

# **2015 – 16 Budget Estimates**

**Report No. 4, 55<sup>th</sup> Parliament**  
**Education, Tourism and Small Business**  
**Committee**  
September 2015

# EDUCATION, TOURISM AND SMALL BUSINESS 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.

Consideration of the Budget Estimates allows for the public examination of the responsible ministers, directors-general and chief executive officers of agencies within the Committee's portfolio areas. This was undertaken through an analysis of the budget papers, questions on notice and the public hearing process.

The Committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2015 for the portfolios of Education and Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the Committee, I wish to thank the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games, and departmental officers for their cooperation in providing information to the Committee throughout this process.

I would also like to thank the other members of the Committee and the Committee's secretariat staff, along with other Queensland Parliamentary Service staff, for their hard work and valuable contribution to the Committee's estimates considerations this year.

Scott Stewart MP  
Chair

September 2015

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Role of the Committee

The Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee (the Committee) is a portfolio committee of the Queensland Parliament required under section 88 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and established under the Standing Rules and Orders.

The committee's areas of responsibility are:

- education
- tourism, major events, small business and the Commonwealth Games.<sup>1</sup>

On 16 July 2015, the Appropriation Bill 2015 and the estimates for the committee's area of responsibility were referred to the Committee for investigation and report.<sup>2</sup>

On 25 August 2015, the Committee conducted a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games, and other witnesses. A copy of the transcript of the Committee's hearing can be accessed [here](#).

### 1.2 Aim of this report

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
- additional information given in relation to answers.

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

Prior to the public hearing, the Committee provided the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games with questions on notice in relation to the estimates. Responses to all the questions were received.

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

### 1.3 Other Members participation

The Committee gave leave for other Members to participate in the hearing. The following Members participated in the hearing:

- Mr Lawrence Springborg MP, Leader of the Opposition

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<sup>1</sup> Standing Rules and Orders, Schedule 6. The schedule provides that departments, statutory authorities, government owned corporations or other administrative units related to the relevant Minister's responsibilities regarding these areas are included.

<sup>2</sup> 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 MP, Deputy Leader of the Opposition
- Mr Tim Nicholls MP, Member for Clayfield
- Mr Jeff Seeney MP, Member for Callide
- Ms Jann Stuckey MP, Member for Currumbin
- Mr Tim Mander MP, Member for Everton

## 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 2015 for the Committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

### 3. Education

The Minister for Education is responsible for two of the three service areas of the Department of Education and Training (DET). The two service areas are:

- early childhood education and care – provides children with access to early childhood education and care through establishing and funding kindergarten and integrated early years services, strengthening children’s transitions to school, as well as a range of parent and family support programs, and regulating, approving and quality assessing education and care services
- school education – delivers Prep to Year 12 in Queensland state schools to prepare young people for transition to further education, training and/or work; regulation of home education; and administering funding to Queensland non-state schools.

The third service area of DET is training and skills, for which the Minister for Training and Skills is responsible.

The Minister’s areas of responsibility are administered through DET and the statutory authority Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA). In accordance with Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Executive Officer of the QCAA attended the estimates hearing and was available for direct questioning by the committee.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2015 compares the appropriations for the department for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>Budget 2014-15 \$'000</b>	<b>Est. Actual 2014-2015</b>	<b>2015-16 \$'000</b>
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	8,056,007	7,916,033	8,561,936
equity adjustment	29,802	(38, 648)	(173,491)
<i>Administered Items</i>	2,924,634	2,901,081	3,108,900
<b>Vote</b>	<b>11,010,443</b>	<b>10,778,466</b>	<b>11,497,345</b>

Source: Appropriation Bill 2015, Schedule 2, p. 8.

Budgeted capital purchases for the Education and Training portfolio (including the Department of Education and Training and related entities) are \$474.2 million in 2015-16.<sup>3</sup>

The 2015-2016 capital purchases of \$439.2 million for education includes \$386.8 million for the construction and refurbishment of educational facilities, Early Childhood and Education Care services, integrated Early Years services and prep-prep outdoor learning environments. This includes \$108.2 million in 2015-16 allocated to the \$1.38 billion Queensland Schools Public Private Partnerships project for 10 new schools in South East Queensland.<sup>4</sup>

#### **3.1.1 Budget highlights – Department of Education and Training**

2015-16 budget highlights for DET include:

- investment of:

<sup>3</sup> State Budget 2015-16, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 31

<sup>4</sup> ibid

- \$10 million to establish essential early years services in Redlands, Inala, Gordonvale and Tara
- \$2.3 million in a pilot program addressing the interface between intensive family support services and early childhood development in six locations across Queensland
- \$3.3 million over two years to reinvigorate learning environments for children attending kindergarten programs servicing discrete Indigenous communities across Queensland
- \$152.4 million over three years and \$86 million ongoing, to deliver initiatives under the government's Extra Teachers policy to lower class sizes and support high schools, including hiring up to an additional 875 teachers (including 275 specialist high school teachers) beyond normal growth in Queensland state schools
- \$1 million (as part of \$8.9 million over three years, to employ 45 additional guidance officers to increase counselling and career advice services for Queensland state high school students. The government is also providing ongoing funding of \$5 million per annum for this initiative
- \$6 million over three years, including \$2 million in 2015-2016 as part of a program to establish an enhanced and rigorous teacher classification system and pay structure to modernise and improve the teaching profession
- an additional \$70 million for maintenance of existing state schools bringing the total investment to \$178 million in 2015-16, with a further \$230 million invested over three years from 2016-17 for the state schools maintenance program
- investing an additional \$30 million over three years for priority minor works across state schools
- investing \$2 million in 2015-2016 to progressively upgrade fire protection systems in state schools to meet required pressure and flow requirements
- providing ongoing funding, including \$7 million in 2015-2016, to secure the future of Queensland's ten Children and Family Centres
- providing additional ongoing funding, including \$2.8 million in 2015-2016, to support children with suspected or diagnosed disability to actively participate in a kindergarten program
- rolling out stage two of the successful transitions to school initiative, including additional resources for schools and new materials for parents and early childhood services to strengthen collaboration and enhance children's continuity of learning
- enhancing the qualifications, skills and capabilities of the early childhood education and care workforce through the release and implementation of the Early Childhood Education and Care Workforce Action plan
- commencing construction of a special school in Cairns, with total government investment of \$25 million, with \$8 million in 2015-2016
- improving the participation of students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in state schools by strengthening implementation of the Australian Curriculum for Mathematics, Science and Technologies, teacher professional development and developing partnerships with key STEM stakeholders.

### **3.1.2 Issues raised at the public hearing – Department of Education and Training**

Issues raised by the Committee in relation to Education included:

- the recently announced issues with child protection reports that were not passed on to relevant agencies due to an IT system, including:
  - the proportion of the 644 child protection reports during the current Minister's term, the number of reports of suspected child abuse that weren't referred via the IT system in 2015 and in previous years, and the current safety of those children
  - the assurances sought and received by the Minister about the IT reporting system for child protection, and the staff stood down after problems with the system were identified
  - the scope and cost of the Deloitte review and provision of all documentation to Deloitte
  - the former Minister for Education and Training's consultation with stakeholders about student protection reporting, and when the former Minister signed off on changes to the reporting procedure
  - modifications made to daily reports to ensure all child safety reports made by school principals are received by police and Child Safety, and reporting procedures to protect students from harm
- the proportion of the \$406 million allocated to the Department of Education and Training by the previous Newman government to enact the recommendations of the Carmody Report
- job outcomes from investment in teaching and guidance officer staff, the capital works program and school maintenance, and the teaching workforce over the period 2012-2013 to 2014-2015
- results of the review of the OP system, announcement of the conclusion of the review; and the funding allocated by the former government to initiate proposed reforms to the OP system
- whether ICT was exempt from the Newman government's whole-of-government savings strategy
- school maintenance including: the number of schools and buildings that need to be maintained; how the 2015-2016 budget allocation will be delivered to schools, including specific areas targeted; implementation of long-term solutions to building maintenance; and the difference between whole-of-life-cycle assessments and the previous school condition assessments
- capital works, including: the impact on the capital works budget of the former government's decision to deliver 10 new schools through Public Private Partnerships and the ramifications for schools outside South East Queensland
- performance of Queensland students' in NAPLAN tests; the student withdrawal rate from NAPLAN; and NAPLAN testing online
- involvement of 45 new guidance officers in the implementation of the Safe Schools Coalition program, and protection measures put in place for the safety of children who visit the Minus18 website promoted by the Safe Schools Coalition program
- reintroduction of the Queensland Teachers' Union on school principal selection panels and the level or type of expertise union members bring to those panels
- state government support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students; and financial assistance provided by the state government for the ten children and family centres for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children

- the Great Results Guarantee program, including: the amount of the \$797 million federal funding committed in 2014 that will remain at the end of the 2015-16 financial year; the program role in improvement in Queensland students' NAPLAN results; and that no school will be worse off under future funding after 2015-16
- Gonski funding: including the contact made by the Minister with the federal Minister for Education; the financial commitment that the previous federal government required from the previous state government; and where the state government will find the funding to match the Gonski funding
- size of the cohort of students with a disability and the support provided to those students, particularly students with autism
- impact of announcement to provide an additional 2,500 teachers, including 875 teachers beyond growth, on state schools, particularly primary schools
- education assets that are listed for sale or disposal, and the future of Fortitude Valley State School
- the Great Teachers = Great Results program including: the future and funding of the 300 master teachers; the impact of funding levels on annual performance reviews for teachers
- Independent Public Schools (IPS), including future annual funding of \$50,000; the success of the IPS program; date of the next round of expressions of interest for the IPS program; funding to assist disadvantaged schools build capacity to get IPS status; and the results of a survey of IPS.
- how the distribution of 45 additional guidance officers affects state high schools
- review of the teachers' award
- the Department of Education and Training's approach to meeting the need for specialist teachers; the number of specialist teachers employed
- professional development resources and opportunities available to state school teachers
- science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects including: promotion of the subjects at state schools
- meeting with principals and principal round tables
- future of the Premier's ANZAC prize
- distance education, particularly the work undertaken to ensure the quality of distance education material and learning standards for children
- the implications of the change to eligibility requirements for prep this year, and the advice sought from early childhood education experts about this change in policy
- capital works including:
  - what funding was allocated by the previous Government in 2014-15 or for 2015-2016 for a new hall for Enoggera State School and the Cairns State High School High Performance Centre
  - the anticipated capital surplus for 2014-15 and the funding deferred from 2014-15 - to be expended in 2015-16; the number and location of schools to be built in 2015-16; planning

work to be undertaken in 2015-16 for the 40-48 new schools the Queensland Schools Planning Commission determined are required in the next six years; and whether any planning works includes the two new schools required in each of the Caloundra, Toowoomba and Beaudesert regions

- reduction in the number of teachers available in state schools after the rounding benefit for school teacher allocations was removed; and the current proportion of classes that are over the class size target
- why parent groups are no longer included in board representation with the establishment of the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority
- the reviews, inquiries, taskforces or committees established by the Department of Education and Training since January 2015, their funding and membership
- fee paying students in state schools, including: the cost per term; the number of fee paying students in 2015 compared to 2014 and projected numbers for 2016; the schools those students attend and numbers at each school; whether enrolment applications for local or fee paying students were refused and the reasons; the expected revenue for the 2015 and 2016 school years and how is utilised by the Department of Education and Training.

#### 4. Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games

The Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games is responsible for the two service areas of the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games (DTESB). The two service areas are:

- tourism and events development – works across government to strategically improve planning and approval of new tourism industry projects and major events. It showcases Queensland as an investment destination and the opportunities for investment in the State’s tourism infrastructure and product development. The service area leads and coordinates government service delivery for one-off major events. It is working with the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation, the City of Gold Coast and the Australian Government to deliver the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. The service area enters into partnership arrangements for other major event organising committees and leverages other government services and programs across multiple tiers of government to maximise long term economic and social benefits for the State.
- business to government services – focuses on products and services that are delivered to business and industry customers (particularly small business) and to other government agencies or jurisdictions.

The minister’s areas of responsibility are administered through DTESB and two statutory authorities; Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) and Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation (GOLDOC). In accordance with Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Executive Officers of TEQ and GOLDOC attended the estimates hearing and were available for direct questioning by the committee.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2015 compares the appropriations for the department for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>Budget 2014-15 \$'000</b>	<b>Est. Actual</b>	<b>2015-16 \$'000</b>
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	86,841	35,915	175,684
equity adjustment	15,724	14,899	43,419
<i>Administered Items</i>	119,393	142,515	170,386
<b>Vote</b>	<b>221,958</b>	<b>193,329</b>	<b>389,489</b>

Source: Appropriation Bill 2015, Schedule 2, p. 11.

The total capital purchases for the DTESB portfolio in 2015-16 are \$43.4 million with \$131.1 million in capital grants.<sup>5</sup>

The 2015-2016 capital purchases of \$43.4 million includes \$39.5 million allocated to the Queensland State Velodrome for track cycling and \$3.7 million allocated to the Belmont Shooting Centre. Capital grants funding has been allocated to the construction of Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games venues.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> State Budget 2015-16, Capital Statement – Budget Paper No. 3, p 105

<sup>6</sup> ibid

#### **4.1.1 Budget highlights – Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games**

2015-16 budget highlights for the department include:

- implementing the Embracing 2018 Action Plan for 2015 and a baseline report for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games legacy program's Evaluation and Monitoring Framework
- delivering the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure program, including enhancements in tourism capability building, quality standards and new tourism facilities
- continued implementation of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games venues and village infrastructure program
- continuation of the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council to provide direct input to Government on issues facing the small business sector
- rolling out the Queensland Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow program by providing:
  - \$1 million over three years for structured entrepreneurship and IT skill learning programs to primary and secondary schools across Queensland
  - \$1 million over three years for grants to assist stay-at-home parents to develop home based businesses
- extending the service growth, reach, quality and maturity of the Queensland Government's online services delivered to Queensland business via the Business and Industry Portal.

#### **4.1.2 Issues raised at the public hearing – Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games**

Issues raised by the Committee in relation to Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games included:

- Tourism and Events Queensland funding between 2015-2016 and 2018-2019; the reason for four year funding; the impact on attracting events; the impact of a reduction in the size of the TEQ board on its budget; and advice provided to the former Government by the TEQ Board about inability to deliver core functions as a result of funding uncertainty
- funding for Regional Tourism Organisations, including core funding and awarded contestable funding for 2015-16
- reasons that DestinationQ 2015 will be held in Townsville
- future of the annual state of the industry report and the Tourism and Commonwealth Games Cabinet Committee
- Queensland Destination Events program including: assurance of funding for established and regional events following changes to funding criteria; support for destination and event marketing in the outback; the impact of changes to policy about reef management, lockout laws and vicious lawless associaton laws on the competitive advantage of the Gold Coast and Cairns as destinations
- reason the target for tourism investment attraction in 2015-16 is lower than the investment achieved in 2014-2015

- major event funding, including the World Science Festival
- Attracting Aviation Investment Fund including: tourism targets; the approach to pursuing new or improved capacity on priority airline routes into Queensland, and the economic impact; unspent funds from 2014-15 re-allocated for 2015-16; and criteria funding under the program
- funding provided in the 2015-16 budget to support growth and jobs in the small business sector
- policy focus to increase employment, particularly for small business including: the Home-Based Business Grants Program; the Best and Brightest Fund; and the Advance Queensland Future Jobs Strategy
- level of business confidence in Queensland and consultation undertaken with small business
- membership of the Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council; targets for red tape reduction and progress in achieving the targets
- membership of the Small Business Advisory Council membership and tasks set for the Council by the Minister
- funding for the Commonwealth Games including: Federal Government funding; funding available to deliver the Commonwealth Games in the Townsville region
- upgrade of the Broadbeach Bowls Club for the Commonwealth Games and pending approval of poker machines and licences to enable repayment of the loan for the upgrade
- oversight of the planning and delivery of the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games including: progress in implementation of the Auditor-General's recommendations regarding governance and delivery of the Games; progress made between reviews by the Commonwealth Games Federation Coordination Commission in October 2014 and June 2015, and comments about management of the event
- whether responses were received by the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games and GOLDOC from the Auditor-General after their respective responses to the Auditor-General's draft report on Commonwealth Games progress
- plans for and the number of live sites for the Commonwealth Games, the impact on the number of people who may attend the actual events and the proposed arts and cultural program at live sites
- location of the road cycling race and a media report that it may be moved from Elanora
- the number of people working in the Office of Commonwealth Games Delivery, the responsibilities of the office and initiatives being worked on, and the number of staff at GOLDOC
- refurbishments to the Benowa TAFE to accommodate the GOLDOC offices
- how the target of \$54 million commercial revenue for the Commonwealth Games is to be achieved
- work undertaken to capitalise on the legacy of the Games including business growth, venues and employment

- state government representation at the Commonwealth Games handover ceremony in Glasgow
- impact of the Commonwealth Games for small business
- public servants and the Government's Union Encouragement Policy.

## **Statement of Reservation**

A Statement of Reservation commences on  
the next page



# John McVEIGH MP

## Member for Toowoomba South

Shadow Minister for Science, Information Technology and Innovation



9<sup>th</sup> September 2015

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### Statement of Reservations – Education, Small Business and Tourism Committee

Dear Sue

I hereby submit the following Statement of Reservations in relation to the Education, Small Business and Tourism Committee's 2015 Estimates Report.

#### Education

Following the Estimates Hearing, the LNP Opposition became even more concerned about the amount of time the Minister is dedicating to the critical area of education within her mega-portfolio of Education, Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games.

Under questioning from the Member for Everton, about which of the portfolio was of the highest priority, the Minister responded:

*'I take all of my responsibilities extremely seriously'*

The LNP Opposition remains convinced it is not possible for one person to give the highest priority to all of these portfolio areas. Furthermore, the LNP Opposition believes it is highly inappropriate for the government to attempt to operate with a part-time Minister who carries the enormous responsibility for 100,000 registered school teachers, 1,700 schools, the education and welfare of 770 000 children and an annual budget of \$9 billion. This represents 20 per cent of the State's total annual budget and it demands a Minister who can largely dedicate all of their time to it.

The LNP Opposition is alarmed by the Minister's flippant response to questioning about the lack of time she had dedicated to education issues, based on what she has declared publically in her diaries. When the Member for Everton made a serious point about how only 38 per cent of the Minister's meetings related to education when education made up 98 per cent of the portfolio's budget the Minister responded:

*'See, I am a busy girl!'*

A not-unexpected outcome of the Minister's mega-portfolio is the IT system failure for the reporting of the suspicion of child abuse. The LNP Opposition remains convinced, despite the Minister's assurances during the Estimates Hearings, that if she was able to dedicate more time to education, she would have become aware of the system failure earlier. It remains the LNP Opposition's belief that the mega-portfolio is potentially compromising the safety and welfare of Queensland school children.

Following Estimates, the LNP Opposition believes the government needs to urgently appoint a Minister who is able to dedicate the majority of their time to the education and welfare of 770 000 young Queenslanders.

The LNP Opposition believes the purpose of the estimates process is to assist with the scrutiny of the Government's expenditure of public monies and government policies. Judging from their performance at estimates, it seems that the Labor members of the committee and the Minister do not subscribe to the same view.

The Estimates process prohibited proper scrutiny of the Minister in relation to her portfolio, of the roughly two hundred and fifty hour period of estimates, only three and half hours were made available for the portfolio of education. This is compared to the approximately four hours and fifteen minutes made available for Education last year under the previous government.

The LNP recognises the importance of the relationship between the school principal and the school community. It is important that where a new principal is to be selected that the school community plans a central role in their selection. The LNP Opposition is concerned with the reintroduction of unions inclusion as part of school principal selection panels, on what is meant to be a merit based selection panel.

The *Great Teachers=Great Results* was an initiative focused on evaluating our teaching standards and improving professional development excellence to support Queensland teachers from the beginning of their career and as they make the transition from graduate to skilled professional. The LNP Opposition was pleased to hear that the Labor Government will be continuing with the LNP's initiative of mentoring beginning teachers, Master Teachers and annual performance reviews. However, the LNP Opposition was disappointed that \$180million has been cut from the *Great Teachers=Great Results initiative*.

## **Tourism**

In what seems to be a first for Estimates, it is of great concern that the answers to Questions taken on Notice by the Committee were not released until some six and a half hours after they were lodged to the Committee, at 10am. While I note the comments from the Minister that her office lodged responses prior to 10am, stalling of their release by the Chair of the Committee, the Member for Townsville, begs the question as to why this was the case and why has there been no explanation or reasoning given to date. For a government who promised to 'restore the estimates process' this is an appalling abuse of process and smacks of a government deliberately trying to avoid scrutiny and accountability.

The tourism industry is sick and tired of the smoke and mirrors campaign being peddled by the Minister about future cuts which in reality is designed to camouflage her own cuts to Tourism and Events Queensland.

Despite this industry relying heavily on confidence and reputation, the Minister, in May this year, belittled Queensland's proud tourism industry, describing it as a 'leaning tower of Pisa' and she has continued to spread fear ever since. It was therefore not surprising the Minister refused to provide any information regarding the reported negative impacts on visitor numbers and online bookings caused by the scare campaign over the Great Barrier Reef peddled by green groups and Labor.

Further, this same Minister tried to justify the false figures she has been peddling across Queensland by tabling a crude graph that had no reference to a source document and did not even have the axis properly labelled. It could hardly be considered as credible documentation to support her rhetoric.

With regards to RTO funding, the Minister failed to guarantee current amounts would be maintained nor whether RTOs would be assured of 4 year funding agreements in the same vein as TEQ. In addition there was no guarantee the new regional events funding model, which now includes Brisbane, would not bleed events away from some smaller locations.

Sadly, targets that were aligned with Tourism Australia's targets for 2020 have been dismissed as aspirational and discarded.

The LNP is also deeply concerned about the Government's intention to repeal and replace the criminal gang laws, which were raised as a major issue by the Mayor of the Gold Coast and local industry stakeholders. On 21 August 2015 the Australian Financial Review noted:

*"that Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate, tourism operators and businesses have warned the Palaszczuk government about any moves to repeal the tough anti-biker laws, saying it could scare off investors and tourists from the Sunset Strip."*

The LNP Opposition notes the Minister's agreement with the LNP about Labor's proposed lockout laws and the impact on tourism, particularly on the Gold Coast and urges her to prove she will stand up for the industry.

It is pleasing to see that the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund is being maintained, however just boosting the funding allocation without enhancing the criteria does not automatically warrant success.

### **Small Business**

The LNP Opposition believes the Minister's performance in Estimates is indicative of her overall lack of focus and commitment to small business.

When asked by the Member for Clayfield to outline one red tape reduction initiative that has been implemented since the election of the Labor Government, the Minister could only outline the continuation of a program started under the previous LNP Government.

It was revealed during estimates that the Small Business Advisory Council and the Red Tape Advisory Council had met just once, on the Thursday before the estimates hearings. It took specific questions from the Member for Clayfield to get the Minister to publicly outline the members of each of those committees.

During estimates the Minister admitted the Red Tape Advisory Council would not have a specific red tape reduction target and that the Small Business Advisory Council had not been tasked with looking at any Labor Government proposals and the potential impact on small business. Indeed, the Minister's response was that:

*"I tasked them with saying, 'I want to work with small business to grow jobs in Queensland."*

The LNP Opposition believes the Minister was not fulsome in her responses about business confidence broadly in Queensland. During estimates, the Minister claimed:

*"We have seen consistently an increase in business confidence since the election of this government."*

The LNP Opposition can point to a range of independent reports which show business confidence plummeting following the election of the Labor Government. The CCIQ Pulse Survey of Business Conditions, released in May, showed business conditions had dropped to the lowest level in a decade and business confidence reached a six-year low. The Sensis survey of small and medium businesses, released in August, shows net confidence in Queensland is the lowest in the nation.

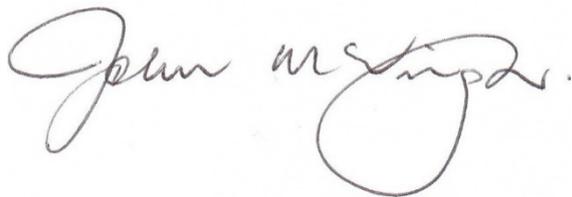
When asked about policies aimed at facilitating small business growth and confidence the Minister could only respond in a political way by challenging the Opposition members and reflecting on the previous government. The LNP Opposition believes the Minister's performance did not reflect someone with a positive plan for small business, or someone across the many issues of the small business community.

### **Commonwealth Games**

The LNP Opposition wants to take a bi-partisan approach to ensuring the best possible Commonwealth Games for the city of the Gold Coast. However, the Opposition was disappointed in the way in which the Minister used the Commonwealth Games estimates hearings as a political get-square on her predecessor. Following a series of government questions, the Minister used estimates to raise allegations against the former Minister and her former Chief of Staff. It's clear from her responses in estimates that the Minister made no attempt to clarify this matter before levelling these allegations publicly in estimates. The LNP Opposition believes this decision was made for political purposes, rather than a true desire to find out more information.

The Minister also gave a commitment during estimates to talk to the Gold Coast mayor about the redevelopment of the Broadbeach Bowls Club. The LNP Opposition will continue to pursue this issue with the Minister, to ensure a positive outcome is achieved for the Commonwealth Games and the broader Gold Coast community.

Yours sincerely



**Dr John McVeigh MP**  
**Deputy Chair Parliamentary Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee**  
**Member for Toowoomba South**  
**Shadow Minister for Science, Information Technology and Innovation**