

2023-2024 Budget Estimates – Appropriation Bill 2023



Report No. 35, 57th Parliament
Education, Employment and Training Committee
August 2023

Education, Employment and Training Committee

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Acknowledgements

The committee thanks:

- the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing
- the Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice.

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

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Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2023 - 2024 financial year.

Consideration of the budget estimates allows for the public examination of the responsible Ministers and the chief executive officers of agencies within the committee's portfolio areas. This was undertaken through the questions on notice and public hearing process.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2023 for the committee's areas of responsibility be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing, the Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice, and their departmental officers for their co-operation in providing information to the committee throughout this process.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee 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.



Kim Richards MP

Chair

August 2023

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

The Education, Employment and Training 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:

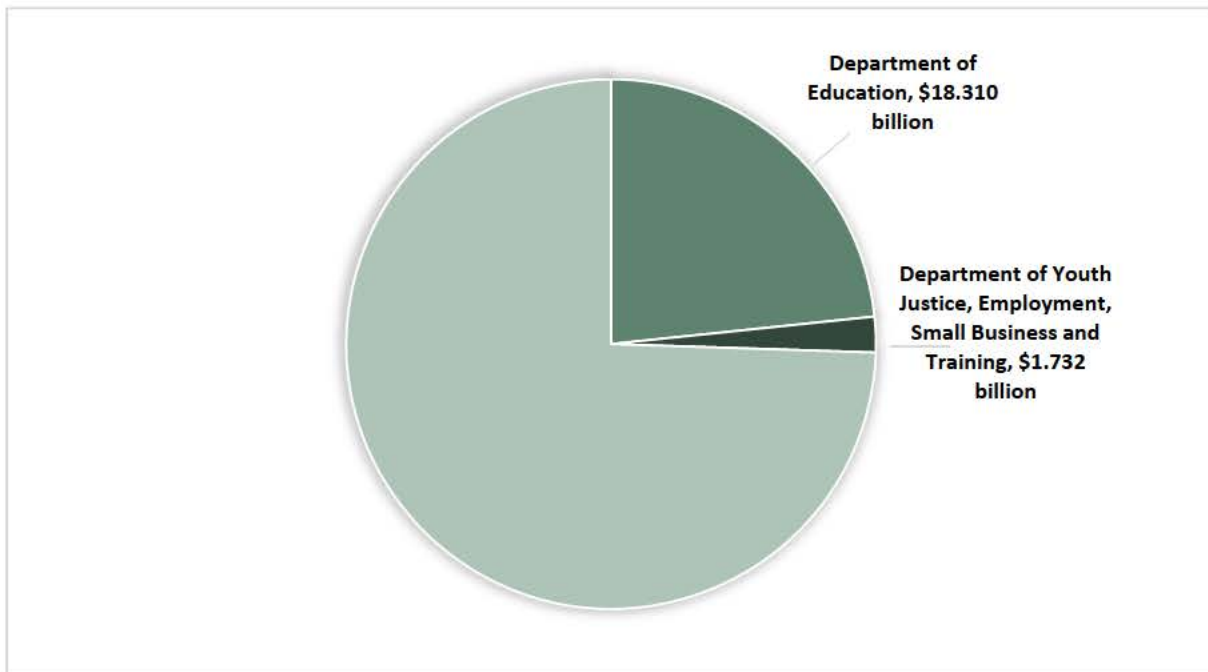
- Education, Industrial Relations and Racing
- Employment, Small Business, Training, Skills Development and Youth Justice.

On 16 June 2023, the Appropriation Bill 2023 and the estimates for the committee's area of responsibility were referred to the committee for investigation and report.²

The estimates process is one of the key mechanisms to examine government expenditure, performance and effectiveness. By examining and reporting on the proposed expenditures contained in the Appropriation Bill the committee assists the Parliament in its scrutiny of the government's proposed expenditure.

The total appropriation for 2023-24 is \$78,411,379,000.³ The proportion of proposed expenditure for portfolio areas considered by the committee is illustrated in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: Proposed expenditure examined by the committee, relative to total



Note: The total appropriation made by the Appropriation Bill 2023 is \$78,411,379,000.

Source: Based on information contained in the Appropriations Bill 2023, Schedule 1, pp 7-8.

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

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.

³ Appropriation Bill 2023, section 2.

The committee examined the Appropriation Bill 2023 in relation to the:

- Department of Education
- Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training.

On 3 August 2023, the committee conducted a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from:

- Hon Grace Grace MP, Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing
- Hon Di Farmer MP, Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice
- other witnesses.

A copy of the transcript of the committee's hearing is available on the committee's webpage.

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 information contained in:

- budget papers
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice
- evidence taken at the hearing
- additional information given in relation to answers.

Prior to the public hearing, the committee provided Ministers with Questions on Notice (QoNs) in relation to the estimates. The committee received responses to all the pre-hearing questions on notice. These responses are included in the volume of additional information tabled with this report.

After the public hearing, the committee received additional information from Ministers in relation to answers provided at the hearing. This information is included in the volume of additional information tabled with this report.

1.3 Participation by other Members

The committee gave leave for a number of Members to participate in its estimates hearing. A list of Members granted leave 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.

Recommendation 1

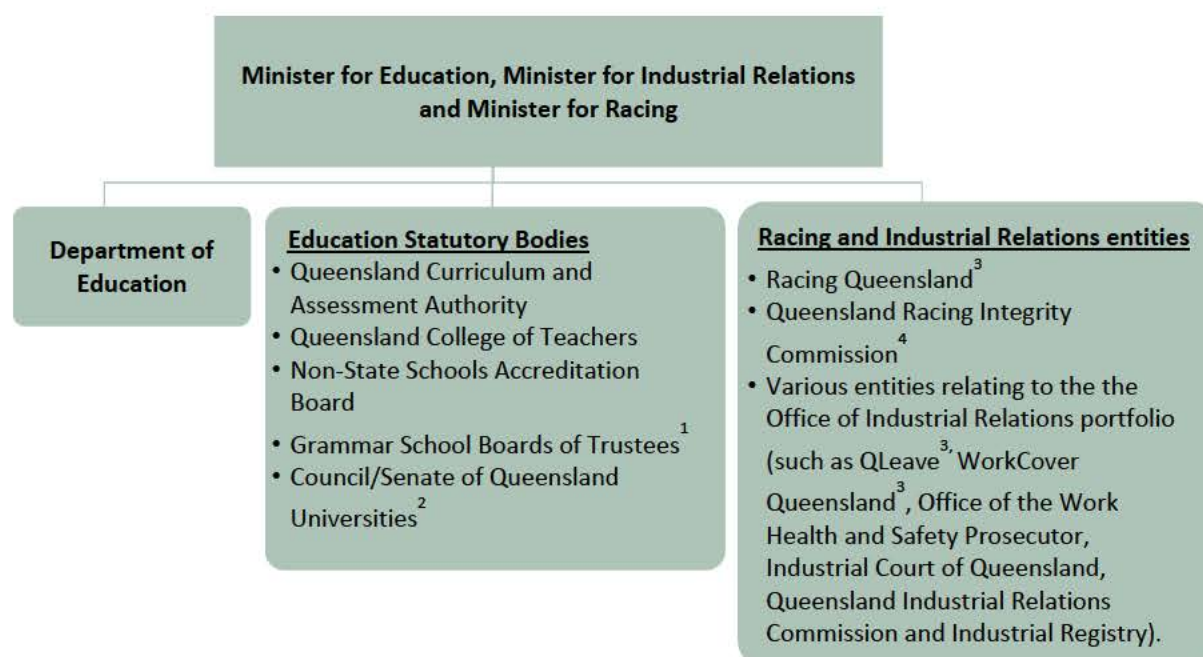
The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2023 for the committee's areas of responsibility be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

3 Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing

The Minister has responsibility for the Department of Education, the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA), and the Queensland Racing Integrity Commission (the Commission), whose service areas and performance standards are detailed separately in the budget papers.⁴

In addition to the Department of Education, the QCAA, and the Commission, the Minister is responsible for a number of other education statutory bodies and racing and industrial relations entities as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Entities within the portfolio of the Minister for Education, Minister of Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing



Notes:

1. This includes Brisbane Grammar, Brisbane Girls Grammar, Ipswich Grammar, Ipswich Girls Grammar, Rockhampton Grammar, Rockhampton Girls Grammar, Toowoomba Grammar and Townsville Grammar.
2. This includes Central Queensland University, Griffith University, James Cook University, Queensland University of Technology, University of Queensland, University of Southern Queensland and University of the Sunshine Coast.
3. Statutory body.
4. Queensland Racing Integrity Commission is a statutory body reporting through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.
5. QLeave is a statutory body. It is the trading name of the Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority, which also administers schemes on behalf of the Community Services Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority and the Contract Cleaning (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority.
6. Information about related government bodies is available from the department's 2021-22 Annual Report.

Source: Department of Education, Correspondence, 14 August 2023.

⁴ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements (SDS), Department of Education, p 21. Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements (SDS), Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, p 24. The Commission forms part of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

3.1 Department of Education

The Department of Education has the following four service areas:

- Early Childhood Education and Care
- School Education
- Industrial Relations
- Racing.⁵

The objectives of these service areas are:

- a strong start for all children
- every student realising their potential
- far and safe workplaces and communities
- a vibrant racing industry.⁶

3.1.1 Budget overview

The proposed budget for the department comprises an estimated \$12.818 billion in controlled expenses in 2023-24, an increase of \$828.6 million from the 2022-23 estimated actual expenditure.⁷ According to the SDS, the increase in controlled expenses mainly reflects:

- provision for enterprise bargaining outcomes
- higher depreciation expenditure
- additional expenditure associated with a range of school education related initiatives
- increased expenditure to support kindergartens.⁸

Total administered expenses are estimated to be \$9.678 billion, an increase of \$380.7 million.⁹

According to the SDS, major changes in administered expenses and revenue relate to:

- increased funding for non-state schools under the National School Reform Agreement and associated Bilateral Agreement
- funding from the Australian Government
- the impact of the new racing reforms that commenced from December 2022.¹⁰

To fund this budgeted expenditure, the Appropriation Bill 2023 proposes that the Department of Education receive a departmental appropriation of \$12.151 billion in 2023-24, with the remainder of the \$6.158 billion in planned departmental spending to be financed through an equity adjustment and revenue from administered items.¹¹

⁵ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 1.

⁶ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 1.

⁷ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 14.

⁸ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 14.

⁹ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 10.

¹⁰ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 14.

¹¹ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2.

Table 1, taken from the Appropriation Bill 2023, illustrates the combined total of the cash appropriations for the department for 2023-24, compared with the budgeted and actual cash appropriations in 2022-23.

As highlighted in Table 1, the combined appropriation of \$18.310 billion for 2023-24 represents an increase of \$1.402 billion or 8.3 per cent on last year's budgeted appropriations, and an increase of \$1.422 billion on the estimated actual expenditure by the department in 2022-23.

Table 1: Appropriations for the Department of Education, 2023-24

Appropriations	Budget 2022-23 \$'000	Est. Actual 2022-23 \$'000	Vote 2023-24 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	11,131,218	11,091,882	12,151,259
equity adjustment	753,059	575,250	675,851
<i>Administered Items</i>	5,022,901	5,220,654	5,482,413
Vote	16,907,178	16,887,786	18,309,523

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2.

Trends in appropriations and expenditure

For comparison, Table 2 shows the amount sought in the Appropriation Bill 2023 for the department for 2023-24 against the appropriations and estimated actual expenditure over the previous three years.

Table 2: Trends in appropriations and expenditure for the Department of Education

	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Appropriation	14,725,634	15,836,450	16,907,178	18,309,523
Estimated Actual Expenditure	14,243,330	15,671,892	16,887,786	

Source: Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 2020, Schedule 2; Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2; Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 2; Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2.

Budget highlights

The 2023-24 budget highlights for the Department of Education are summarised in Table 3, below.¹²

¹² Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 3.

Table 3: Budget highlights for the Department of Education

Free kindergarten for all 4-year-olds	Increased funding of \$645.4 million over 4 years and \$189.4 million per annum ongoing, with indexation, to provide for 15 hours per week of kindergarten free from 1 January 2024 for all 4-year-olds, removing the cost barrier to participation in kindergarten, relieving cost of living pressures for Queensland families, improving educational outcomes, and supporting labour market participation.
Delivery of critical educational infrastructure to accommodate enrolment growth in state schools	\$1.181 billion over 4 years (totalling \$1.654 billion over 10 years), with a further \$72.2 million over 5 years held centrally, to deliver critical educational infrastructure to accommodate enrolment growth in state schools including school halls and performing arts facilities, strategic land acquisition and new school construction.
Safe and secure teacher housing	\$48.3 million over 4 years for safe and secure teacher housing in regional and remote communities.
Strengthen local school-industry partnerships and support school to work transitions	\$5 million over 4 years to strengthen local school-industry partnerships and support school to work transitions, as part of the government's total funding package of over \$70 million for new initiatives included in the 2022–2025 Action Plan as part of the Good people, Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2023 to create a strong and diverse workforce ready to seize today's jobs and adapt to future opportunities.

3.1.2 Capital program

Capital purchases of \$1.534 billion have been planned by the Department of Education in 2022-23. This includes \$1.451 billion for the construction and refurbishment of school educational facilities and early childhood education and care services.

The department's 2023–24 budget also provides for:

- \$421.9 million for the Building Future Schools Program
- \$326.3 million for the provision of additional facilities at existing state schools experiencing faster enrolment growth
- \$227.1 million to replace and enhance facilities at existing schools, including \$138 million for critical infrastructure upgrades to create contemporary learning environments as part of the Special School renewal, Contemporary Specialist Spaces and Discreet Indigenous Community Renewal Programs
- \$202.6 million as part of the School Halls program
- \$106.3 million as part of the new strategic land acquisition fund, to acquire land for future and new and expanded schools
- \$126.8 in capital grants for the non-state schooling sector and student hostels
- \$47.4 million in grants for racing infrastructure projects that contribute to the growth and sustainability of the Queensland racing industry.¹³

3.1.3 Matters considered by the committee

The committee considered a range of matters in relation to the estimates for the Department of Education. These are summarised in Table 4, below.

¹³ Queensland Budget, 2-23-24, Capital Statement, p 32.

Table 4: Matters considered by the committee in its consideration of estimates for the Department of Education

Matters considered	Public hearing transcript page, QoN
Portfolio-wide issues	
Consultancies	6, 7, 30, 33
Meetings with lobbyists	4, 5, 30
Complaints lodged through the department's online complaints process	QoN 15
Education	
Teacher resignations	11, 12, 31 QoN 17
Occupational violence against teachers	12, 13, 19
Upgrades to school playgrounds and tuckshops	10, 11, 25
Free kindergarten initiative	3, 9-10
Capital funding for strategic land acquisitions	QoN 1
Funding for the free kindergarten initiative	QoN 3
The student wellbeing package	QoN 4
Classrooms and other facilities at schools assessed as part of the Maintenance Management Framework	QoN 11
The department's projected school maintenance budgets 2023 to 2027 and value of forecast required maintenance	QoN 12
Children in care who are enrolled in Queensland state schools	QoN 14
Compliance with class size targets specified in the Teachers' Certified Agreement	QoN 16
Funding allocated in the 2023-24 budget to curb vaping in state schools	QoN 19
Teacher recruitment	7, 11, 13
Student suspensions due to substance misconduct	28
Loss of first year teachers, and teacher retention	12
Support to improve student literacy and numeracy	15, 16

Matters considered	Public hearing transcript page, QoN
Resourcing to support student behavioural management	18, 19
Student disciplinary absence determinations	18
Operation of early childhood centres under the National Quality Framework	20-21
Racing	
Economic and social contribution provided by the Queensland racing industry	QoN 9
Betting Tax Act revenue to support the sustainability of the racing industry	35 QoN 20
Queensland Racing Integrity Commission – testing rates and results, staffing, procurement	31-33
Measures to address shortages of jockeys	34
Country racing – track conditions, investments	34-35
Operation of the new Queensland Racing Appeals Panel	36
Major racing infrastructure projects	36-37
Industrial Relations	
WorkCover Queensland’s performance in deciding claims for workers’ compensation within statutory timeframes	QoN 18
Actions to protect Queensland workers from occupational dust lung disease	QoN 6
WorkCover Queensland – procurement, costs, handling of different types of claims (mental vs physical)	37-41, 44
Handing of complaints by the department	41, 44-47
Electrical and workplace safety, including measures to address psychosocial risks at work and sexual harassment, reviews of relevant Acts	42-43, 48-49
Wages of public sector workers	43
Workers’ compensation, including operation of reforms relating to first-responders	49

3.2 Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

The role of the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) is ‘to provide high quality curriculum, assessment and reporting services that enable equity, excellence, public confidence, and lifelong learning’.¹⁴

3.2.1 Budget overview

The QCAA’s operating expenses for 2023–24 are estimated to be \$88.323 million, an increase of approximately \$0.6 million over the actual expenses incurred in 2022-23.¹⁵ The SDS states the increase is primarily due to a growth in state-wide face-to-face engagement with teachers and school leaders. A significant portion of this engagement relates to professional learning and support being provided to schools and teachers for the implementation of revised Australian Curriculum v9.0. QCAA offers reimbursement of the cost of a relief teacher to enable schools to release teachers for these professional learning activities.¹⁶

Just under two-thirds (64.2 per cent) of the QCAA’s operating expenses relate to employee expenses. These are expected to increase by approximately \$3.4 million or 4.2 per cent in 2023-24.¹⁷

3.2.2 Matters considered by the committee

The committee did not raise any matters about the estimates for the QCAA during its consideration of budget estimates.

3.3 Queensland Racing Integrity Commission

The Queensland Racing Integrity Commission’s (the Commission) purpose is to work with the racing industry and community to protect animals involved in racing, ensure high standards of integrity and safety, and undertake education and compliance activities to enhance public confidence in the Queensland racing industry.¹⁸

The Commission’s vision is for an ethical and safe racing industry in Queensland.¹⁹

3.3.1 Budget overview

The Commission’s operating expenses for 2023-24 are estimated to be \$33.966 million, a decrease of approximately \$0.2 million under the actual expenses incurred in 2022-23.²⁰ The decrease mainly relates to the transfer of the Racing Appeal Panel to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, partially offset by higher employee costs as a result of enterprise bargaining increases.²¹

Just over two-thirds (68.2 per cent) of the Commission’s expenses relate to employee expenses. These expenses are expected to increase by \$1.05 million or 4.7 per cent in 2023-24.²²

¹⁴ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 21.

¹⁵ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 25.

¹⁶ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 24.

¹⁷ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Education, p 25.

¹⁸ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, p 26.

¹⁹ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, p 26.

²⁰ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, p 29.

²¹ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, p 28.

²² Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, p 29.

3.3.2 Capital program

In 2023-24, the Commission's capital program is budgeted to be just over \$23 million.²³ The increase in property, plant and equipment is primarily due to the acquisition of a new site to relocate the Racing Science Centre to make way for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games venue.²⁴

3.3.3 Matters considered by the committee

The committee raised several matters about the estimates for the Commission during its consideration of budget estimates including:

- testing rates and results
- staffing of the Commission
- procurement.

Table 4, above, provides details of the sections of the hearing that dealt with these issues.

²³ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, p 27.

²⁴ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, p 28.

4 Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice

The Minister has responsibility for the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training (DYJESBT), as well as TAFE Queensland, a statutory body whose service areas and performance standards are detailed separately in the budget papers.²⁵

In addition to DYJESBT and TAFE Queensland, and as illustrated in Figure 3, the Minister is responsible for:

- the Queensland Training Ombudsman
- the Queensland Small Business Commissioner
- Jobs Queensland.²⁶

Figure 3: Entities within the portfolio of the Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice



These are independent statutory authorities. As per the requirements of the Financial Accountability Handbook (volume 1, p 12), a statutory authority is accounted for as part of the administering agency (i.e. separate financial statements are not required).

4.1 Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training

DYJESBT, formally the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT),²⁷ has the following four service areas:

- Youth Justice – keeping the community safe
- Employment – connecting and supporting Queenslanders with employment programs and services
- Small Business – connecting Queensland small businesses to grants and support programs
- Training – connecting Queenslanders to training and skills programs and initiatives.²⁸

²⁵ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements (SDS), Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training.

²⁶ Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 1) 2023, p 25.

²⁷ As part of machinery-of-government changes, the Youth Justice service area was added to the former department, DESBT, to form DYJESBT in May 2023.

²⁸ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, pp 1-2.

The objectives of the DYJESBT's service areas are:

- reducing recidivism by holding children and young people to account for their offending behaviour and ensuring youth justice supervision focuses on improving social, economic, civic participation and cultural connection, and reducing the disproportionate representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the youth justice system
- preparing Queensland's workforce for the demands of current and future industries
- helping small businesses to start, grow and thrive
- connecting people to quality training and skills.²⁹

4.1.1 Budget overview

The proposed budget for DYJESBT comprises an estimated \$1.745 billion in controlled expenses in 2023-24, an increase of almost \$345 million from the 2022-23 estimated actual expenditure for the former department.³⁰ According to the SDS, the increase in controlled expenses mainly reflects additional employee expenditure and supplies and services related to the recent machinery-of-government change, which brought Youth Justice services into the department.³¹ To fund this budgeted expenditure, the Appropriation Bill 2023 proposes that DYJESBT receive an appropriation of \$1.716 billion in 2023-24, with the remainder of the \$15.861 million in planned departmental spending to be financed through an equity adjustment.³²

Table 5, below, shows the combined total of the cash appropriations for the department for 2023-24, compared with the budgeted and actual cash appropriations in 2022-23.

Table 5: Appropriations for the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, 2023-24

Appropriations	Budget 2022-23 \$'000	Est. Actual 2022-23 \$'000	Vote 2023-24 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	1,277,405	1,314,334	1,716,109
equity adjustment	26,210	(16,884)	15,861
<i>Administered Items</i>			
Vote	1,303,615	1,297,450	1,731,970

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2.

²⁹ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, pp 1-2.

³⁰ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 13.

³¹ Queensland Budget 2022-23, Service Delivery Statements, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 12.

³² Queensland Budget, 2023-24, Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2.

As highlighted in Table 5, the total combined 2023-24 appropriation of almost \$1.732 billion represents an increase of just over \$428 million on last year's budgeted appropriations, and an increase of almost \$435 million on the estimated actual total appropriations for the department in 2022-23.

Trends in appropriations and expenditure

For comparison, Table 6 shows the amount sought in the Appropriation Bill 2023 for DYJESBT for 2023-24 against the appropriations and estimated actual expenditure for DESBT over the previous three years. As can be seen in this table, the appropriation for DYJESBT for 2023-24 represents a significant increase compared to the appropriations and expenditure for the former department. This increase is largely due to the addition of the youth justice responsibilities as part of recent machinery-of-government changes.

Table 6: Trends in appropriations and expenditure for the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training

	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Appropriation	1,357,775	1,244,539	1,303,615	1,731,970
Estimated Actual Expenditure	1,294,168	1,382,763	1,297,450	

Source: Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 2020, Schedule 2; Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2; Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 2; Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2.

Budget highlights

The 2023-24 budget highlights for DYJESBT are summarised in Table 7.³³

Table 7: Budget highlights for the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, 2023-24

Increased funding to continue youth justice initiatives	<p>Additional funding of \$189.5 million over 5 years (commencing 2022–23) for initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5.1 million over 3 years (commencing 2022–23) for grassroots early intervention • \$78.1 million over 4 years to extend and expand Youth Co-Responder Teams • \$25.4 million over 4 years to extend and expand the Intensive Bail Initiative • \$29.4 million over 4 years to make diversion programs ongoing • \$5 million over 2 years to empower communities to develop local solutions to youth crime issues • \$30.1 million over 4 years to extend and expand Intensive Case Management • \$5 million over 3 years for the Specialist Youth Crime Rapid Response Squad • \$4.2 million over 2 years to continue On Country programs
Funding for new initiatives included in the 2022–2025 Action Plan as part of the <i>Good People. Good Jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032</i>	<p>Over \$70 million for initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased funding of \$5.9 million over 2 years to extend the Micro-Credentialing Pilot Program • increased funding of \$5.5 million over 3 years to expand the Diverse Queensland Workforce Program • additional funding of \$6.5 million over 3 years for a network of Industry Workforce Advisors

³³ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 3.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased funding of \$4.1 million over 3 years to expand the Gateway to Industry Schools Program additional funding of \$5.3 million over 4 years for the implementation arrangements of the Queensland Workforce Strategy increased funding of \$7.3 million in 2022–23 to expand the Group Training Organisation Pre-Apprenticeships Program
Additional funding for a variety of other initiatives	<p>Funding for a variety of initiatives, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional funding of \$4.6 million over 2 years to support women undertaking a trade apprenticeship additional funding of \$29.8 million over 3 years to upgrade and modernise existing government Vocational Education and Training Information and Communication Technology systems additional funding of \$6.8 million over 3 years for a package of initiatives to support the mental health and wellness of small business owners additional funding of \$16 million over 2 years to expand TAFE Queensland's Great Barrier Reef International Marine College in Cairns additional funding to support the establishment of a Queensland Indigenous Business Network.

4.1.2 Capital program

DYJESBT has planned a capital program of \$99.4 million in 2023–24. This includes:

- \$13.4 million for youth justice infrastructure to support detention and support services, facilitating connection to family, community and country
- \$31.8 million for the continued delivery of Equipping TAFE for our Future projects which supports training requirements of emerging industries while strengthening the productivity of existing industries
- \$26.5 million for the Eagle Farm Robotics and Advanced Manufacturing Centre
- \$5.3 million for the Bohle Renewable Energy Centre
- \$8 million to expand TAFE Queensland's Great Barrier Reef International Marine College in Cairns
- \$5.8 million for TAFE Technology Fund projects delivered in partnership with the Australian Government, including Loganlea Clinical Skills Laboratory, Pimlico Visual Arts Precinct and Thursday Island Health Hub projects
- \$40.5 million for the Annual Training Infrastructure Program to renew and revitalise training infrastructure across the state, to improve accessibility to the necessary skills and training required to boost labour market productivity.³⁴

4.1.3 Matters considered by the committee

The committee considered a range of matters in relation to the estimates for the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training. These are summarised in Table 8, below.

³⁴ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 11.

Table 8: Matters considered by the committee in relation to the estimates for the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training

Matters considered	Public hearing transcript page/QoN
Training and Skills	
Completion rates for vocational education and training	52-56, 58
The new Queensland vocational education and training strategy	56-57
Fee-free TAFE	57
Agricultural training, including measure to increase enrolments	58-60
Incentives to address skills shortages, including to upskill or reskill	60 QoN 6
Partnerships, including with the Queensland College of Wine and Tourism	61
The cost of delivering training	62-63
Measures to address skills shortages in emerging and critical areas, including renewable energy	63 QoN 5
Student outcomes – for students at TAFE Queensland and the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre	64-66, 76 + additional information provided post-hearing
Financial sustainability of TAFE Queensland	QoN 3
Investments in TAFE and training infrastructure, campuses equipped to provide practical hands-on training	QoN 4 QoN 19
Complaints about training received	QoN 17
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Workforce issues, including regional workforce needs, workforce shortages, and the Queensland Workforce Strategy	69, 75 QoN 7
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Youth crime rates	77-79
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Accountability mechanisms in youth justice	86-87
Resourcing – staffing levels, including staffing for youth co-responder teams	87-88 QoN 10 QoN 15
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4.2 TAFE Queensland

The role of the TAFE Queensland is to ‘deliver education and training that enables students to increase their skills and knowledge to support employment or further study outcomes.’³⁵ It aims to:

- maintain a highly recognised and trusted brand with long established, deep industry connections offering employers confidence in the skills, knowledge and quality of its students
- deliver responsive, contemporary training to its students to ensure a workforce with the skills and capability that industry needs now and into the future
- work collaboratively with government, industry and its communities to deliver training.³⁶

4.2.1 Budget overview

TAFE Queensland’s operating expenses for 2023–24 are estimated to be \$832.776 million, an increase of approximately \$43.4 million over the expenses actually incurred in 2022–23.³⁷

Roughly two-thirds (67.3 per cent) of TAFE Queensland’s expenses are employee expenses. These are expected to increase by approximately \$28.3 million or 5.3 per cent in 2023-24. This increase is mainly due to enterprise bargaining wage increases, Queensland Government superannuation changes, and a new mental health levy attached to payroll tax.³⁸

TAFE Queensland’s operating expenses in 2023-24 are expected to exceed its total income by just over \$62 million. In comparison, in the previous financial year, TAFE Queensland’s expenses exceeded its income by about half that amount, just under \$30 million.³⁹

4.2.2 Capital program

In 2023–24, TAFE Queensland’s capital program is budgeted to be just over \$16 million. This includes:

- \$4.5 million for the acquisition, replacement and modernisation of training and operational equipment, \$5.1 million for the ICT program of work
- \$5.6 million on the development of training product and materials to support delivery.⁴⁰

This amount is significantly smaller than in the previous financial year, when TAFE Queensland’s capital program cost approximately \$85 million.⁴¹

³⁵ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 16.

³⁶ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 16.

³⁷ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 20.

³⁸ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 19.

³⁹ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 20.

⁴⁰ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 18.

⁴¹ Queensland Budget, 2023-24, SDS, Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training, p 18.

4.2.3 Matters considered by the committee

The committee raised several matters about the estimates for TAFE Queensland during its consideration of budget estimates, including:

- the implementation of fee-free TAFE
- outcomes for TAFE students
- the financial sustainability of TAFE Queensland
- investment in TAFE Queensland campuses and infrastructure
- the ability of TAFE campuses to provide practical, hands-on training.

Table 8, above, provides details of the sections of the hearing, and Questions on Notice that dealt with these issues.

5 Statement of Reservations

LNP Opposition Statement of Reservation

Education, Employment and Training Committee – Budget Estimates 2023/24

INTRODUCTION

Opposition members of the Committee agree with the passing of the 2023/24 Budget.

The Estimates process gives the Parliament the opportunity to question the government on its financial stewardship and its proposals for the forthcoming year.

As has become apparent throughout this process, the government is becoming increasingly sclerotic. It has grown rigid and unresponsive, its management of the state's finances has become haphazard and there is a growing gap between its promises and its record of delivery.

The state's economy faces significant challenges and Queenslanders are facing increasing cost of living pressures. This Budget was an opportunity for the government to meet these challenges and provide effective cost of living relief.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence of either of these objectives being met.

Long term economic trends are not encouraging and the government has adopted a piecemeal approach to mitigate cost of living pressures without addressing the fundamental reasons behind spiralling increases.

As a consequence, and despite claims of record expenditure, the government has been unable to reassure Queenslanders that genuine steps are being taken to address critical challenges, such as the youth crime crisis and the cost of living crisis.

Immersed in chaos, the government has failed to demonstrate, through the Estimates process, that it has solutions to the problems facing Queenslanders.

EDUCATION, QUEENSLAND CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

Estimates revealed a failure to deliver on the promised 7,329 **new** teacher and teacher aides over four years from 2020. Recruitment numbers remain well below **Labor's election commitment**, with an increase of only 587 FTE teachers and teacher-aides, as shown in the latest public sector workforce profile. With the current teacher workforce shortages throughout Queensland this lack of progress is of great concern for our school communities.

Question on notice 17 revealed almost 5,700 teachers and teachers aides have left the Department of Education in the last 18 months. The Director General described measures in place to understand why Queensland teachers are leaving the profession, however, we believe that these measures are inadequate.

There is no data recorded around occupational violence and teacher safety with respect to teachers leaving, no understanding of the root cause. Suspensions and exclusions due to substance misconduct has risen by 190%, to a total of 8,654 instances. It was concerning to learn that there is no breakdown of instances, no data collected to measure vaping or other substance type.

It was disappointing that again this year the Service Delivery Statements revealed that not a single outcome target in literacy and numeracy was achieved across all year levels, 3, 5, 7 and 9, with Indigenous students' results being even worse. The lack of outcomes is of great concern to Queensland parents and students.

RACING

During the short component of the Committee's hearing dedicated to Racing, it was revealed that Queensland's racing watchdog, the Queensland Racing and Integrity Commission (QRIC), had faced significant staff attraction and retention issues.

The attrition rate identified by the Acting QRIC Commissioner was 24.6%, with a number of senior staff leaving the organisation, including the:

- General Manager of Racing North Queensland;
- Thoroughbred Deputy Chief Steward of North Queensland;
- Manager of the Greyhound Adoption Program;
- QRIC Senior Counsel;
- Chief Vet;
- Chief Thoroughbred Steward; and
- Director of Racing, Licensing and Registration.

The Opposition also raised concerns with the high number of scratchings at regional Queensland race meets, due to jockey shortages. This is not a new issue, and despite assurances years ago that action was being taken, the industry is still grappling with a lack of jockeys in regional areas.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

It's important that an organisation's staff are inspired and engaged. However, bringing in a self-confessed former drug dealer, biker and standover man, who more recently pleaded guilty to assault occasioning bodily harm, for motivational speaking at WorkCover raises questions about the decision making of the government. The fact the Minister claims she was not aware of the recent charges raises serious questions.

Meanwhile, Queensland businesses are facing higher WorkCover charges under this government, in addition to spiralling wages costs.

Serious integrity concerns were also raised about the Office of Industrial Relations. These allegations that were previously put to the Department by the Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations but were dismissed as unsubstantiated. Yet, the allegations were later confirmed to be accurate in a subsequent Queensland Industrial Relations Commission judgment. This raises our suspicion that the Department knowingly failed to act with impartiality in this matter, and leaves serious questions about possible undue influence by CFMEU officials upon the Office of Industrial Relations and the Minister.

TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Examination of the Training and Skills portfolio revealed consistent failures over the last 8 years in the delivery of apprenticeship completions. During a critical skilled worker shortage, the Government has reintroduced a Train and Retain strategy that was originally introduced in 2008 to address a shortfall in skilled tradespeople. To date this strategy has not delivered the necessary outcomes after 8 years of failures, and the Minister has stated that this will now be a priority.

The Labor Government's apprenticeship completion target for 2022-2023 was 11,500 but only 9,800 were delivered. For the last 8 years the Labor Government's Apprenticeship and School Based Apprenticeship & Traineeship completion targets have never been met. When asked about what modelling has been done to arrive at the target numbers, the Director General spoke of 'stretched targets'. We believe that this was a disappointing answer given the significant implications of poor completion rates on the economy.

Trade areas such as construction were identified as having some of the worst outcomes, and when asked how the department will improve and what actions will be taken to ensure the downward trend does not continue there were general statements around the Train and Retain strategy, the workforce strategy, and school programs.

Questions were asked about the number of students enrolled in vocational education and training courses delivered at the Cleveland Education and Training Centre located at the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. The Minister agreed to provide additional information. When the answer was received after the estimates session it revealed low enrolment rates and extremely low continuation rates. There was not an opportunity to discuss this in further details.

EMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS

The issue of crime and the impacts on Small Businesses was raised including increased insurance premiums, interruption to trade, and the impact on staff. When asked about how many small businesses had been affected by crime it was disappointing to discover that the department were unaware of the 41% increase in instances of the offence 'unlawful entry with intent – shop' in the last financial year. The department indicated there were programs to assist Small Businesses including the Mental Wellness Program but measures such as financial support for CCTV or improved security were not addressed.

A pre-hearing question regarding the Small Business Strategy Survey revealed that there were no specific questions asked about crime. This was a missed opportunity to hear how crime is impacting small and family businesses at this crucial time. The response rate to the survey was extremely low with only 864 responses, 702 which were eligible to respond.

It was revealed that in every quarter of the last financial year the department had instances where undisputed small business invoices were not paid in accordance with the state governments On-time Payment Policy. Questions were raised around how small businesses can have confidence they will be paid on time by government departments if the department of small business cannot make payment within the 20 days. The department conceded that there is always room for improvement.

Reducing red tape and regulation have again not been sufficiently prioritised by this government. When asked, references were made to a range of actions and reforms, however, no deliverables were able to be identified. The Business Launchpad was previously described as regulatory reform initiative, this was clarified as actually being an information platform rather than a red tape reduction initiative.

The Small Business Financial Counselling Service was raised and how this service would continue now that federal funding has been cut. No direct answer was forthcoming with the department stating it would be discussed.

YOUTH JUSTICE

When it comes to youth justice the Government's failures are clear. Queenslanders are living through a 106% increase in unlawful use of a motor vehicle, a 59% increase in unlawful entry and 120% increase in robbery, all under this Palaszczuk Labor Government.

While the Government has repeatedly said their measures are targeting serious repeat offenders, they have failed dismally - with estimates revealing the cohort has only become more untouchable under this Government and now represents 20% of offenders. When pushed the Minister demonstrated that she has run out of ideas and plans for these young offenders, and refused to admit that Queenslanders are paying the price for her Government's failures.

The Minister gave no assurance that she has a plan to get the 500-odd children out of adult watchhouses, despite saying repeatedly in 2019 that she does not want to see them there. The new detention centres will not be opened until 2026, and will only add 120 beds in total, so there is no clear solution on the table from the Government.

The Hearing also revealed the new trial sites for expansion of the electronic monitoring device trial are following the failed pattern of the program to date, with no grants of bail given with this device in Cairns, Toowoomba or Mt Isa since the program expanded in March.

Overall, there was no confidence given this Government has the ability or plans to improve the safety of Queenslanders who are being impacted by youth crime each day. They have clearly given up being able to turn the lives around of serious repeat offenders and the community is paying the price.

CONCLUSION

This year's estimates hearings have failed to provide the reassurance that Queenslanders seek that the government has solutions to the myriad of problems facing the state.

The Estimates process, despite its well-known and long-standing shortcomings, provided no significant evidence that the government has a sustainable and considered plan to restore and improve key services. The government has wasted the opportunity presented by the 2023/24 Budget to meet the reasonable expectations of Queenslanders.

A government consumed by crisis and chaos has failed in its basic responsibilities resulting in Queenslanders having to pay an unsustainable price.



James Lister MP

Deputy Chair

Member for Southern Downs

16 August 2023



Mark Boothman MP

Member for Theodore

16 August 2023