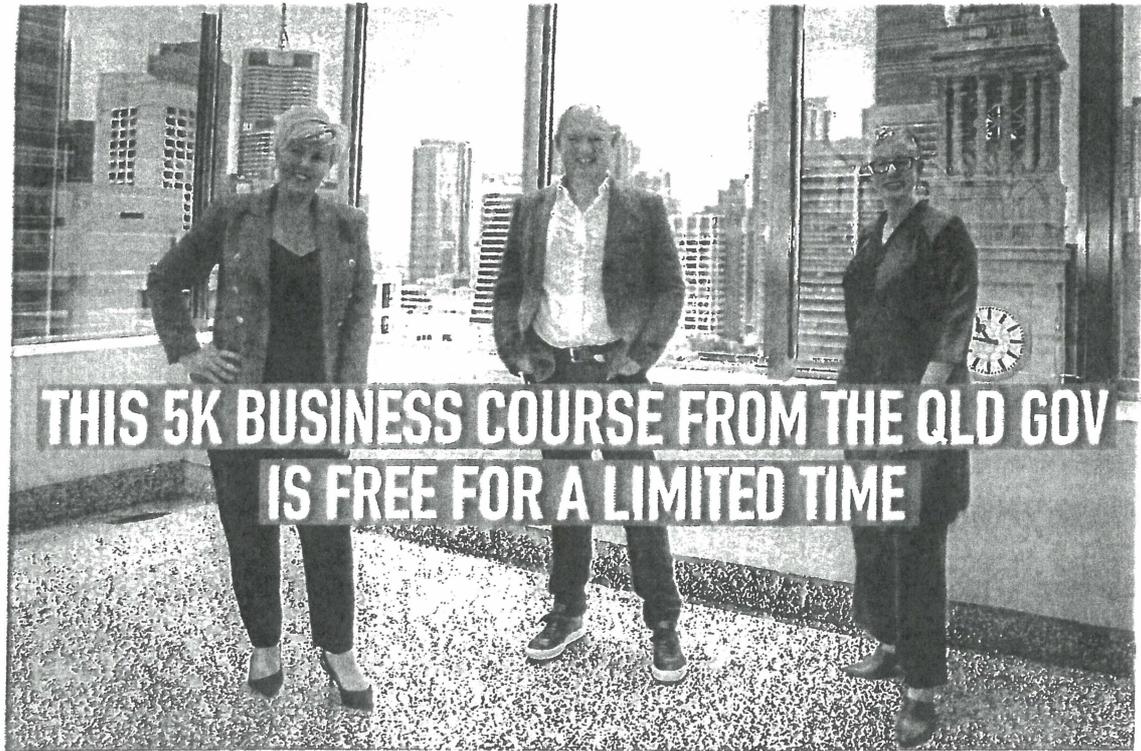
Jane Anderson



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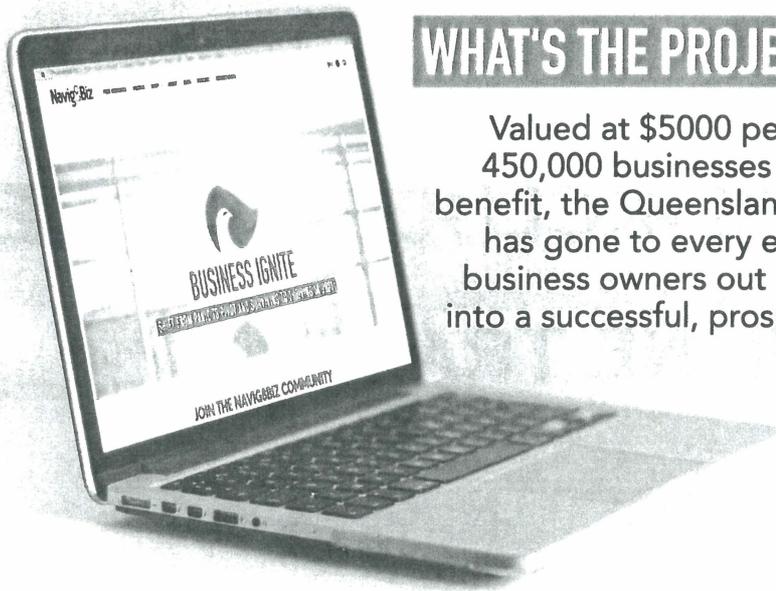
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- Pivot Opportunities
- Scaling Your Business
- Mindset and Growth
- Networking Opportunities
- Support and Mentoring



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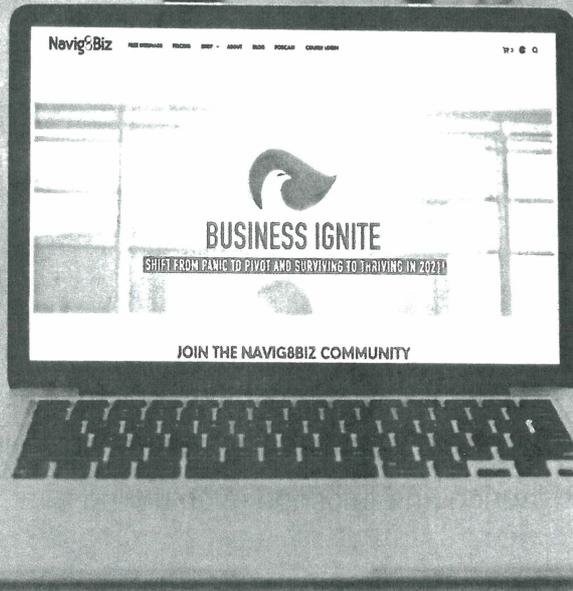
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"I knew there was a gap in the market, but I had no idea how to build a successful business. With the online content I was able to quickly implement the learning into my business, and launch and succeed even during a pandemic." - *Grace Martin*.

"First time in a long time have I had such an easy, quick online registration. Well done. And looking around the site, it is very user-friendly, with content that is relevant to meet both business and personal needs." - *Julie Dimmick*.

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Jane Anderson

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Documents received after the hearing

Documents received after the hearing	
1.	Letter from the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development dated 16 August 2021



Minister for Employment and Small Business
Minister for Training and Skills Development

1 William Street Brisbane Q 4000
PO Box 15483 City East Q 4002
Telephone +61 7 3719 7500
Email employment@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dept ref: CIC-351
MO ref:

16 August 2021

Ms Kim Richards
Chair
Education, Employment and Training Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
Email: eetc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Richards

I wish to provide some additional information regarding my comments and those made by my Director-General, Mr Warwick Agnew, at the Estimates Hearing on 29 July 2021.

In my evidence on page 66, I said:

In June this year I announced the Big Plans for Small Business strategy, which includes \$140 million in grants for small businesses. It also included significant initiatives that support small business.

To clarify:

In June this year I announced the Big Plans for Small Business strategy, which includes \$25 million in grants for small businesses. It also included significant initiatives that support small business.

In my evidence on page 75, Mr Agnew said:

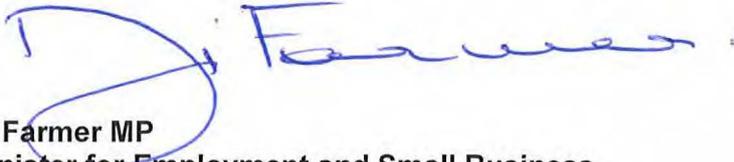
I will attempt to do that as quickly as I can. In relation to the information that the Minister wanted to provide you on the Small Business Hotline, I can confirm that there were 18,000 calls in the financial year 2020-21 and 39,100 calls since March 2020. I would like to correct a statement that I made in relation to the recording of our Small Business Hotline. Our hotline services are provided by Smart Service Queensland I understand that they are recorded. I would be keen, if there is an opportunity, for that individual to provide their number so we could follow up and ensure that information is used for training and correction.

To clarify:

I will attempt to do that as quickly as I can. In relation to the information that the Minister wanted to provide you on the Small Business Hotline, I can confirm that there were 18,000 calls in the financial year 2020-21 and 39,100 calls since March 2020. I would like to correct a statement that I made in relation to the recording of our Small Business Hotline. Our hotline services that are provided by Smart Service Queensland I understand that they are recorded. I would be keen, if there is an opportunity, for that individual to provide their number so we could follow up and ensure that information is used for training and correction.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to review the Hearing Transcript. If you require additional information or would like to discuss this matter further, I invite you to contact my Chief of Staff, Ms Emily Taylor on telephone 3719 7500.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Di Farmer', with a large, stylized initial 'D'.

Di Farmer MP
Minister for Employment and Small Business
Minister for Training and Skills Development