



2022-23 Budget Estimates - Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022

**Report No. 29, 57th Parliament
Economics and Governance Committee
August 2022**

Economics and Governance Committee

Chair	Mr Linus Power MP, Member for Logan
Deputy Chair	Mr Ray Stevens MP, Member for Mermaid Beach
Members	Mr Michael Crandon MP, Member for Coomera*
	Ms Melissa McMahon, Member for Macalister
	Mr Daniel Purdie MP, Member for Ninderry
	Mr Adrian Tantari MP, Member for Hervey Bay

*Mr Andrew Powell MP, Member for Glass House, participated as a substitute member for Mr Michael Crandon MP, Member for Coomera, for the committee's public hearing for the consideration of the 2022-23 portfolio budget estimates.

Committee Secretariat

Telephone	+61 7 3553 6637
Email	egc@parliament.qld.gov.au
Technical Scrutiny Secretariat	+61 7 3553 6601
Committee webpage	www.parliament.qld.gov.au/EGC

Acknowledgements

The committee thanks the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for his assistance.

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

Contents

Chair's foreword	ii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Role of the committee	1
1.2 Aim of this report	2
1.3 Participation by other Members	2
2 Recommendation	1
3 Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service	2
3.1 Appropriation	2
3.2 Service Area highlights	3
3.3 Budget highlights	3
3.4 Capital purchases	4
3.5 Key issues raised during consideration of the budget estimates	4
4 Statement of Reservation	7

Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the Economics and Governance Committee's consideration of the budget estimates for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for the 2022-23 financial year, as set out in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022.

Central to these considerations was the committee's conduct of a question on notice process and public hearing, which provided an opportunity for the committee to examine the estimates of expenditure in greater detail, including further exploring information set out in the budget papers accompanying the Bill.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Speaker, the Clerk and other Parliamentary Service officers for their co-operation in providing information to the committee throughout this process.

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

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



Linus Power MP

Chair

August 2022

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

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

The committee's primary areas of responsibility are:

- Premier and Cabinet and Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Treasury, Trade and Investment
- Tourism Industry Development, Innovation and Sport.

The committee also has a monitor and review role in relation to the performance of the functions of the Queensland Integrity Commissioner and Auditor-General, which are set out in the statute and in the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly (Standing Orders).²

On 24 June 2022, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022 and the estimates for the committee's area of responsibility were referred to the committee for investigation and report.³

In making this referral, the Legislative Assembly agreed to a resolution setting out dates and specified timeframes for each portfolio committee to hold its estimates hearing, and requiring the committees to report back to the Assembly on the referred estimates by 12 August 2022.⁴

In keeping with the Assembly's direction, on 26 July 2022 the committee conducted a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly (Speaker) and other witnesses.

Prior to the hearing, the committee also provided the Speaker with questions on notice and received answers to each of those questions.

These answers to the committee's pre-hearing questions on notice are available on the committee's estimates webpage and are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report. The transcript and broadcast of the committee's hearing are also available on the committee's estimates webpage⁵.

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

² See *Integrity Act 2009*, *Auditor-General Act 2009*; Standing Orders, schedule 6 and s 194A. Standing Orders, Schedule 6; *Auditor-General Act 2009*, ss 9, 11, 12, 12A, 18, 21, 38A, 68, 70; *Integrity Act 2009*, ss 68, 74, 78, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, 88, 89.

³ Standing Order 177 provides for the automatic referral of the Annual Appropriation Bills to portfolio committees once the Bills have been read a second time.

⁴ Queensland Parliament, Record of Proceedings, 22 June 2022, pp 1629-1632.

⁵ Economics and Governance Committee, Consideration of 2022-2023 Portfolio Budget Estimates, <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Work-of-Committees/Committees/Committee-Details?cid=167&id=4182>

1.2 Aim of this report

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

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

- budget papers
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice
- evidence taken at the hearing.

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

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

1.3 Participation by other Members

The committee gave leave for other (non-committee) Members to participate in the hearing.⁶ The following Members participated in the hearing:

- David Crisafulli MP, Leader of the Opposition and Member for Broadwater
- Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar
- David Janetzki MP, Member for Toowoomba South
- Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger
- Tim Mander MP, Member for Everton
- Amy MacMahon MP, Member for South Brisbane
- Sam O'Connor MP, Member for Bonney
- Fiona Simpson MP, Member for Maroochydore.

⁶ A list of Members granted leave to participate in the hearing is included in the volume of additional information tabled with this report.

2 Recommendation

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

The committee agrees to the proposed expenditure for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service and recommends its approval by the Assembly.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service, as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

3 Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service

The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is responsible for the Legislative Assembly of Queensland and the Parliamentary Service.

The Legislative Assembly consists of 93 Members who discharge a range of important constitutional, legislative and constituency responsibilities.

The Parliamentary Service, established by the *Parliamentary Service Act 1988*, provides administrative and support services to the Legislative Assembly. The objectives of the Parliamentary Service are to:

- support the Legislative Assembly (and its committees and Members) in fulfilling its functions within the institution of Parliament
- support Members of the Legislative Assembly to engage with and represent their electorates
- provide information, corporate and facility management services
- safeguard, promote and strengthen the institution of Parliament.⁷

The Legislative Assembly's activities are coordinated through two main service areas:

- Members' Salaries, Entitlements and Electorate Office Services
- Parliamentary Precinct Support Services.

The first of these 2 service areas administers the remuneration and entitlements of Members of the Legislative Assembly and provides resources and support services to assist in maintaining Members' electorate offices.

Parliamentary Precinct Support Services provides a range of support services within the parliamentary precinct to assist the Parliament, its committees and Members.⁸

3.1 Appropriation

The budgeted expenditure for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for 2022-23 is \$113.5 million, an increase of \$4.8 million from the 2021-22 Estimated Actual.⁹ The budget papers advise that this difference is primarily related to additional funding received in 2022-23 associated with enterprise bargaining costs, Members' remuneration, operating funding associated with the Parliamentary Annexe refurbishment, and maintenance and electorate office leasing escalation.¹⁰

The Legislative Assembly's major assets are land and buildings. The Legislative Assembly's main liabilities related to creditors supplying goods and services to the Legislative Assembly, and accrued employee benefits. The increase to assets in 2022-23 is due to the planned repairs and upgrades to the external façade of the Parliamentary Annexe, and the refurbishment of soft furnishings in Members' office and overnight accommodation floors.¹¹

The following table shows the cash appropriation for 2022-23 compared with the budgeted and actual cash appropriations for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service in 2021-22.

⁷ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 1.

⁸ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 3.

⁹ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 6.

¹⁰ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 6.

¹¹ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 6.

Appropriations	Budget 2021-2022 \$'000	Est. Actual 2021-2022 \$'000	Vote 2022-23 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	103,591	105,658	111,308
equity adjustment	(266)	(148)	35,413
<i>Administered Items</i>
Vote	103,325	105,510	146,721

Source: Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022, Schedule 1, p.6.

3.2 Service Area highlights

In 2022-23, the Parliamentary Service will:

- upgrade wi-fi capabilities within the Parliamentary precinct and electorate offices
- continue to upgrade critical infrastructure of the Parliamentary Annexe with a focus in 2022-23 on the external façade and the interior of levels 9 to 23 of the Parliamentary Annexe tower
- plan and deliver a regional sitting of the Queensland Parliament in Cairns during the term of the current 57th parliament
- implement a 3 year information technology digital strategy for the Parliamentary Service with focus in 2022-23 on the development of a digital preservation strategy to improve the lifecycle management of the parliament's digital information collections and streamlining business processes and workflows by converting paper-based forms into digital formats
- implement a new regional education program to engage key regional centres on parliamentary and democratic processes
- implement automatic speech recognition technology to modernise existing processes used to produce the official record of parliamentary proceedings (Hansard).¹²

3.3 Budget highlights

A primary focus for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service in 2022-23 will be to continue to upgrade critical infrastructure, including the external façade and the interior of levels 9 to 23 of the Parliamentary Annex tower.¹³ The upgrade to the bedrooms and offices include a range of things such as new carpeting, repainting and replacement of aged soft furnishings.¹⁴

The government is providing increased funding of \$8.8 million over 4 years and \$2.2 million per annum ongoing to support various operating costs and associated increases related to software and ICT support costs, select committee and committee inquiry costs, maintenance of plant and equipment, and precinct event and visitor management costs.¹⁵

¹² Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 1.

¹³ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Legislative Assembly of Queensland, p 1.

¹⁴ Hon Curtis Pitt MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2022, p 7.

¹⁵ *Budget Paper No.4: Budget Measures*, p 113.

The government is providing increased funding of \$5.3 million over 4 years and \$1.2 million per annum ongoing to continue the Electorate Office Technology Model delivering improved data service performance and reliability, data security, mobility and business tools through provision of new software and infrastructure.¹⁶

The government is providing additional funding of \$562,000 over 4 years and \$171,000 per annum ongoing to improve electorate office security through the installation of a standardised CCTV monitoring system in electorate offices.¹⁷ In addition, the government is also providing funding of \$612,000 in 2022-23 to improve CCTV monitoring in each electorate office across Queensland.¹⁸

3.4 Capital purchases

The total planned 2022-23 capital expenditure for the Legislative Assembly of Queensland is \$43.6 million. Major capital projects include the necessary repairs and upgrades to the external façade of the Parliamentary Annexe, and the refurbishment of soft furnishings in Members' office and overnight accommodation floors (levels 9 to 23). Other capital projects include the installation of CCTV in Members' electorate offices, the ongoing electorate office accommodation improvement program, and upgrades to information technology infrastructure.¹⁹

The following table shows the capital purchases by the Legislative Assembly in the respective years.

		2021-22 Budget \$'000	2021-22 Est.Actual \$'000	2022-23 Budget \$'000
Capital purchases		7,882	15,382	43,561
Capital grants	
Total capital outlays		7,882	15,382	43,561

Source: Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Legislative Assembly of Queensland p.5.

3.5 Key issues raised during consideration of the budget estimates

Matters that were raised and considered by the committee in relation to the estimates for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for 2022-23 included:

- the major capital project for 2022-23 to repair the exterior of the Parliamentary Annexe and refurbish offices and overnight rooms²⁰ and update on three year critical infrastructure and services upgrade program²¹
- current status of planning regional sitting of the Queensland Parliament in Cairns, and associated anticipated costs²²
- details of Youth Parliaments for 2021-22 and those scheduled for 2022-23²³

¹⁶ Budget Paper No.4: Budget Measures, p 113.

¹⁷ Budget Paper No.4: Budget Measures, p 113.

¹⁸ Budget Paper No.4: Budget Measures, p 152.

¹⁹ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Legislative Assembly of Queensland p 5.

²⁰ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 1.

²¹ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 2.

²² Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing questions on notice no. 3, 18.

²³ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 4.

- displays and significant events delivered in 2021-22 and planned for 2022-23²⁴
- new and expanded hospitality initiatives²⁵
- new regional education program²⁶
- support for charities and other not-for-profit organisations²⁷
- costs relating to parliamentary website upgrades²⁸
- new parliamentary education programs launched in 2021-22 and planned for 2022-23²⁹
- maintenance costs of electorate offices for 2021-22³⁰
- confiscated items by parliamentary security³¹
- discrepancy between anticipated and estimated actual capital purchases for 2021-22³²
- breakdown of ‘user charges and fees’ received in 2021-22³³
- legal costs paid by the Queensland Parliament in two matters of litigation regarding Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland (CCC) reports³⁴
- clarification on questions that may be asked in estimates hearings to witnesses including Ministers and CEOs³⁵
- clarification on whether questions relating to matters before the CCC are *sub judice*³⁶
- accountability and total budgeted resources for Parliamentary Committees for 2022-23³⁷
- increased independence of key integrity bodies regarding human and monetary resources³⁸
- workplace health and safety for parliamentary staff during the construction period to repair the façade and refurbish the interior of the Parliamentary Annexe³⁹
- the costs of running estimates hearings on the parliamentary budget⁴⁰

²⁴ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 5.

²⁵ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 6.

²⁶ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 7.

²⁷ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 9.

²⁸ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 12.

²⁹ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 13.

³⁰ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 14.

³¹ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 17.

³² Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 19.

³³ Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 20.

³⁴ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2021, p 3.

³⁵ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2021, p 3.

³⁶ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2021, p 4.

³⁷ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2021, p 4; Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 16.

³⁸ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2021, p 5.

³⁹ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2021, p 5.

⁴⁰ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2021, p 6.

- long-term plans for the Parliamentary Annexe refurbishment project and alternative venues for events when level 7 outdoor deck areas will be unavailable to members and used as a site office and workspace by the building contractors⁴¹
- specific initiatives to support members that have been recently delivered or planned for in the near future⁴²
- recent planned initiatives to ensure the Parliamentary Service remains a modern and effective workforce.⁴³

⁴¹ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2021, pp 6-7.

⁴² Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2021, p 8; Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing questions on notice no. 8, 11, 15.

⁴³ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 26 July 2021, p 9; Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 10.

4 Statement of Reservation

Economics and Governance Committee - Non-Government Statement of Reservation

Introduction

Opposition members of the Committee agree with the passing of the 2022/23 Budget.

However, the Budget is characterised by numerous shortcomings which have failed to meet the expectations of Queenslanders. Many of these shortcomings became increasingly evident during the Estimates process.

The Budget was an opportunity for the government to show Queenslanders they have listened to them. It was a chance to open the books and show Queenslanders they have been heard. It was a chance to reveal the true state of affairs and what will be done to make their lives just a little easier.

The Estimates process failed to provide reassurance that the great challenges facing Queenslanders were being addressed – the health crisis, the housing crisis, the youth crime crisis, the cost of living crisis and the integrity crisis.

Estimates revealed a host of band aid solutions that will do little to improve conditions throughout Queensland. Coupled with a litany of cost overruns and government financial waste – no better demonstrated than by the loss of over \$220 million of taxpayers' funds on the Wellcamp vanity project – no long term solutions were presented by the government.

Despite its inherent imperfections, the Estimates process drew attention to government neglect and waste and a cavalier disregard for the highest standards of probity and integrity in government.

Legislative Assembly

The LNP welcome the extensive measures that the Parliament are taking to ensure the safety of Parliamentary Service staff during the renovations to the Annexe, as outlined by Mr Speaker.

However, the LNP are concerned with the financial burden placed on the Parliament by its involvement in Supreme Court cases against Mr Peter Carne and Ms Jackie Trad. As the Clerk confirmed during the hearing, these matters combined have already cost Queensland Parliament over \$28,000 with thousands more anticipated. The LNP are concerned that these matters are costing time and money which should be spent on running the People's House.

The LNP also believe that great weight should be placed behind the Clerk's comments regarding the Portfolio Committee system. The LNP agree that when it comes to the role of Committees in promoting the accountability of government, we have a long way to go. Committees have not necessarily been discharging some of the duties and responsibilities envisaged in the 2011 review, especially regarding matters of public works and accounts.

It is also the strong view of the LNP that key integrity bodies, such as the Auditor-General and Integrity Commissioner, should be tied more closely to the Parliament and its Committees rather than the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Matters such as staffing and budget allocations should not be the decision of the same bodies being held to account by the integrity agencies.

Premier and Cabinet

This budget fails to address the integrity crisis that is engulfing the government.

Unfortunately, the government did not take up an offer from the former Integrity Commissioner to stay on in the position so she could attend the estimates hearing.

It was also revealed that, despite the former Integrity Commissioner advising the government of her resignation over 6 months ago, a suitable replacement has not been identified. The appropriateness of the appointment of the Acting Integrity Commissioner must also be questioned.

Secrecy continues to be a key priority for this government. The Premier refused to release details about the appointment of the former Under Treasurer. The Premier refused to disclose details about the Wellcamp Quarantine Facility. The circumstances around the indemnity provided to former Deputy Premier, Jackie Trad, also remain a mystery.

The Acting Auditor-General confirmed an investigation was underway into Wellcamp but revelations that requested documents are yet to be provided by the government are concerning.

Problems with the Right to Information process are still ignored by the government.

While the government is preoccupied with these integrity issues, services provided to Queenslanders continue to suffer. Examples were highlighted where service levels have been reduced, measures discontinued, and no targets set when the government has failed to meet previous targets.

It was also demonstrated at the hearing that the government has no plan to deal with the housing crisis that they've allowed to develop over the last seven years.

While the government announces record health funding, Queenslanders will need to wait for 7 years for a new hospital to be built with less than 1% of the government's hospital fund to be spent in the 2022/23 financial year.

Queenslanders need these serious issues addressed now.

Treasury

The 2022-23 Budget is a budget of broken promises from a government that Queenslanders can no longer trust. The Treasurer promised on at least 26 occasions that there would be no new or increased taxes this term. He has broken that promise. Furthermore, his attempts to qualify his promise, saying he didn't use particular words, reflect a government that no longer prioritises integrity.

The Government is projecting a net operating surplus of approximately \$2 billion for 2021-22, yet the fiscal balance was still -\$2.4 billion and the Government is still engaged in new borrowing of approximately \$4 billion. The \$10 billion revenue windfall was met with a \$7 billion increase in expenses. As a result, debt continues to grow relentlessly. It is now \$110 billion, and will be \$129 billion by the end of the forwards. This is up from \$72 billion in 2015- an increase of 80%. Additionally, after a simulated privatisation of the titles registry last year specifically to lower net debt, net debt is set to triple over the forwards, which will set alarm bells off at all of the ratings agencies.

The billions of dollars in waste exposed over the last two weeks' Estimates hearings have brought to bear the LNP's concern that the Treasurer is unable to restrain the wasteful spending of his Cabinet colleagues. In two weeks alone, the LNP uncovered over \$3bn of new waste between mothballed projects, cost overruns and mismanagement of public funds.

The Treasurer's own spending caused concern as well. More than \$1 million taxpayer dollars has been spent advertising the government's increased coal royalties. The LNP have grave concerns that the taxpayers of Queensland are funding advertising the sole purpose of which is to promote a political decision of the Cabinet. Additionally, the CEO of Trade and Investment Queensland confirmed that his office did not know the details of the proposed new royalty tiers prior to the Budget announcement. The TIQ Tokyo office was also given no instruction regarding the increase. The LNP are therefore concerned that the Treasurer, as Minister for Trade, is not treating our largest trading partner with the due respect they deserve.

The Treasurer's dismissive attitude around matters of integrity also concerns the LNP greatly. When asked about interactions between Anacta Strategies on behalf of Tabcorp and his Chief of Staff prior to the introduction of betting tax changes favourable to Tabcorp, the Treasurer claimed that they weren't meetings, they were phone calls. The Treasurer's assertion that phone calls cannot count as meetings in 2022 is considered difficult to believe by the LNP.

A definitive forecast for revenue raised from the land tax changes can still not be provided. It is common practice for tax increases to be listed in the “Revenue Measures” section of the Budget papers. This year, that is within Budget Paper 4. Forecasts over the forward Estimates were provided for the three other tax increases in this year’s Budget, but not the land tax. The best that could be provided is the Under Treasurer providing a very preliminary estimate of \$20 million for 2023-24. The LNP still holds reservations that the immense administration required to acquire a relatively small amount of revenue is not a cost-effective exercise and not a worthwhile use of the resources of the Queensland Revenue Office.

Finally, it was disappointing to observe the lack of vision and planning from the Treasurer to tackle cost of living. We know since the hearing that Queensland’s inflation rate is now 7.3% year-on-year. Aside from the electricity rebate, which was later revealed to be far different in practice than the government advertised, the Treasurer provided no comfort to Queensland families struggling with the skyrocketing cost of living.

Tourism

Eco-tourism projects championed by this government languish. Plagued by cost blowouts, reductions in scope and stakeholders’ concerns, projects such as the Wangetti Trail will not be completed on time.

There are also concerns about the delivery of other projects such as Paluma to Wallaman and the Cooloola Great Walk. Questions remain as to whether all government departments are committed to eco-tourism projects.

There are increasing concerns amongst Regional Tourism Organisations that amalgamations are being considered. The government has refused to rule that out.

The government has also failed to listen to its own Tourism Industry Reference Panel with requests for additional funding for programs such as the Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund and Experience Development Fund ignored.

Innovation

Budget trickery was on show when it came to innovation, with the Department confirming the long-touted \$755 million Advance Queensland fund was actually only \$331.5 million from the Innovation Department, with the rest made up of basically whatever the Government wanted to call ‘innovation’ from within the allocations of every other department. Further to that, no specific guidelines could be given about what constitutes Advance Queensland or innovation funding, so there is very little transparency over what is specifically being spent on innovation in Queensland.

With this newly revealed figure of \$331.5 million over seven years, it is clear the State Government’s next phase of Advance Queensland funding of \$100 million over the next three years represents a sizeable cut to Advance Queensland spending from an average of \$47 million a year over the last seven years to around \$33 million a year over the next three.

In the run up to the 2032 Olympics, this is the last thing we need. We should be investing more than ever in supporting these future industries to make the most of when we will have the eyes of the world on our state.

The Minister also confirmed the State Government approved the reallocation of nearly \$3 million in funding announced in 2019 for a world-class koala research facility at Dreamworld to instead be repurposed into building a new rollercoaster. There is no guarantee the facility will ever be built and no evidence any minister followed up with Dreamworld in the three years since this substantial funding was provided to see whether they would proceed with what would have been Queensland’s first native animal genomics lab.

Using the excuse of COVID doesn’t stack up either; the State Government’s own press release at the time said this facility was expected to begin construction in mid-2019, at least six months before any of us knew what COVID was.

This situation is disappointing given the potential of this facility to have not only provided a tourism attraction but to also have made a genuine effort to conservation by helping manage the threats our native species face.

It is a clear demonstration that for the State Government, all they care about is announcements over outcomes.

Sport

Local sporting clubs are doing it tough due to recent flooding with \$132 million in damages reported to government. It is vital that disaster recovery funding is delivered as soon as possible. This is of particular concern give the large number of programs that remain underspent from the 2021/22 financial year.

The government's planning for major sporting events is also of concern. Although committing to the redevelopment of the Gabba, questions remain about an alternative location for AFL and cricket during construction works. Although the RNA grounds are an option under consideration, more work needs to be done to validate the expected \$80m cost.

Conclusion

Having interrogated ministers and officials throughout the Estimates process the Opposition does not believe the Budget presented a sustainable solution to the significant problems facing the Queensland economy and Queenslanders.

Just as ambulance ramping and hospital waiting times were at critical levels last year, housing shortages continue to exist throughout the entire state, crime rates continue to increase, and critical infrastructure remains underfunded.

The 2022/23 Budget was a lost opportunity that will make the lives of Queenslanders even more difficult in the coming years.

The squandering of millions of dollars demonstrates the government has turned its back on the needs of Queenslanders and has lost control of the levers of public administration.

Ray Stevens MP
Deputy Chair
Member for Mermaid Beach

Michael Crandon MP
Member for Coomera

Daniel Purdie MP
Member for Ninderry