

2015-16 Budget Estimates

Report No. 5, 55th Parliament

Agriculture and Environment Committee

September 2015

Agriculture and Environment Committee

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Chair's Foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2015-16 financial year contained in the Appropriation Bill 2015 for the committee's areas of responsibility: Agriculture, Fisheries, Sport and Racing; Environment and Heritage Protection; and National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef.

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I wish to thank Ministers, Directors-General, Chief Executive Officers and advisors for their assistance during our examination of the budget estimates.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Howard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Howard MP

Chair

September 2015

1. Introduction

Role of the committee

The Agriculture and Environment Committee is a portfolio committee appointed by a resolution of the Legislative Assembly on 27 March 2015. In accordance with section 88 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, the committee's primary areas of responsibility are: Agriculture, Fisheries, Sport and Racing; Environment and Heritage Protection; and National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef.¹ These areas fall within the portfolios of the:

- Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing; and
- Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef.

Examination of portfolio budget estimates

On 17 July 2015, in accordance with SO 177(2), the Legislative Assembly referred the budget estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility contained in the Appropriation Bill 2015 for examination and report by 11 September 2015.²

For its examination of the estimates referred, the committee conducted a public hearing on Friday 21 August 2015 and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from Ministers, Directors – General, CEOs and other witnesses. The transcript of the committee's hearing can be accessed at: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-assembly/sitting-dates/dates/2015/2015-08-21>

Aim of this report

This report summarises the estimates referred to the committee and highlights issues the committee considered during its examination.

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

- the suite of budget papers tabled by the Treasurer. These papers are available at <http://budget.qld.gov.au>
- Ministers' answers to a series of questions the committee submitted prior to the hearing
- evidence taken at the hearings, and
- answers to questions taken on notice by Ministers and officers at the hearing.

The committee has tabled a volume of additional information with its report on the estimates referred for examination. This volume contains: the minutes of the committee's private meetings for the estimates process; Ministers' answers to questions from the committee prior to the hearing; documents tabled during the hearing; and answers provided to the committee in response to questions taken on notice at the hearing.

Other Members' participation

The following members sought, and were granted, leave by the committee to participate in the hearing on 21 August:

- Mr Lawrence Springborg, Member for Southern Downs and Leader of the Opposition

¹ Schedule 6 of the [Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland](#).

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

- Mr John-Paul Langbroek, Member for Surfers Paradise and Deputy Leader of the Opposition
- Mr Jeff Seeney, Member for Callide
- Mr Andrew Powell, Member for Glass House
- Mrs Jann Stuckey, Member for Currumbin, and
- Mrs Deborah Frecklington, Member for Nanango.

Recommendation

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure for the committee's areas of responsibility, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2015, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

2. Estimates for the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries and Minister for Sport and Racing

The following sections provide information on the estimates, objectives and service delivery highlights for entities that fall within the portfolio. These entities are: the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries; Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges; QRAA; and the Sport and Recreation and Racing sections of the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing.

Budget summaries for departments and other entities are provided at the back of this report.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Objective: connect industry to opportunities – enabling producers and businesses to grow their markets, secure investment, lift productivity and better manage economic and climatic adversity; manage biosecurity risks – to protect agricultural resources, human health, social amenity and the environment and social value; and provide customer responsive services.

Highlights 2015-16

Service Area 1 – Agriculture

- Continue existing drought relief arrangements and work with industry to commence development of a new suite of measures that will assist producers to improve their climate risk management and preparedness strategies
- Commence development of a ten year research, development and extension blueprint for agriculture and food
- Support the development of the northern regional economy by providing a 'one-stop' service that supports private sector water and land resource development initiatives
- In conjunction with industry, support the Minister to undertake outbound trade missions that promote existing food and fibre products and showcase new, niche and emerging products and investment opportunities
- Better meet industry workforce needs by: supporting Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges and local universities to deliver skill-based training in the agricultural sector; and exploring the establishment of a Rural Job Agency in conjunction with industry, and
- Allocate \$3.2 million for the continued delivery of Best Management Practice programs and extension and technical services that improve the uptake of management practices by producers and agricultural industries impacting on the Great Barrier Reef.

Service Area 2 – Biosecurity Queensland

- Commence the *Biosecurity Act 2014* with responsibility for the management and mitigation of biosecurity risks shared with those who create or increase risks
- Lead a review of Queensland's biosecurity capability
- Provide a further \$4.7 million for the ongoing development of the Biosecurity Information Management System
- Direct a further \$1.3 million to the Queensland Biosecurity Preparedness Program for enhanced incident response
- Manage nationally significant biosecurity eradication responses including Panama Tropical Race 4 disease Red, Imported Fire Ant, Electric Ant, four Tropical Weeds, Red Witchweed and Cucumber Green Mottle Mosaic virus
- Raise animal welfare standards by establishing a Ministerial Animal Welfare Advisory Board
- Implement a Protecting Puppies initiative to better protect dogs used for breeding, and

- Provide an additional \$5 million over three years to leverage additional investment by local governments and industry for new initiatives to control wild dogs and feral cats.

Service Area 3 – Fisheries and Forestry

- Implement the provisions of the *Sustainable Fishing* policy document, including the following: establish three net-free fishing zones in north and central Queensland; develop a Charter Fishing Action Plan; review the regulatory arrangements for fisheries management, taking into consideration the 2014 independent review of fisheries management; develop allocation and harvest strategy policies to ensure appropriate regulatory arrangements for commercial fishing; and improve consultation mechanisms for fisheries stakeholders
- Review and update the Queensland Government's response to the joint industry/government Queensland Forest and Industry Plan developed in 2012
- Implement the forest and timber industry research, development and extension program in consultation with industry, and
- Continue to fulfil the State's contracted supply commitments for native forest log timber, other forest products and quarry material.

Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges

Objective: The Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC) support the sustainability of agricultural, rural and related industries and communities by improving the knowledge and skills of the existing and future workforce.

QRAA

Objective: QRAA's strategic intent is to achieve self-sufficiency through financial leadership, service delivery excellence, business growth and capability. QRAA is a specialist service delivery program that provides loans, grants, rebates and subsidies.

Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing

Objective: Queensland's outstanding parks and forests are protected, enjoyed and cherished now and in the future, enhancing Queensland's wellbeing and prosperity; Queenslanders lead active and healthy lifestyles through participation in physical activity; the Queensland racing industry operates with integrity; and the department is a capable and streamlined, customer-centric organisation.

Minister Byrne is responsible for the Sport and Recreation and Racing sections of the department to which service delivery areas 2 and 3 relate.

Highlights 2015-16

Service area 2 – Sport and Recreation

In 2015-16, the service area will deliver key Government commitments and initiatives by:

- Improving local sporting facilities through: delivering a major upgrade to the Gap Football Club clubhouse and sporting fields; and contributing to the upgrade of the Cannon Hill Parish Community Pool
- Supporting grassroots sport and recreation clubs through the Get in the Game initiative, with \$45.7 million allocated in 2015-16 across the four key programs: \$5 million for Get Started Vouchers to provide vouchers of up to \$150 to encourage more children and young people to play sport and become involved in recreation activities; \$3.5 million for Get Going Clubs to support not-for-profit sport and active recreation organisations with creating and providing access to participation opportunities; \$19.2 million for Get Playing for new or upgraded sport and

active recreation facility projects; \$18 million for Get Playing Plus for major new or upgraded sport and active recreation places and spaces

- Completing the \$7.1 million redevelopment of the Sunshine Coast Recreation Centre
- Completing the replacement of the athletics track at the Townsville Sports Reserve
- Providing \$250,000 to construct a canoe launching facility and boardwalk at David Fleay Wildlife Park, in partnership with Gold Coast Waterways Authority which is contributing \$295,000 towards the total project cost of \$545,000, and
- Supporting Queensland athletes through the Queensland Academy of Sport in their preparations for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the 2018 Commonwealth Games

Service area 3 – Racing

In 2015-16, the service area will deliver key Government commitments and initiatives by:

- contributing to the implementation of the accepted recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the Queensland Greyhound Racing Industry to strengthen and improve the integrity and public confidence in the industry
- reviewing the *Racing Act 2002* to ensure the Act addresses contemporary developments in the racing industry
- continuing to fund major racing infrastructure projects
- providing \$1 million to fund 20 additional country race meetings to contribute to regional economies and support the long-term sustainability of the Queensland racing industry.

Issues examined at the public hearing

The issues examined by the committee included:

- Creation of three new net-free fishing zones adjacent to Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton as part of the Government's *Reef 2050 Plan*
- Government measures to strengthen drought management and responses
- Support for primary producers to lift and maintain productivity and profit
- Assisting producers to improve climate risk management preparedness strategies
- Employee numbers within the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Government-sponsored trade missions
- Penalties for boat drivers
- Subsidies and rebates available through the government's Drought Relief Assistance Scheme
- \$10 million saving initiatives for employee expenses
- Ongoing review of the fishery management policy as part of the Government's *Reef 2050 Plan*
- Plans for long-term growth and development of crops to assist the growth of a sustainable fuel industry
- New varieties of horticultural products being developed through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Funding for a new research facility at Spyglass
- Establishment of the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance as a single point of reference for Queensland's agricultural sectors for workforce matters
- The Government's commitment to the fire ant eradication program
- Biosecurity Queensland's continued assistance with cattle tick control and management

- Application processes for assistance available through QRAA, and how the funds have been allocated
- Calls to have Shark Control Program nets removed from Queensland beaches
- Senior executive changes at QRAA
- The impact of Tropical Cyclone Marcia
- Benefits of Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges establishing international training markets in 2014-15
- Maintenance programs for facilities at Emerald and Longreach colleges
- Compensation and the voluntary buyout program for commercial fishermen affected by the implementation of net-free fishing zones
- Review of the Queensland racing industry
- Government's commitment to increase female participation in sporting activities in Queensland
- Development of a state netball facility at the Queensland Sports and Athletics Centre in partnership with Netball Queensland
- Financial problems facing Racing Queensland; and the \$6 million savings that are expected this financial year
- Income for the Queensland All Codes Racing Industry Board
- The Government's commitment to country racing given the social benefits to remote communities
- Government support for the delivery of the improved Queensland Thoroughbred Incentive Scheme in 2015-16
- Implementation of the recommendations of the final report from the Greyhound Racing Industry Commission of Inquiry, and
- Funds spent on the care and security of greyhounds seized or surrendered

3. Estimates for the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef

The following sections discuss the objective and service delivery highlights for other entities that fall within the portfolio of Hon Dr Stephen Miles MP, Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. These entities are: the National Parks sections of the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing; and the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection.

Budget summaries for departments and other entities are provided at the back of this report.

Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing

Minister Miles is responsible for the National Parks sections of the department to which service delivery area 1 relates.

Highlights 2015-16

Service area 1 – National Parks

In 2015-16, the service area will deliver key Government commitments and initiatives by:

- delivering \$12 million in Great Barrier Reef and national park islands conservation and compliance programs as part of the \$17 million State-Commonwealth Joint Great Barrier Reef Field Management Program
- ensuring that joint management arrangements for Naree Budjong Djarra National Park and Peel Island are delivered in accordance with the Indigenous Management Agreement
- progressing amendments to relevant provisions of the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* to ensure the Act delivers appropriate protections for Queensland's national parks
- protecting the Daisy Hill forest by ensuring the Daisy Hill Regional Park is managed in accordance with the management principles set out in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*
- saving the Mooloola Logging Area from the development of large-scale motorbike facilities on the site
- providing for infrastructure to support parks and forests conservation and visitor experiences, including a refurbished visitor centre at Carnarvon National Park, improving amenities at Dundubara and Eurong on Fraser Island and upgrading day-use and camping areas at Danbulla State Forest on the Atherton Tablelands
- committing \$3.1 million to employ 22 rangers in Cape York national parks, strengthen management of these areas' natural and cultural values and support Indigenous joint management and employment opportunities
- implementing strategic fire and pest management programs to mitigate threats to parks and forests and ensure the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is a good neighbour, and
- progressing the declaration of two new fish habitat areas and the extension of one fish habitat area in Central Queensland.

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection

The mission of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection is to lead environment and heritage protection and sustainability in Queensland. To support the achievement of the Government's objectives for the community and address the state's environmental challenges, the department has identified four key goals and two complementary goals, each with a number of strategies:

○ **Goal one: Enhance Queensland's ecosystems -**

Improve the water quality of Queensland's coast, waterways, catchments and wetlands; protect and conserve Queensland's ecosystems and species, and increase the State's protected area estate; and minimise negative interactions between wildlife and communities.

○ **Goal two: Protect the Great Barrier Reef -**

Provide clear accountability for the State's contribution to the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan; establish and support a high-level taskforce providing advice on ways to improve water quality impacting on the Reef; and establish the Office of the Great Barrier Reef to oversee and coordinate implementation of Reef actions across government.

○ **Goal three: Protect the State's significant heritage places -**

Promote the value and understanding of Queensland's heritage through programs and education initiatives; and regulate and support the management and protection of places with State heritage value.

○ **Goal four: Avoid, minimise or mitigate impacts on the environment -**

Regulate environmentally significant activities based on best practice project assessment and approval and a contemporary compliance framework that focuses on risk; oversee the development and delivery of whole-of government climate change mitigation and adaptation programs; and administer the environmental offsets framework to minimise impacts on the environment.

○ **Goal five: Work productively with industry, business and community -**

Provide evidence behind decisions and greater access to performance data; implement a five year science and research program to inform policy and monitor performance; promote private sector investment in environment and heritage protection; and educate, and engage with, communities about the State's ecosystems and species.

○ **Goal six: Invest in our people to deliver quality and innovative service -**

Continue to invest in developing a responsive, ethical, inclusive and engaged workforce that is able to meet current and emerging priorities; and continue to strengthen our governance and accountability frameworks.

Highlights 2015-16

Service area 1 – Environmental Protection Services

- In 2015-16, a high-level taskforce will report on the best possible approach to meet targets of up to 80 per cent reduction in nitrogen run-off and up to 50 per cent reduction in total suspended sediment run-off in key catchments such as the Wet Tropics and the Burdekin by 2025.
- Improve water quality for the Great Barrier Reef through the provision of an additional \$100 million over five years towards water quality initiatives, scientific research and helping businesses transition to better environmental practices in the primary production, mining and fishing industries as part of the Saving the Great Barrier Reef policy.
- All Great Barrier Reef spending will be reported by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection in an annual investment plan and annual report.
- Provide finer scale monitoring and reporting under the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan report card.

- Repeal the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013 and make arrangements to phase-out sand mining on Stradbroke Island. Consult closely and early with the Quandamooka people on any future decision relating to the management of mining leases on North Stradbroke Island.
- Work with industry and local governments to investigate changes needed to address waste issues including unlawful waste and recycling activities, uncompetitive practices within the waste and recycling industry, and the application of financial assurances for landfill.
- Establish a Local Government Coastal Hazard Climate Adaptation Fund (\$4 million per annum over three years) to assist local councils with the development of coastal hazard adaptation strategies and coastal adaptation pilot projects and develop a Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy in collaboration with local councils and other key stakeholder groups (\$1 million per annum over three years).
- Provide improved compliance and assessment services through the ongoing Compliance Review Program, including implementation of a new 'proactive compliance' methodology. The program delivers standardised, integrated and cost-effective services to Queensland industry and the general public, including a new Information and Communication Technology system to replace at risk systems and take advantage of new technologies (such as cloud hosting and smartphone integration).

Services area 2 – Species and Ecosystem Protection Services

- Improve the management of crocodiles so as to address human safety risk on a sound scientific footing and ensure that the human safety outcomes desired by the community are delivered whilst being able to assess and address impacts on the conservation of the species. Consult with the Rockhampton community regarding potential extension of the Crocodile Urban Management Area and act on the results of this consultation.
- Complete a pilot project which targets littering on six major highways in the south-west region through evidence based initiatives developed with local communities and councils.
- Expand the protected area estate, including by continuing the NatureAssist program to secure nature refuges over lands of significant conservation and high climate change resilience.
- Explore innovative avenues for increasing the protected area estate towards the target set through the Convention on Biological Diversity, using the best available climate change science.
- Work with traditional owners, stakeholders and communities to introduce protections for Queensland's pristine rivers from large scale industrial operations, and work towards World Heritage nominations for Cape York and the Great Sandy Straits.
- Continue wildlife management and conservation activities including koala protection, management of estuarine crocodiles, and services to reduce conflict in human wildlife interactions. Advance reforms to the delivery of wildlife management, such as delivery of a more modern, risk based set of regulations.
- Expand Waterway Health Report Cards to Cairns and Townsville.

Service area 3 – Heritage Protection Services

- To ensure significant Queensland heritage places are identified and their values protected, the department will:
 - continue to update and improve the accuracy of information about places entered in the Queensland Heritage Register, and
 - make the large collection of digitised documents and images about heritage places more publicly available through the new Living Heritage Information System.

Issues examined at the public hearing

The issues examined by the committee included:

- Creation of and staffing for the Office of the Great Barrier Reef
- The impact of climate change and global warming on the Great Barrier Reef
- Staffing within the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
- Capital dredging in Moreton Bay
- Funding and progress in implementing the Saving the Great Barrier Reef policy
- Expansion of areas covered by Waterway Health Report Cards
- Future growth of Cairns and Mourilyan ports
- Soil runoff from grassed plains and timbered areas
- Reef water quality improvement targets
- UNESCO World Heritage Committee decision not to list the Great Barrier Reef as endangered
- Timing of river catchment report cards
- Staffing for the Queensland Waste Data System
- Additional funding for the investigations of underground coal gasification
- Management of crocodiles in northern waterways
- Climate change resilience mapping
- Climate change adaptation funding for coastal communities
- Management of flying foxes
- Emission reductions and environmental benefits from biofuel mandates
- Euthanasia of a cassowary at Garners Beach rehabilitation centre
- Land spraying practices by CSG companies
- The impacts of the NatureAssist program on conservation outcomes on privately owned land
- Commercial development and grazing in national parks
- Heritage protection action at Willard's farm, also known as 'The Pines' in Birkdale
- Additional funding for assessing environmental impact statements
- The Springbrook Rescue Restoration Project
- Operation of the Mooloola off-road motorcycle recreation facility
- The acquisition of land for national parks
- Management of marine debris on Queensland beaches
- Funding for indigenous national park rangers
- Funding for the joint management of North Stradbroke Island National Parks
- The Government's strategy for grazing leases and special leases on forest areas
- Transition strategy funding for the closure of the Yarraman Mine on North Stradbroke Island
- Protection of the Daisy Hill forest
- Additional funding for the management of lands of high conservation value, and
- The management and protection of Raine Island.

4. Budget summaries

The following summaries are based on information presented in [Budget Paper 5 - Service Delivery Statements](#).

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)

| DAF | 2014-15 budget \$'000 | 2014-15 Est. \$'000 | Actual | 2015-16 Budget \$'000 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Controlled | | | | |
| Total Income* | 408,579 | | 426,524 | 437,986 |
| Total expenses | 408,579 | | 426,524 | 437,986 |
| Operating surplus/(deficit) | .. | | .. | .. |
| Net assets | 402,601 | | 399,815 | 402,011 |
| Administered | | | | |
| Total revenue | 11,226 | | 13,544 | 13,045 |
| Total expenses | 11,226 | | 13,544 | 13,045 |
| Net assets | 4,280 | | 3,348 | 3,421 |

Note* Includes State and Commonwealth funding.

Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC)

| QATC | 2014-15 budget \$'000 | 2014-15 Est. \$'000 | Actual | 2015-16 Budget \$'000 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Total Income* | 20,300 | | 20,106 | 21,633 |
| Total expenses | 22,007 | | 21,817 | 23,177 |
| Operating surplus/(deficit) | (1,707) | | (1,711) | (1,544) |
| Total assets | 103,903 | | 102,334 | 102,908 |
| Total liabilities | 5,136 | | 4,488 | 4,766 |
| Net assets/(Liabilities) | 98,767 | | 97,846 | 98,142 |

QRAA

| QRAA | 2014-15 budget \$'000 | 2014-15 Est. \$'000 | Actual | 2015-16 Budget \$'000 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Total Income | 64,120 | | 74,340 | 79,376 |
| Total expenses | 40,964 | | 65,153 | 76,317 |
| Operating surplus/(deficit) | 23,156 | | 9,187 | 3,059 |
| Total assets | 584,116 | | 653,692 | 692,108 |
| Total liabilities | 252,159 | | 346,330 | 381,687 |
| Net assets/(Liabilities) | 331,957 | | 307,362 | 310,421 |

Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing (DNPSR)

| DNPSR | 2014-15 budget \$'000 | 2014-15 Est. Actual \$'000 | 2015-16 Budget \$'000 |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Controlled | | | |
| Total income | 418,978 | 331,651 | 407,578 |
| Total expenses | 420,049 | 335,200 | 404,318 |
| Operating surplus/(deficit) | (1,071) | (3,549) | (3,260) |
| Net assets | 2,908,965 | 2,812,077 | 2,787,216 |
| Administered | | | |
| Total revenue | 27,010 | 64,414 | 41,941 |
| Total expenses | 27,010 | 64,414 | 41,941 |
| Net assets | 6,276 | .. | .. |

Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP)

| DEHP | 2014-15 budget \$'000 | 2014-15 Est. Actual \$'000 | 2015-16 Budget \$'000 |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Controlled | | | |
| Total income | 175,034 | 174,013 | 205,019 |
| Total expenses | 175,034 | 176,684 | 207,651 |
| Operating surplus/(deficit) | .. | (2,671) | (2,632) |
| Net assets | 54,626 | 60,968 | 63,624 |
| Administered | | | |
| Total revenue | 7,143 | 29,010 | 7,123 |
| Total expenses | 7,143 | 29,010 | 7,123 |
| Net assets | 258 | 210 | 210 |