



QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT

COMMITTEES

2024-25 Budget Estimates Volume of Additional Information

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

August 2024

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**Questions on notice and responses – *Minister for Health,
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Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 1

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to Health and Environment Committee Pre-hearing Question on Notice No.2 and No.3 of 2023, will the Minister advise the dollar value of 'productivity dividends' and 'efficiency dividends' (reported separately by hospital and health service, financial year and dividend) for financial year 2023-24 and what is expected for the financial year 2024-25?

ANSWER

In Queensland Health, productivity dividends are counted in lives saved and lives improved.

We are asking our Hospitals and Health Services to do more, with more. As well as providing more funding to them, we also ask them to look at ways to use new technology, new ways of working, new medicines, new procedures to help patients and help their budgets go further.

Funds saved when a healthcare facility improves what it can do by using new medicines, technology or processes can be invested back into providing more care to their community.

I've continued to travel around the State speaking to our frontline health workers, I know that many of our clinicians have extraordinary ideas about how we can improve our health system so that it delivers more care, to more Queenslanders, with better outcomes.

Setting a target for our HHSs to deliver additional activity within their record budgets ensures that the leadership of our Health Services engage with their clinicians on the ground and utilise their innovative ideas for the betterment of their local communities.

Productivity improvements are regularly achieved through new models of care, new technology and / or changes to procedures. Productivity can be achieved through:

- The use of less invasive surgical procedures such as robotic surgery which can reduce recovery time and lengths of stay;
- Alternate sedation and technology which no longer require overnight stays and can be provided as a day procedure;
- The use of electronic medical records to assist in reducing medication errors and providing follow-up prompts for patient care; and
- New and improved medications and technologies.

We continue to embed learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic by increasing investment in virtual care and telehealth with \$27 million to be invested in 2024-25. Over the past year we have been developing a digital platform for the Queensland Virtual Hospital's Virtual Emergency Care Service (VECS). This service will be available statewide and provide access to virtual unplanned and emergency care, offering an alternative to visiting an emergency department. That's a productivity improvement.

Nambour General Hospital and the Gold Coast University Hospital have commenced a new service which allows women to have a hysteroscopy procedure performed under local anaesthetic in as little as one to two hours, allowing them to leave hospital the same day. By utilising alternate sedation, the service is improving outpatients' experience, avoiding risks associated with general anaesthesia and reducing length of hospital stay so they can get back to routine activities. That's a productivity improvement.

Another example where technology is supporting less invasive procedures is at the Gold Coast University Hospital, which is the first Australian public hospital to offer innovative incisionless surgery for people with disabling neurological conditions like Parkinson's Disease. As this surgery is non-invasive, there are no incisions or drill holes, which enhances recovery time, and enables patients to potentially be discharged the following day. That's a productivity improvement.

A productivity dividend is the amount of additional activity – measured in terms of a Queensland Weighted Activity Unit (QWAU) that a Hospital and Health Service (HHS) is expected to perform as a result of productivity improvements.

Productivity dividends of 1% and 1.5% were applied to the activity based funded HHSs in 2023-24 and 2024-25 respectively. HHSs will deliver 21,117 QWAUs in 2023-24 and 32,798 QWAUs in 2024-25 through productivity improvements.

Productivity dividends do not result in a reduction to funding.

No efficiency dividends have been applied in 2023-24 or 2024-25.

The below tables outline the productivity dividend that has been applied to the activity based funded HHSs, as well as the published budgets and the percentage increase on the prior years budget by HHS for 2023-24 and 2024-25. The quantification of productivity dividends in monetary terms is not meaningful and the financial results of productivity dividends are not monitored. The only way to quantify productivity dividends in monetary terms is to apply the Queensland Efficient Price (2023-24), noting that this price changes year on year. This does not impact funding nor represent the cost of delivering this activity:

Hospital and Health Service ¹	2023-24 Productivity Dividend		2023-24 Published Budget	
	QWAU	\$'000	\$'000	% increase on PY
<i>Queensland Efficient Price: \$5,840</i>				
Cairns and Hinterland	1,412	8,246	1,298,955	10.2%
Central Queensland	778	4,544	809,576	7.4%
Children's Health Queensland	880	5,139	991,211	7.2%
Central West	-	-	104,307	11.5%
Darling Downs	975	5,694	1,113,085	10.2%
Gold Coast	2,562	14,962	2,131,972	9.6%
Mackay	667	3,895	613,104	9.1%
Metro North	4,722	27,576	3,995,605	10.5%
Metro South	3,916	22,869	3,350,035	10.8%
North West	180	1,051	242,707	10.2%
South West	-	-	198,730	9.6%
Sunshine Coast	1,786	10,430	1,608,399	10.6%
Torres and Cape	-	-	315,518	14.0%
Townsville	1,357	7,925	1,307,743	8.7%
West Moreton	892	5,209	915,661	12.1%
Wide Bay	990	5,782	849,204	10.0%

¹ Excludes Mater Health Service

Hospital and Health Service ²	2024-25 Productivity Dividend		2024-25 Published Budget	
	QWAU	\$'000	\$'000	% increase on PY
<i>Queensland Efficient Price: \$5,840</i>				
Cairns and Hinterland	2,207	12,889	1,436,293	10.6%
Central Queensland	1,205	7,037	873,364	7.9%
Children's Health Queensland	1,367	7,983	1,094,558	10.4%
Central West	-	-	114,678	9.9%
Darling Downs	1,556	9,087	1,243,170	11.7%
Gold Coast	4,014	23,442	2,420,739	13.5%
Mackay	1,086	6,342	678,527	10.7%
Metro North	7,256	42,375	4,413,921	10.5%
Metro South	6,190	36,150	3,724,459	11.2%
North West	-	-	274,320	13.0%
South West	-	-	217,987	9.7%
Sunshine Coast	2,761	16,124	1,795,347	11.6%
Torres and Cape	-	-	351,753	11.5%
Townsville	2,239	13,076	1,462,723	11.9%
West Moreton	1,405	8,205	1,053,652	15.1%
Wide Bay	1,512	8,830	951,868	12.1%

² Excludes Mater Health Service

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 2

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to Health and Environment Committee Pre-hearing Question on Notice No.4 of 2023, will the Minister provide an update on each of the following in relation to the \$300m over 5 years committed to the integrated electronic medical record (ieMR) referred to on page 155 of Budget Paper No. 4 2022-23

- a) a schedule of when each facility under the program will begin work on the project
- b) a schedule of when each facility under the program is due to 'go live' with the system
- c) for those facilities outlined in (a) and (b), the proposed project expenditure for each (reported separately by facility and financial year)?

ANSWER

Queensland is at the forefront of the digital hospital agenda in Australia with the implementation of the integrated electronic Medical Record, widely known as the ieMR.

The integrated electronic Medical Record delivers an integrated suite of digital health care services to improve safety, efficiency and quality in clinical workflow processes. By replacing paper-based clinical charts, the integrated electronic Medical Record solution allows healthcare professionals to simultaneously access and update patient information.

The following is the high-level schedule that has been developed with Metro North Health and relevant facility clinical leaders and is accurate as of June 2024. The schedule is subject to change and is reviewed on a regular basis to manage the implementation around operational and service delivery priorities of the Hospital and Health Services.

Costings associated with this schedule have been refined and are regularly reviewed across the Digital Hospital Program since the original allocations were provided in November 2022. As each sub-project progresses through its implementation phase, which continues throughout the life of the project, costs are subject to change including a risk-based contingency allocation.

Metro North ieMR Outpatients – enterprise Schedule Management (ESM)

\$18.06 million was committed over three years as a program for the delivery of the ieMR Outpatients – enterprise Schedule Management (ESM) across 5 sites at Metro North Hospital and Health Service which included:

- \$7.42 million in FY 22/23;
- \$10.29 million in FY 23/24; and

- \$0.35 million in FY24/25.

The project commenced in October 2022 at The Prince Charles, Redcliffe, Caboolture, and Kilcoy Hospitals, as well as at community health in Metro North with a Go Live of July 2023, October 2023 and January 2024 respectively.

Metro North ieMR Clinicals and Inpatients

The delivery of the ieMR Clinicals and Inpatients commenced in June 2023 at Redcliffe Hospital with a Go Live of June 2024. \$38.99 million was committed over three years for delivery which included:

- \$1.98 million in FY 22/23;
- \$32.61 million in FY 23/24; and
- \$4.40 million in FY24/25.

The delivery of the ieMR Clinicals and Inpatients commenced in May 2024 at Caboolture and Kilcoy Hospitals with a proposed Go Live of May 2025. \$38.83 million has been committed over three years for delivery which includes:

- \$0.97 million in FY 23/24;
- \$37.34 million in FY 24/25; and
- \$0.52 million in FY25/26.

The delivery of the ieMR Clinicals and Inpatients commenced in May 2024 at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital with a proposed Go Live of April 2026. \$94.37 million has been committed over four years for delivery which includes:

- \$1.55 million in FY 23/24;
- \$3.30 million in FY 24/25;
- \$86.27 million in FY25/26; and
- \$3.25 million in FY 26/27.

The delivery of the ieMR Clinicals and Inpatients commenced in June 2024 at The Prince Charles Hospital with a proposed Go Live of April 2027. \$79.75 million has been committed over four years for delivery which includes:

- \$0.20 million in FY 23/24;
- \$0.81 million in FY 24/25;
- \$9.91 million in FY25/26; and
- \$68.83 million in FY 26/27.

ieMR Optimisations, HHS Uplift *(Hub and Spoke) and Read-Only

\$13.96 million has been committed across 3 years to uplift the ieMR across five HHSs with existing partial access:

- \$2.38 million in FY 22/23;
- \$9.36 million in FY 23/24; and
- \$2.22 million in FY 24/25;

In the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, the delivery of the ieMR has been completed at the Caloundra Health Service with a Go-Live of April 2024 and

commenced in January 2023 at Maleny Soldiers Memorial Hospital and Gympie Hospital with a proposed Go Live by October 2024.

In the West Moreton Hospital, the delivery of the ieMR has been completed at Esk Hospital and Laidley Hospital with a Go Live of April 2024 and commenced in January 2023 at Gatton Hospital and Boonah Hospital with a proposed Go Live by October 2024.

In the Townsville Hospital and Health Service, the delivery of the ieMR has been completed at Ingham Health Service, Joyce Palmer Health Service, Hughenden Multipurpose Health Service, Richmond Health Service with a Go Live of April 2024 and commenced in January 2023 at Magnetic Island Health Service, Home Hill Health Service, Charters Towers Health Services and Ayr Health Service with a proposed Go Live by October 2024.

In the Mackay Hospital and Health Service, the delivery of the ieMR has been completed at Sarina Hospital with a Go Live of April 2024 and Bowen Hospital with a Go Live of June 2024 and commenced in January 2023 in Proserpine Hospital, Collinsville Multi-Purpose Health Service, Dysart Hospital, Clermont Multi-Purpose Health Service and Moranbah Hospital with a proposed Go Live by November 2024.

In the Cairns hospital and Health Service, the delivery of the ieMR has commenced across the Cairns Hospital and Health Service, including at Cairns Hospital, Babinda Hospital, Gordonvale Hospital, Innisfail Hospital, Mareeba Hospital, Mossman Multi-Purpose Health Centre, Tully Hospital and Yarrabah Medical Centre in January 2023 with a proposed Go Live by May 2025.

\$16.04 million across 5 years has also been committed under the program to deliver optimisations including the Digital Early Warning Tools, Comprehensive Assessment and Care planning, Digital Sepsis Pathway, Transfer of Care Information and Dietary Interface functionality.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 3

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 169 of Budget Paper 4 which outlines \$1.0 billion of equity funding for the Capacity Expansion Program in 2027-28 to support the 'Patient Flow Enhancement Program', will the Minister provide an itemised list of all projects and programs funded through the \$1.0b in equity funding from 2023-24 to 2027-28 (reported separately by financial year)?

ANSWER

The Capacity Expansion Program is the largest every investment in infrastructure for Queensland Health. The Program is delivering new hospitals, more hospital expansions and a new Queensland Cancer Centre. It is also delivering 2,220 new beds across the state.

The Program includes the new Bundaberg, Toowoomba, and Coomera hospitals, the new Queensland Cancer Centre, major hospital expansions at 11 sites across Queensland – including Brisbane, Cairns, Fraser Coast, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Mackay, Moreton Bay, Robina, Toowoomba, and Townsville. Since commencement of the CEP in June 2022, Queensland Health has:

- released its first ever Design Principles and standardised designs, used on more than 80 per cent of designed spaces;
- completed schematic design for all fifteen CEP projects; and
- broke ground on six projects.

During consultation across the projects, Queensland Health doctors and nurses, and importantly patients, continued to advocate for additional investment in support services. These support services have a significant impact across the entire patient journey from admission to discharge, and have been deemed essential to ensure timely, effective, and high-quality care can be delivered across our facilities.

An additional \$1 billion investment was included in this year's State Budget, to deliver the Patient Flow Enhancement Program which will optimise patient flow across the CEP projects, reducing wait times and providing functional and optimal spaces for healthcare professionals to deliver care.

By expanding capacity and optimizing patient flow, the CEP aims to:

- Reduce wait times and ensure patients see healthcare professionals in a timely and safe manner.

- Enhance care levels for inpatients by providing them with the necessary resources and infrastructure.
- Prevent backlogs and negative impacts on patients, ensuring smoother healthcare delivery.
- Expand clinical support services that directly support patient flow through hospitals such as medical imaging, cardiac services, pathology, pharmacy, central sterilising supply, biomedical technology services, central energy services and food services.
- Minimise operating costs associated with inefficiencies in the hospital system.

While the final scope of the Patient Flow Enhancement Program is being determined, examples of specific improvements identified at some of the CEP projects that have been identified include:

- For the New Toowoomba Hospital and Ipswich Hospital Expansion Stage 2 projects, we heard very clear feedback from clinicians about the increasing requirement for Cardiac Services across the state. Queensland Health has made changes to the design for these projects based on expert clinician and patient feedback, to establish the right relationships between clinical areas to allow for efficient patient flow.
- For the Mackay Hospital Expansion, targeted workshops and engagement sessions were conducted with key stakeholders including Friends of the Birth Centre and other community representatives. The community reference group co-designed the future of birthing services and provided crucial input on design elements. Along with the delivery of a new Birth Centre, the Patient Flow Enhancement Program will enable delivery of some additional services at Mackay Base Hospital including the Ronald McDonald Family Room.

We will continue to listen to our frontline health workers, taking their advice on what they need to provide high quality care to Queensland's communities. This is about ensuring the next generation of healthcare services here in Queensland, and that's what the CEP is delivering.

Individual contract values and project values cannot be detailed or announced until post-award of the contracts, to maintain probity and commercial tension in these critical negotiations to deliver the best and most financially beneficial outcomes for Queenslanders.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 4

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to answer to Question on Notice No. 1283 of 2023 and Queensland Ambulance Service meal penalties, will the Minister provide (reported separately by calendar month from July 2023 to June 2024, and by Queensland Ambulance Service Region):

- a) the total meal penalty hours and
- b) the total dollar value of meal penalty hours?

ANSWER

Since 2015, we have employed more than 1,500 additional frontline ambulance officers, including more than 300 in 2023-24.

The Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) recognises the wellbeing of staff and has implemented strategies to maximise access to meal breaks during rostered shifts. A penalty applies when meal breaks are not taken within specified windows of time and have been a long-standing entitlement.

A response to an emergency will always take precedence, and as such, often incurs the payment of a meal penalty.

In 2012, meal penalties were subject to Enterprise Bargaining negotiations. As agreement could not be reached, the matter was referred to The Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC). I am advised that the former LNP Newman Government made submissions to the QIRC in favour of meal penalties being removed, stripping frontline workers of their hard earned entitlements.

In mid-2014, the QIRC released its decision on wages and employment conditions for QAS employees to settle outstanding matters. The QIRC acknowledged the complexity in an operational environment, and QAS undertook system changes to support the scheduling and monitoring of access to meal breaks.

Over the last three years, every QAS region has reduced the average duration of meal penalties. In addition, the percentage of shifts incurring a meal overtime penalty has remained relatively stable since 2021-22 with four of the eight regions reflecting a reduction in the percentage of shifts incurring a meal overtime penalty.

A number of regions have seen an increase in the percentage of meal shifts incurring a meal penalty, however these regions saw an up to 17 per cent increase in Code 1 demand over the same period.

A meal penalty does not necessarily indicate more hours worked, but the application of a penalty when a meal break is not provided within a specified meal window. This penalty is a part of the employees' industrial entitlements.

In addition, I am advised that due to the operational nature of emergency services, some ambulance operatives may from time to time choose not to take their meal breaks in the specified period, thereby attracting a penalty.

I am advised that the below lists note total meal penalty hours and total dollar value of meal penalty hours, by QAS Region and month between July 2023 and June 2024.

a) Total Meal Penalty Hours – July 2023 to June 2024

- Far Northern: 2,801; 2,573; 2,524; 2,130; 2,295; 3,095; 3,063; 3,182; 3,492; 3,314; 3,184; 3,786.
- Northern: 2088; 2631; 2124; 2010; 2282; 1926; 1989; 2145; 3191; 2225; 1914; 1,921.
- Central: 2,433; 2,971; 2,183; 2,375; 1,932; 2,300; 2,296; 2,365; 2,128; 2,100; 2,101; 2,665.
- Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay: 13,861; 13,153; 12,640; 12,525; 13,799; 15,028; 15,157; 14,900; 14,689; 14,579; 15,747; 15,188.
- Darling Downs and South West: 2,781; 2,639; 2,621; 2,866; 2,779; 3,245; 2,981; 3,017; 3,038; 3,212; 3,747; 3,799.
- Metro North: 28,010; 28,189; 26,359; 28,172; 28,250; 29,042; 28,775; 28,309; 29,249; 28,282; 31,284; 29,672.
- Metro South: 43,467; 43,493; 40,166; 42,859; 41,966; 44,914; 46,078; 43,995; 44,506; 43,469; 47,641; 44,772.
- Gold Coast: 16,208; 16,202; 15,092; 15,892; 16,900; 17,618; 17,400; 17,282; 17,165; 17,278; 18,132; 18,058.

b) Total Dollar Value of Meal Penalty Hours – July 2023 to June 2024

- Far Northern Region: 0.12M; 0.12M; 0.14M; 0.06M; 0.11M; 0.13M; 0.15M; 0.13M; 0.17M; 0.17M; 0.11M; 0.20M.
- Northern Region: 0.08M; 0.13M; 0.10M; 0.06M; 0.10M; 0.10M; 0.08M; 0.08M; 0.17M; 0.10M; 0.09M; 0.07M.
- Central Region: 0.10M; 0.15M; 0.10M; 0.10M; 0.09M; 0.10M; 0.11M; 0.11M; 0.10M; 0.10M; 0.10M; 0.14M.
- Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay Region: 0.67M; 0.57M; 0.61M; 0.61M; 0.69M; 0.69M; 0.73M; 0.74M; 0.66M; 0.72M; 0.74M; 0.75M.
- Darling Downs and Sunshine Coast Region: 0.13M; 0.11M; 0.13M; 0.13M; 0.14M; 0.15M; 0.13M; 0.15M; 0.15M; 0.15M; 0.17M; 0.16M.
- Metro North Region: 1.29M; 1.27M; 1.22M; 1.28M; 1.37M; 1.42M; 1.26M; 1.38M; 1.35M; 1.29M; 1.43M; 1.42M.
- Metro South Region: 1.95M; 1.94M; 1.89M; 1.99M; 2.00M; 2.16M; 2.07M; 2.11M; 2.07M; 2.02M; 2.18M; 2.10M.
- Gold Coast Region: 0.74M; 0.76M; 0.75M; 0.75M; 0.85M; 0.88M; 0.82M; 0.85M; 0.84M; 0.88M; 0.85M; 0.88M.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 5

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) 'Finish on Time Performance', will the Minister provide the annual percentage of crews finishing on time for the 2014-15 and the 2023-24 financial year, broken down by QAS Region?

ANSWER

The Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) recognises the wellbeing of staff and has implemented strategies to ensure our hard-working paramedics are able to finish their shifts on time.

Operational overtime is a service delivery model that has long existed in ambulance services.

Whilst systems are in place to help support QAS staff to finish on time, such as rostering aligned to demand, implementation of alternative service delivery models such as the QAS Falls Co-responders or Hospital Located Teams, it is still inevitable that shift extensions will occur.

The QAS does all it can to minimise the impact of shift overtime to staff and have standalone criteria around deployment to ensure that our service is able meet operational demand whilst also supporting employee wellbeing.

Shift extension overtime occurs when a paramedic is dispatched to a Triple Zero (000) call in response to community demand for service at or near the end of a rostered shift. When this does occur, all attempts are made to provide back up to support the crew to finalise their shift as soon as possible. The QAS is committed to minimising overtime, however, paramedic supervisors will prioritise the response to a critical patient and manage overtime accordingly.

In the 2023-24, financial year, the QAS provided over 11 million hours of work, and of that shift overtime equated to less than three per cent of all those hours.

The QAS does not have a standardised Finish on Time Performance Report. In addition, paramedics may from time to time voluntarily undertake overtime, which cannot be disaggregated.

To provide a detailed response by Financial Year and by Region would require the reconciliation of multiple workforce datasets, and would therefore represent an unreasonable diversion of resources.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 6

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to answer to Question on Notice No. 125 of 2023— Will the Minister provide the amount of ambulance 'lost time' for April 2024, May 2024, June 2024 (reported separately by hospital and health service and calendar month)?

ANSWER

The QAS is the busiest ambulance service in the country, responding to 1.2 million incidents a year, and is the only mainland service that is free. Something that will never change under the Miles Government.

Since 2015, we have employed more than 1,500 additional frontline ambulance officers, including more than 300 in 2023-24. As a result of our investments, we have been able to ensure that more than 90 per cent of 000 calls are answered within 10 seconds, and 90 per cent of the most critical incidents are attended in approximately 17 minutes.

This impressive performance comes in the face of record demand. In the quarter ending March 2024, the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) received 22,263 more calls and transported 9,075 more patients to hospital compared to the same time in the previous year. In addition, the QAS saw their busiest ever day for Triple Zero calls – more than 4,000 in a single day.

Data from the 2024 Productivity Commission Report on Government Services also shows that in 2022-23 Queensland had the best performing ambulance service in the country across measures such as response time, number of paramedics per capita, and cardiac arrest attendances.

Total 'Lost time' is an unofficial internal reporting metric used by the QAS, and not a published performance measure. As such, it should not be used to determine a facility's Patient Off Stretcher Time. In addition, total lost time is not an accurate reflection of the pressures that our system is facing as it does not appropriately account for growth in demand, or growth in resources. Nor does it show whether patients are seen within clinically recommended timeframes. Lost time per ambulance, however, can provide a better indication of the care that Queenslanders are likely to receive.

I am pleased to advise that Lost Time per Ambulance is now being published on the performance website as part of our commitment to ongoing data transparency.

Performance data is published on a quarterly basis, with quarter three data for the 2023-24 financial year available via <http://www.performance.health.qld.gov.au>.

Performance data for April to June 2024 will be released as part of the next quarterly data report.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 7

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to patients waiting for Cochlear Implants through Queensland Health—
Will the Minister advise:

- (a) the number of patients on the waiting list for Cochlear Implants as of 1 January for 2023 and 2024,
- (b) the number of Cochlear Implant procedures undertaken each calendar year for 2023 and 2024,
- (c) the number of patients currently on the waiting list for Cochlear Implants?

ANSWER

Queensland Health are progressing a range of initiatives to address the well-being and safety of patients with cochlear implants. To support the provision of safe, high quality audiology services to Queenslanders, a networked statewide clinical governance model for Queensland Health audiology services is currently being finalised for implementation across Queensland Health and Mater Health Services in the second half of 2024.

The Queensland Government is supporting advocacy for a national consensus on the minimum standard for the frequency of mapping cochlear implants in children in the first 12 months post cochlear implantation and regulation of audiologists. State and territory Health Ministers have agreed to develop a statement.

Queensland is also the lead jurisdiction for the development of a Decision Regulatory Impact Statement (Audiology Decision RIS) on options for the future regulation of the audiology profession to be considered at an upcoming National Health Ministers Meeting.

Cochlear implant surgery is a highly specialised procedure which requires each patient to receive staged pre-operative and post-operative audiology testing, as well as post-operative programming.

Given the highly specialised and complex nature of the pre-operative assessment, median elective surgery treatment time for cochlear implants was 96 days in the 2023-24 financial year. This has remained stable compared to 95 days in the 2022-23 financial year.

Cochlear implants are currently performed by Childrens Health Queensland, Metro North and Townsville Hospital and Health Service, and Mater South Brisbane.

Patients are referred for the procedure following a clinical review by a specialist treating team. Each year, Queensland Health receives between 120 to 150 referrals to the Elective Surgery waiting list for insertion of cochlear implant/s.

I have been advised that, due to the stable volume of referrals received for this service, the number of patients on the elective surgery waiting list for Cochlear Implants has also remained consistent over the requested reporting periods:

- 70 as at 1 January 2023
- 70 as at 1 January 2024
- 63 as at 1 July 2024

The number of Cochlear Implant procedures undertaken each calendar year from 2023 and 2024 was:

- 128 during 2023 (January to December)
- 63 during 2024 (January to June)

Source: Queensland Health Elective Surgery Data Collection (ESDC)

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 8

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED
MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND
MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN) —

QUESTION

With reference to Question on Notice No. 478 of 2024 and the 'Process for Ministerial approval for maternity service changes' and Queensland Health's Clinical Services Capability Framework will the Minister provide (reported separately by Queensland Health facility):

- a. the number of notifications received by the department in relation to any suspension of a maternity service from 15 May 2024 and
- b. the total number of days, those services in part (a) were suspended?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring all women in Queensland have access to high-quality, reliable maternity services, no matter where they live. Where a mother cannot birth at their preferred facility, plans are always put in place to support them to birth at alternative locations.

Those plans are communicated to expectant parents and support services, and expectant parents are supported to have a safe birthing experience.

From 15 May 2024, the vast majority of temporary service reductions were in response to workforce shortages. One service reduction at Redland Hospital was related to a power shutdown. This was required to connect power to the new Stage One building switchboards and was for a period of 20 hours from 13 July to 14 July 2024.

The Department of Health is working tirelessly to recruit to rural areas and whilst this is challenging, there are initiatives underway to strengthen the maternity workforce and retain rural practitioners. This includes investing \$42 million over four years for regional, rural and remote maternity services for a range of initiatives, which include:

- Supporting GPs and rural generalists to complete an Associate Training Program (Advanced Procedural) training in obstetrics.
- Expanding midwifery-led models of care and virtual care to provide rural and remote clinicians 24/7 access to specialist advice.
- Appraising models of care to co-design sustainable models of maternity care at selected locations most exposed to reductions in capability of birthing services.

Each Hospital and Health Service (HHS) continues to undertake work to minimise service reductions. For example, in 2023-24 Metro South HHS allocated an additional \$1.88 million to employ an additional six medical practitioners at Beaudesert Hospital resulting in a significant decrease in short term maternity service reductions due to

emergent leave. Townsville HHS has appointed an additional Obstetric MO Officer at Ingham.

All notifications were for temporary suspension, usually this occurs for less than two days and often does not impact women's birthing plans.

The Table below shows temporary change notifications for maternity services under the Clinical Services Capability Framework received by the Department of Health from 15 May 2024 to 14 July 2024.

Facility	A: number of notifications received relating to any suspension of a maternity service	B: Number of closures in A: that were less than 24 hours	C: the total number of days, those services in part (a) were suspended	D: Comments on impacts of notifications
Ingham Health Service	4	0	8 days	One woman was supported to birth at Townsville University Hospital
Mareeba Hospital	2	1	1 day	One woman was supported to birth at Cairns Hospital.
Beaudesert Hospital	2	2	1 day	No women impacted.
Redland Hospital	1	1	0.25 days	No women impacted.

** Hospital and Health Services make the notification prior to temporary closures. Services do not routinely advise what the actual duration was if a return to services occurs earlier.*

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 9

The HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to all Queensland Health staff, will the Minister please advise each of the following as at 30 June 2024:

- a. the number of staff with open investigations stemming from misconduct
- b. the number of Queensland Health staff suspended with pay
- c. the dollar value of payments made to staff since being stood down with full pay
- d. the number of staff suspended without pay?

ANSWER

As at 30 June 2024:

- a. The number of matters with open investigations stemming from misconduct is **36** which represents **0.03 per cent** of the total workforce.
- b. The number of Queensland Health staff suspended with pay is **130** which represents **0.10 per cent** of the total workforce.
- c. The approximate dollar value of payments made to staff since being suspended on full pay for the 2023-24 financial year is **\$11,518,000**.
- d. The number of staff suspended without pay is **15** which represents **0.01 per cent** of the total workforce.

Queensland Health adopts a proactive approach to misconduct and suspected corruption conduct matters. Education and training are provided through the online Code of Conduct course which focuses on ethical decision-making; competencies relating to fraud, corruption, misconduct and public interest disclosures; bullying and sexual harassment; and discrimination. Additionally, various HR policies address the obligations of management and employees to comply with the Code of Conduct and a fraud awareness campaign is run on an annual basis.

The current Queensland Health conduct and performance suspension data as at 30 June 2024 represents the latest approved data provided by the Public Sector Commission and percentages are calculated on the Queensland Health headcount of 132,670.

Under section 128 of the *Public Sector Act 2022*, the Public Sector Commission is required to publish information annually about the number, types, and management of work performance matters for each agency. However, this data is not limited to suspension data. The data for the 2023-24 financial year is not yet available, however is expected to be published before 30 September 2024.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 10

The HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

How much did Queensland Health write off due to inventory write-offs, from expired RAT tests and vaccines over the past four financial years (broken down by year)?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government undertook several strategies to reduce the impact of COVID-19, including a strong public health response. These strategies contained the prevalence of COVID-19 within our communities, reduced illness and more than likely saved lives.

The strategies included the establishment of a COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) stockpile to support Queensland Health and other Queensland Government agencies (such as Education Queensland, Queensland Corrective Services, and the Queensland Police Service) with the State's COVID-19 response.

Similar to all other States and Territories, Queensland planned and prepared for a range of scenarios regarding the use of RATs in its COVID-19 public health response. Compared to other jurisdictions, Queensland was more prudent in the number of RATs purchased.

Queensland's strong public health response resulted in lower than forecast consumption of RATs and as an unavoidable consequence, inventory write-off was required.

As such, the only inventory write-off for RATs occurred in the 2023-24 financial year at a total value of \$165.159 million.

In May 2024, Queensland Health engaged a Brisbane-based supplier to recycle the expired RAT stockpile. The solution will result in 98 per cent of the RAT product recycled through two waste streams (cardboard and plastic pellets for injection moulding).

Rather than the stockpile approach adopted at the height of the pandemic, Queensland Health now purchases RATs as a managed stock line. This is a standard inventory management approach which considerably reduces the risk of expired stock and inventory write-off.

The COVID-19 vaccine is funded and distributed exclusively by the Australian Government. Queensland Health has no visibility of the amount (or value) of COVID-19 vaccine 'written-off' due to expiry.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 11

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 15 of the SDS, can the Minister outline how the \$1.152 billion will boost patient flow and support hospital infrastructure through the Capacity Expansion Program?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government's \$10 billion Capacity Expansion Program is the largest ever investment in infrastructure for Queensland Health. This year's allocation of \$1.152 billion is helping expand capacity across the state.

The Program is delivering new hospitals, more hospital expansions and a new Queensland cancer centre. It is also delivering 2,220 new beds across the State.

The Program includes the new Bundaberg, Toowoomba, and Coomera hospitals, the new Queensland Cancer Centre, major hospital expansions at 11 sites across Queensland – including Brisbane, Cairns, Fraser Coast, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Mackay, Moreton Bay, Robina, Toowoomba, and Townsville. Since the commencement of the CEP in June 2022, Queensland Health has:

- released its first ever Design Principles and standardised designs, used on more than 80 per cent of designed spaces;
- completed schematic design for all fifteen CEP projects; and
- broke ground on six projects.

During consultation across the projects, Queensland Health doctors and nurses, and importantly patients, continued to advocate for additional investment in support services. These support services have a significant impact across the entire patient journey from admission to discharge, and have been deemed essential to ensure timely, effective, and high-quality care can be delivered across our facilities.

An additional \$1 billion investment was included in this year's State Budget, to deliver the Patient Flow Enhancement Program which will optimise patient flow across the CEP projects, reducing wait times and providing functional and optimal spaces for healthcare professionals to deliver care.

By expanding capacity and optimizing patient flow, the CEP aims to:

- Reduce wait times and ensure patients see healthcare professionals in a timely and safe manner.

- Enhance care levels for inpatients by providing them with the necessary resources and infrastructure.
- Prevent backlogs and negative impacts on patients, ensuring smoother healthcare delivery.
- Expand clinical support services that directly support patient flow through hospitals such as medical imaging, cardiac services, pathology, pharmacy, central sterilising supply, biomedical technology services, central energy services and food services.
- Minimise operating costs associated with inefficiencies in the hospital system.

While the final scope of the Patient Flow Enhancement Program is being determined, examples of specific improvements identified at some of the CEP projects that have been identified include:

- For the New Toowoomba Hospital and Ipswich Hospital Expansion Stage 2 projects, we heard very clear feedback from clinicians about the increasing requirement for Cardiac Services across the state. Queensland Health have made changes to the design for these projects based on expert clinician and patient feedback, to establish the right relationships between clinical areas to allow for efficient patient flow.
- For the Mackay Hospital Expansion, targeted workshops and engagement sessions were conducted with key stakeholders including Friends of the Birth Centre and other community representatives. The community reference group co-designed the future of birthing services and provided crucial input on design elements. Along with the delivery of a new Birth Centre, the Patient Flow Enhancement Program will enable delivery of some additional services at Mackay Base Hospital including the Ronald McDonald Family Room.

We will continue to listen to our frontline health workers, taking their advice on what they need to provide high quality care to Queensland's communities. This is about ensuring the next generation of healthcare services here in Queensland, and that is what the CEP is delivering.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 12

The HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 3 of the SDS, can the Minister outline the measures Government is taking to address occupational violence in our health system?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government is committed to addressing the issue of occupational violence by promoting a culture of safety and ensuring healthcare workers, wherever they work, are supported should an incident occur.

As part of the Queensland Government's record \$28.9 billion 2024-25 health investment, \$37.88 million has been committed over the next four years to prioritise the safety of the healthcare workforce.

- \$36 million will be allocated to increase the number of Security Officer positions to 70 full time equivalent (FTE) positions across the state's Hospital and Health Services (HHSs), in addition to expanding the successful Ambassador Program with an additional 12 FTE roles across the state.
- \$1.88 million will be dedicated to the development and implementation of new occupational violence prevention initiatives through to 2028.

These initiatives will ensure the safety and wellbeing of healthcare workers by creating an Occupational Violence Escalation pathway for employees, establishing clear pathways for security interventions, including the use of force by Security Officers, and defining best practice security staffing requirements.

The Queensland Government will continue to implement a range of effective security enhancements for HHSs across the state, including the installation of CCTV in all high-risk areas, provision of personal duress alarms for staff in high-risk areas, installation of fixed duress alarms in high-risk areas, and the provision of body worn cameras for all security staff.

The ongoing efforts to protect the health and safety of staff and patients builds on Queensland Health's nation-leading approach to stamping out occupational violence in healthcare settings.

The Queensland Occupational Violence Strategy Unit (QOVSU) is Australia's first permanently funded unit dedicated to developing strategies to reduce violence within a healthcare setting.

The QOVSU works with frontline clinicians and executives to implement a range of strategies and encourage staff to report every incident.

The activities completed by the unit so far include:

- The introduction of Occupational Violence Incident Response Kits to guide staff on how to support a colleague in the event of an occupational violence incident.
- The development and implementation of a non-punitive, decision-making pathway for use when workers feel their health and safety is at risk from patient's unacceptable behaviour.
- Collaborative work with the Queensland Police Service Training Academy to successfully deliver face-to-face Communicating with Influence de-escalation and negotiation training to healthcare security officers.
- The establishment of a statewide security committee to allow for discussions and consultation on matters pertaining to security officers, such as occupational violence training and equipment, with a view to maximising consistency between HHSs.
- The establishment of the Queensland Health Security Managers Network to connect security leadership professionals with their peers across Queensland Health and provides a forum to identify opportunities for improvement and information sharing between HHS security services.
- The installation of drugs and weapons safes in all high-risk facilities across the state.
- The expansion of the Queensland Health Ambassador Program, a non-traditional security approach focused on the proactive engagement of patients and visitors to improve the patient experience and reduce aggressive and disruptive behaviours.

I am pleased to advise that work is now underway on a comprehensive statewide review of personal protective equipment to ensure healthcare workers and security officers can safely do their jobs across the state's hospital and health services network.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 13

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 1 of the SDS, can the Minister outline the average Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme processing times for each Hospital and Health Service against the number of applications processed, across 2022-23 and 2023-24?

ANSWER

The Miles Government will always prioritise health equity for Queenslanders living in regional, rural and remote communities. We understand that travelling for healthcare incurs additional costs for families, and that is why we continue to improve and maintain the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme (PTSS).

Our Government has a record of making improvements to the PTSS; in the 2023-24 Budget our Government boosted PTSS funding by \$70.3 million to deliver an increase to the travel and accommodation subsidy.

In July 2024 we announced the removal of the four-night rule, to alleviate the cost of healthcare-related travel for Queenslanders and their families by allowing them to access a PTSS subsidy from the first night of healthcare-related accommodation.

The PTSS is administered by the Hospital and Health Services (HHSs), through funding allocated by the Department of Health.

I note that all HHSs can manage the booking of air, bus, ferry, or rail fares for patients and their escorts, alleviating the need for patients to outlay travel costs or rely on waiting for a subsidy. The HHS can also pay the approved commercial accommodation subsidy directly to the accommodation provider, again alleviating the need to outlay costs at first instance.

However, I am advised that some patients may prefer to book their travel independently and claim reimbursement through the HHS, which requires the HHS to assess and process their claim.

The volume of claims received by each HHS is managed and processed within fixed staffing resources. HHSs work towards processing each claim within 30 days to ensure timely PTSS payments to eligible PTSS patients.

Across both 2022-23 and as at June 2024, the Central Queensland, Central West, Gold Coast, Metro North, Metro South, South West, Sunshine Coast, Townsville and West Moreton HHSs processed over 90 per cent of PTSS claims within 30 business days.

While the Wide Bay and Darling Downs HHSs experienced a significant increase in PTSS claims in 2023-24, I can advise that as at June 2024, Wide Bay HHS is processing claims within 25 business days on average and Darling Downs HHS is processing claims within 8 business days on average. I note that measures are being taken to maintain these levels of performance.

As at June 2024 the Mackay HHS processed 84 per cent of claims within 30 days, and in 2023-24 the North West HHS processed 96 per cent of claims within 30 days, which were both improvements on the previous year.

The Cairns and Hinterland and Torres and Cape HHSs do not utilise the enterprise IT solution required to capture the data sought. They use an alternate staff travel and accommodation system to manage PTSS travel and accommodation bookings, as it supports their large staff travel needs.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 14

**THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED
MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND
MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—**

QUESTION

With reference to page 9 of the SDS, can the Minister outline the allocation of funding under the Mental Health Levy including the additional revenue raised?

ANSWER

I refer the Member to my response to Question on Notice 807 of 2024.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 15

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 1 of the SDS, can the Minister outline how Queensland Health is managing patients who should otherwise be in aged or disability care, and the pressures that these patients cause in the system?

ANSWER

Long-stay patients are one of the biggest single pressures facing our hospital system, and one of the biggest impediments to effective patient flow.

As at 27 May, there were 1,013 long-stay patients in Queensland public hospitals – more than the entire Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital, costing the system approximately \$2.1 million per day.

We know that people do not want to be in hospital for any longer than is necessary, but these long-stay patients are unable to return to the community because they are awaiting an aged care bed or National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) package.

Aged care and the NDIS are well and truly in the domain of the Commonwealth, but systemic underfunding from the former LNP Federal Government means that the Queensland Government has had to step up to support these patients.

That’s why the Queensland Government is investing \$186.5 million this financial year to reduce the number of long-stay patients in our hospitals, so they can receive appropriate care in appropriate settings.

This investment is enabling the purchase of interim care beds and services in the private hospital and aged care sectors, additional staffing resources and inter-hospital transfer solutions.

As at May 2024, 243 additional beds have been made available. This is combined from both internal and outsourced capacity. This uplift represents 2.1 per cent of the current available overnight beds in Queensland public acute hospitals.

Further investment is being made locally through growth funding allocated to Hospital and Health Services to increase access to appropriate beds for longer stay patients, including 12 beds in Mackay, 24 beds at Hervey Bay, and approximately 30 beds in Central Queensland.

The Miles Government's investment also includes the expansion of hospital discharge initiatives by \$20 million over the next four years, to further support patient flow through the expansion of the Long-Stay Rapid Response (LSRR) program and Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Hospital Hearing Program.

This new funding builds on the initial \$21 million already invested in LSSR since 2021, which has funded essential discharge supports such as interim care, nursing care and equipment to help long-stay patients leave hospital safely, as well as 5 clinical staff in 7 Hospital and Health Services who are solely dedicated to supporting long-stay patients.

As at 20 June 2024, 728 patients supported by LSRR have been able to leave hospital, enabling approximately 44,000 bed days, or \$89 million, to be reallocated to acute care services.

The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Hospital Hearings Program also supports long-stay patients to discharge from hospital by reducing the length of time patients with impaired capacity wait for a tribunal hearing. In 2023, 702 hospital hearings were conducted, resulting in expedited discharge processes and returning 35,340 bed days back to acute level hospital care.

Since August 2022, the number of long-stay older patients in hospitals has increased due to insufficient operational residential aged care beds, particularly in regional and remote areas, and for patients with complex care needs and challenging behaviours.

We are continuing to advocate to the Commonwealth on a range of aged care and disability reforms that are being led by the Commonwealth, ensuring these systems are built effectively to meet the needs of vulnerable Queenslanders.

Despite Queensland's support for national disability and aged care reforms, Queensland Health acts as a provider of last resort for long-stay patients. This occurs when Commonwealth Government aged care and disability supports are not immediately available for people with ongoing care needs seeking to return to community settings.

In the 2024-25 Federal Budget, Queensland was allocated \$121.682 million over four years for a suite of initiatives to support long-stay older patients. This funding will support additional investment in programs for:

- Geriatric Evaluation and Management Hospital in the Home (\$65.2 million)
- Preventing Avoidable Presentations of Older People (\$8 million)
- Purchase of transitional bed capacity in private residential aged care facilities (\$48.48 million).

While this funding is welcomed, we know more needs to be done to boost the availability of aged care beds in Queensland. To that end, I have written to the Honourable Mark Butler MP and the Honourable Anika Wells MP outlining a number of proposals for Queensland and the Commonwealth to work more closely together.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 16

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 1 of the SDS, can the Minister outline measures being taken by Queensland Health and Hospital and Health Services to enhance patient safety?

ANSWER

Queensland Health's priority is to provide safe, high quality and compassionate care, and it is essential that the community can have confidence in the safety and quality of healthcare in every Queensland Hospital and Health Service (HHS).

In order to advance this priority, Queensland Health continues to progress a statewide patient safety and quality improvement program to strengthen and standardise patient safety and quality processes across Queensland Health. This includes:

- enhancing escalation reporting processes to more readily identify and escalate quality and safety concerns to ensure they are addressed in a timely, proper and sufficient way;
- the provision of additional clinical governance support to Hospital and Health Boards and HHSs; and
- strengthening informed consent processes to improve the expectations of patients undergoing procedures in our hospitals.

As Minister for Health, patient safety is a priority across all areas of the department. I have made an ongoing commitment to make matters that affect patient safety, public, when they come to my attention.

We know that public confidence in the fantastic work that our HHSs and hard-working staff provide is strengthened when we can talk about the challenges that our services encounter, the lessons learned, and the ways in that we can drive better health outcomes going forward.

Severity Assessment Code (SAC) 1s

Queensland Health engages in constant analysis of the care it provides to improve patient outcomes and ensure shared learning. Where patient care doesn't meet the standards clinicians are expected to provide, a Severity Assessment Code (SAC) can be assigned to a clinical incident.

The SAC is used to categorise clinical incidents, based on consequences to a patient, and determines the appropriate level of analysis, action and escalation for clinical incidents. The score is used to determine the appropriate level of analysis, action, and escalation for clinical incidents.

The Queensland Health Patient Safety Health Service Directive requires HHSs to undertake and submit a SAC 1 incident analysis report to the Department of Health within 90 calendar days of the incident being reported as a SAC 1.

Clinical Excellence Queensland reviews SAC1 incidents reported. Depending on the report, Clinical Excellence Queensland will share the report with relevant teams within the Department of Health and relevant state-wide Quality Assurance Committees for consideration of emerging trends, and to address and ensure consistency throughout the state.

An example of this shared learning is the way in which sepsis was identified as a major clinical risk. Through a review of SAC 1 incidents, it was identified that there were system failures in recognising and responding to the patients with sepsis.

As a result, Clinical Excellence Queensland introduced paediatric and adult Sepsis programs, ensuring there are pathways to assist clinicians in identifying and treating sepsis within the Emergency Department and within the hospital. Further work is also underway to work with General Practitioners and educate the community on the signs and symptoms of sepsis to ensure early presentation to seek urgent health care.

Clinical Excellence Queensland considers potential statewide recommendations and works with the relevant HHS and statewide entity responsible to determine an appropriate approach to address issues raised.

Patient Safety Escalation Processes

In response to several high-profile reviews, Queensland Health developed and is implementing a Patient Safety Staff Escalation Pathway to make it easier for staff to escalate patient safety concerns without fear of reprisal. The program commenced piloting in four HHSs in October 2023 and is known as Patient Safety Net.

Patient Safety Net has been developed to help strengthen clinical governance and improve patient safety by addressing some of the existing barriers to reporting and responding to patient safety concerns.

The pilot has shown Patient Safety Net provides an additional layer of assurance that patient safety matters are being identified and addressed. An evaluation of the pilot program is in progress and Patient Safety Net is under consideration for statewide implementation.

Ryan's Rule was originally implemented for patients admitted as inpatients to a public healthcare facility or being treated in some Hospital in the Home services. The Department is collaborating with a range of stakeholders to enhance Ryan's Rule through:

- piloting the expansion of the use of Ryan's Rule in Emergency Department adult and paediatric waiting areas at Redcliffe Hospital. The subsequent evaluation of the pilot will enable consideration for the implementation in further Emergency Department waiting areas; and
- partnering with Health Consumers Queensland to undertake First Nations Yarning Circles, seeking feedback on the cultural appropriateness of the

approach to Ryan's Rule. Feedback will inform how Ryan's Rule may be better promoted and/or adapted accordingly.

Queensland Health is also collaborating with Mater Education to offer the High Value Conversations program aimed at enhancing staff communication skills for safe patient care and teamwork. Skills developed include the ability to conduct respectful, curious and helpful conversations, speaking up about unsafe practices, and responding appropriately to raised concerns. This initiative fosters a positive safety culture within the organisation. The training program is in the early stages of delivery in HHSs, Queensland Ambulance Service and the Department of Health.

Utilising technology

Queensland Health is at the cutting edge of actively exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence techniques to detect when a patient's condition starts to deteriorate, prompting quicker and timelier treatment, resulting in better outcomes for patients. Queensland Health has partnered with the University of Queensland to use state-of-the-art Artificial Intelligence methods to develop an early warning solution enabling Queensland Health to accurately identify patients at-risk of either deterioration, or, contracting specific conditions, such as sepsis. This system will provide Queensland with a global benchmark in predictive patient care.

Strengthening Clinical Governance

Existing and new education is being revised and developed to provide comprehensive, easily accessible, contemporary patient safety and quality training and education required for Hospital and Health Boards; HHS Executive; clinical governance staff; and clinicians.

Queensland Health has developed the first Hospital and Health Board simulation education program nationally. The program will equip board members with the necessary skills to effectively contribute to their health service's direction, emphasising safety and quality. It will leverage current experience and skills of board directors, providing opportunities to gain further insights, applying these to quality and safety. Queensland Health has partnered with the Australian Institute of Clinical Governance to deliver this training with a pilot to occur at the end of July 2024 and subsequent statewide rollout to follow.

A draft Queensland Health Clinical Governance Framework is out for consultation. This Framework is aligned with the National Model Clinical Governance Framework and articulates the roles and responsibilities across Queensland Health to ensure optimal clinical outcomes. With each Hospital and Health Service and Queensland Ambulance Service having their own Clinical Governance Frameworks, this framework primarily includes programs delivered by the Department of Health.

Following an independent review of Queensland's Quality Assurance Committees, an action plan is being progressed to enhance their functioning to achieve learnings from clinical case reviews and statistical analyses, informing clinical practice improvements.

Strengthening Informed Consent

Queensland Health has the most comprehensive set of consent forms and patient information sheets, compared to all other jurisdictions, but we know informed consent is more than the provision of paperwork.

The Department is working with clinicians and consumers in how best to strengthen the current informed consent processes to ensure patients are appropriately informed and actively engaged in their own health care decision-making through:

- introduction of a policy in the coming months to strengthen and standardise who can undertake informed consent; and
- development of a digital informed consent solution to enable shared decision-making between clinicians and patients, allowing the patient to be better informed before consenting to the procedure. A proof-of-concept solution with selected surgical procedural informed consent forms is anticipated to be piloted in early 2025 in nominated integrated electronic medical record sites. The subsequent evaluation of the pilot will enable any needed changes to be made, prior to a further phased rollout for other procedural informed consent forms.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 17

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 1 of the SDS, can the Minister outline efforts being undertaken to boost maternity care services?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring all women in Queensland have access to high-quality, reliable maternity services, no matter where they live. We have heard clearly that the women of Queensland want birthing choice and continuity of maternity care, close to home.

The recommencement of birthing services in Weipa after 25 years is evidence of the work this Government has done to boost maternity care services. The lesson from Weipa is that when we have the right facilities, the right leadership, and the right models of care, we can attract specialists to our most remote locations.

We've changed the law to introduce midwife-to-patient ratios at maternity facilities and in an Australian first, we are counting newborn babies as separate patients to their parent – giving Queensland the best patient to midwife ratio in the country. The ratios will be implemented in a staged commencing in 2024, a one midwife to six patient ratio will commence in public maternity wards that have high-level services delivering complex care (CSCF Level 5-6s). Further scoping is underway in collaboration with midwives, unions, and Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) to continue rolling out the ratios in CSCF level 3 and 4 hospitals.

Boosting the Workforce

Since 2015, the Miles Labor Government has boosted the number of:

- *midwives* by 833.38 FTE an increase of 59 percent (1,415.21 FTE midwives in March 2015 to 2,248.59 FTE in June 2024)
- *Obstetrics and Gynaecology Medical staff specialists* by 46.64 FTE an increase of 62.67 per cent (72.42 FTE in March 2015 to 121.06 FTE in June 2024) and
- *Medical Registrars training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology rotations* by 47.55 FTE an increase of 40.04 per cent (118.77 FTE in March 2015 to 166.32 FTE in June 2024).

In an Australian first, Queensland Health established a Chief Midwife Officer position to provide midwifery leadership, lead maternity reforms across Queensland, strengthen maternity services across the state - especially those in rural and regional communities - and build a skilled and sustainable midwifery workforce pipeline.

A full maternity service depends on the availability of highly qualified maternity staff, including those trained in obstetrics and anaesthetics. However, it's no secret, the system is facing global workforce challenges.

Our Government is pulling every lever to attract staff, especially to our regions including offering attractive incentives, these specialist doctors and nurses.

Queensland Health's workforce attraction incentive scheme aims to incentivise health workers to move to Queensland for overseas and interstate, and to take up jobs in rural and remote Queensland. To date it has attracted 15 medical staff in obstetrics and gynaecology and 31 midwives.

In the 2023-34 budget, \$42 million was allocated for regional, rural, and remote maternity services. This has delivered additional staff to support and expand midwife-led care and midwife-supported models of care as well as an additional 4.5 FTE obstetricians across rural and remote HHSs.

It is also supporting Queensland to grow our own people, with a range of initiatives to boost the skills of the existing workforce and encourage new practitioners into the maternity workforce.

Queensland Health is investing \$800,000 a year to deliver an incentive program for GPs to undertake advanced obstetrics to build the specialist GP obstetricians workforce in regional and rural Queensland. Twelve candidates started training in February 2024. And an additional \$1.1 million each year is supporting training placements for doctors to complete an advanced diploma in obstetrics, with 12 candidates being supported in 2024.

We have delivered maternity outreach education for 38 multidisciplinary practitioners improving the skills and capacity of the maternity workforce in regional and rural areas. As well as a best-practice woman-centred care education program expansion to promote multidisciplinary collaboration to support authentic woman-centred care within a maternity service.

A further investment of \$4.4 million under the Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032 will provide skill maintenance and upskilling for regional and rural maternity staff, including in neonatal stabilisation workshops, birthing with consent workshops and midwifery rotations.

We have also introduced a cost-of-living payment for final year nursing and midwifery students to complete their placement in the regions, and we are reviewing Queensland Health's locum policies to maximise options for contracted locum medical officers to support the regional maternity workforce.

Boosting Models of Care

We have heard clearly that the women of Queensland want birthing choice and continuity of maternity care which is why we have invested \$16 million to expand models of care like Midwifery Group Practice and \$1.2 million to establish Queensland's first publicly funded homebirth service.

Midwifery Group Practice provides continuity of maternity care by a known midwife throughout pregnancy, labour and birth, and the early weeks following birth. It is proven to provide a variety of benefits to the baby, parent and workforce. Queensland is leading the way as the highest percentage of all states and territories to provide Midwifery Group Practice; 24.2% compared to 14% nationally in 2023.

A publicly funded home birth exemplar site has been established at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. The service commenced on 1 July 2024 and is offered to women who meet agreed clinical criteria and live within a safe travel distance to the hospital.

We have invested in First Nations midwifery models of care across HHSs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Organisations through the Growing Deadly Families Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Maternity Services Strategy 2019-2025. In 2024-25, the Growing Deadly Families program received a funding boost of \$6.4 million, ongoing to expand across other Health and Hospital Services.

And we are conducting a review of maternity models of care targeted at regional, rural and remote locations. This includes consultation with local mothers to ensure the models of care provided is best able to meet the needs and expectations of the local communities. Completion of the maternity models of care review of Torres and Cape HHS has occurred, with Townsville nearing completion and North West HHS and Central Queensland HHS underway.

Boosting Facilities

Through the \$10 billion Capacity Expansion Program, Queensland Health is also undertaking a range of capital investments to boost the capacity of public maternity services to meet growing demand and better meet the needs and expectations of Queensland women at locations including Bundaberg, Toowoomba, Mackay, Coomera and Redcliffe Hospitals.

Further, the \$1 billion Building Rural and Remote Health Program replaces ageing rural and remote health facilities with modern facilities including maternity and birthing services. We've announced \$200 million to deliver expanded outpatient services, including maternity and midwifery, CT scanning, mental health, and palliative care. The program will deliver new maternity and birthing suites at Biloela and Chinchilla hospital with consultation on the build scheduled to commence in late 2024.

We have boosted funding to the Flying Obstetrics and Gynaecology Service (FOGS) that provides specialist care to women in Roma and 13 central western Queensland towns. The service provides gynaecology clinics and elective procedures to women living in rural communities, bringing maternity care close to home.

We have delivered new equipment at the state's five Maternal Fetal Medicine services at Metro North, Metro South, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Townsville HHSs to improve access to this specialist service for women from all over Queensland.

We have invested \$10 million annually to expand services in the Far North when the Cairns Private Hospital ceased maternity services, with an additional \$1 million for a

capital expansion to create a new maternity assessment centre, providing increased capacity within the existing birthing suites.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 18

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 1 of the SDS, can the Minister outline how Queensland Health is managing record demand for elective surgeries and ensuring Queenslanders can access the care they need it?

ANSWER

Queensland is leading the nation when it comes to elective surgery delivery, despite growing demand.

In the March 2024 financial year to date, elective surgery capacity increased by 6.8 per cent or an additional 7,000 surgeries, when compared to the same period in the prior year. During the same period a further 15,000 surgeries were delivered through partnerships such as Surgery Connect.

At the same time, the proportion of elective surgery patients treated in time increased by 3.0 percentage points, meaning that almost 8,900 more patients were treated within the clinically recommended timeframe than the same period in the previous year.

As at 1 April 2024, there were 4,861 ready for surgery patients waiting longer than clinically recommended, this is a 38 per cent or 2,984 reduction to the number of long waits at the same point last year.

The Miles Government is committed to ensuring Queenslanders can access worldclass health care no matter where they live, and part of that commitment is improving access to planned care.

As part of the 2024-25 Budget, we are investing \$148.6 million to increase capacity to further reduce long waits for outpatients, elective surgery and gastroenterology services under the *Putting Patients First* plan.

In addition, I recently announced that we would be investing \$100 million the Surgery Connect program, which sees public patients treated in private hospitals where it is clinically safe to do so.

This builds on our commitment in 2023-24 which saw approximately 24,000 Queenslanders get their surgery faster and closer to home.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 19

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 21 of the SDS, can the Minister outline efforts being undertaken to ensure the financial stability of Queensland's Hospital and Health Services?

ANSWER

The 2024-25 Queensland budget provides Hospital and Health Services (HHSs) with a record investment of \$22.107 billion in operating funding, an 11.4 per cent increase on last year's operating budget.

This growth in funding will mean that our HHSs can continue to meet the record demand they are seeing and employ the health workforce our growing state needs.

HHS Service Agreements for 2024-25 have been negotiated to provide funding uplift to support performance improvement in patient flow, planned care and emergency department access, as well as funding for the commissioning of capacity expansion initiatives to increase health system capacity into the future.

Where possible the Department continues to allocate funding recurrently, providing HHSs with ongoing stability to support sustainable recruitment processes and health service delivery.

I'm pleased to advise that in the 2024-25 Budget Service Delivery Statement for Queensland Health, 15 of the 16 HHSs were forecasting balanced end of financial year positions, with Children's Health Queensland HHS forecasting a \$7.1 million surplus.

In addition, only three HHSs are currently on Intense Performance Support, with three having been de-escalated in the 2023-24 financial year, and a further four HHSs being de-escalated from Performance Support to Performing.

Pre-hearing Question on Notice

No. 20

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to page 32 of the SDS, can the Minister please outline how the Miles Government is supporting the performance of the Queensland Ambulance Service, and how it compares to other jurisdictions?

ANSWER

The Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) is the busiest, biggest, and fastest ambulance service in the country, and it is the only mainland service that is free – something that will never change under the Miles Government.

The independent Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services, released earlier this year, shows that across almost every measure, QAS outperformed comparable jurisdictions. This amazing performance is thanks to the hard work of our frontline paramedics and ambulance officers.

Since 2015, we have employed more than 1,500 additional frontline ambulance officers. As a result of our investments, we have been able to ensure that more than 90 per cent of 000 calls are answered within 10 seconds, and 90 per cent of the most critical incidents are attended in approximately 17 minutes.

This impressive performance comes in the face of record demand. In the quarter ending March 2024, the QAS received 22,263 more calls and transported 9,075 more patients to hospital compared to the same time in the previous year. In addition, the QAS saw their busiest day ever for Triple Zero calls – more than 4,000 in a single day.

The Miles Government continues to support the QAS by investing in the workforce and resources they need. The 2024-25 Budget includes an investment in 268 additional staff for the QAS, as well as 155 new and replacement vehicles and the ongoing rollout of power assisted stretchers.

While Patient Off-Stretcher Time (POST), is not a performance measure for the QAS, it is relevant to consider how Queensland compares to other states and territories, particularly in light of QAS' excellent performance when compared to interstate services.

There is no nationally consistent approach to measuring ambulance ramping. However, when Queensland Health data is applied to the same metrics and attributes as the ones used in jurisdictions, Queensland is outperforming comparable states by up to 16.6 percentage points:

- 16.6 percentage points above South Australia
- 5.7 percentage points above Tasmania
- 3.6 percentage points above Victoria

Pre-hearing Questions on Notice

Crossbench Member Questions

Dr Amy McMahon MP, Member for South Brisbane

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With reference to the Better Care Together plan announced in 2022 after the Mental Health Select Committee, please provide a list of mental health measures, services or initiatives, along with the corresponding funding, that the government has delivered since the conclusion of the inquiry. Please break this down by:

- (a) Pre-existing measures.
- (b) New measures.
- (c) Existing measures that have been expanded.

ANSWER

It's incredibly important that Queenslanders impacted by mental health challenges, substance misuse, and suicide receive compassionate support at the right time.

As part of the 2022-23 State Budget, our Government committed \$1.645 billion in new funding over the five years to 2027 under our *Better Care Together – a plan for Queensland's state-funded mental health, alcohol and other drug services*.

In January 2023, the Miles Labor Government introduced a new mental health levy through an amendment to the *Payroll Tax Act 1971* delivering the largest-ever investment into mental health, alcohol and other drug and services in Queensland's history.

The levy provides a sustainable funding stream to enhance existing and future services, to deliver more beds and more clinicians to provide community treatment and support services close to home.

Since the Mental Health Select Committee Inquiry into improving mental health outcomes for Queenslanders, the Miles Government has invested \$470 million and employed an additional 657 mental health and alcohol and other drug staff across Queensland to deliver new and expanded services.

Full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing is used in reporting on mental health, alcohol and other drug services and provides a standardised way of measuring and comparing staffing levels, helping to ensure consistency in reporting and analysis. In 2021/22, there were a total of 8,196 FTE.

Recurrent expenditure is used in mental health, alcohol and other drug reporting and provides a standardised way of measuring the ongoing costs that are essential to the

continued provision of high quality, accessible and sustainable mental health, alcohol and other drug services. In 2021/22, total reported recurrent expenditure was \$1.540 billion.

I am pleased to highlight that in 2022-23, \$119.9 million was allocated to deliver initiatives including:

- two new Head to Health Kids services, new child and youth acute response teams, and additional specialist forensic child and youth mental health services for young people in contact with the youth justice system.
- eight new state-wide public specialist inpatient, mother baby beds at 'Catherine's House'.
- new and expanded QAS Mental Health Co-responder teams that pair experienced mental health clinicians with paramedics to resolve mental health crises in the community.
- boost state-wide support for eating disorders at eating disorder specialist services, including boost to Queensland Eating Disorders Service (QuEDS) for state-wide service development and coordination, workforce education and training across Queensland).
- boost eight existing Crisis Support Spaces that provide peer and clinical support to people in mental health crisis as an alternative or adjunct to emergency department care.
- Commenced establishment of four new Crisis Support Spaces in Bundaberg, Redlands, Logan and Sunshine Coast University Hospitals.
- YouTurn to deliver postvention support to all people in Queensland who are bereaved or impacted by suicide).

In 2023-24, \$301.4 million was allocated to deliver initiatives including:

- Twelve new acute response teams across eight hospital and health services (HHSs) to provide timely and assertive treatment and care for children and adolescents.
- The Mental Health 'Hospital in the Home' model has new sites on the Gold Coast and West Moreton, providing an alternative to admission.
- Six new Crisis Support spaces to provide peer and clinical support to people in crisis in Bundaberg, Maryborough, Logan, Redlands, Sunshine Coast and Nambour.
- A new eating disorder specialist service in Metro South to provide treatment to people with an eating disorder.
- In partnership with the Commonwealth Government, ten new aftercare support service teams to provide assertive psychosocial aftercare for people following a suicide attempt or crisis.
- Expanded the Zero Suicide in Healthcare initiative to people at risk of suicide.
- Commenced the Least Restrictive Way project to improve the safety, quality, and consumer experiences by reducing the use of restrictive practices.
- Commenced three new Head to Health services co-funded with the Commonwealth Government - services in Cairns, Sunshine Coast, and Gladstone by the end 2024.
- New models to reduce and respond to Alcohol and Other Drugs related harms, including the introduction of drug checking services (pill testing).

- An additional 72 beds were operationalised, 50 beds of a new 64 bed adult acute unit for Ipswich Hospital and a 22 bed unit at Hervey Bay

In 2023-24, an additional \$36 million capital investment supported the establishment of two new crisis support spaces in Metro South and Mackay, a new 6 bed and 6 chair crisis stabilisation unit with at The Prince Charles Hospital, and in meeting escalation costs for building new mental health units in Cairns, the Fraser Coast and Ipswich.

Transparency around the Levy is not only appropriate but meets the community's expectation. As such, I have committed to reporting annually how this money is being spent and what is being delivered.

Queensland Health and the Queensland Mental Health Commission work collaboratively with key non-government leaders and those with lived experience to develop and publish an Annual Progress update.

This year's Annual Progress update will be publicly available early October and will include 2022-23 expenditure as well as newly allocated expenditure for the current financial year.

The 2022–2023 Annual Progress update can be found here: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/system-governance/strategic-direction/plans/better-care-together>

Pre-hearing Questions on Notice

Crossbench Member Questions

Ms Sandy Bolton MP, Member for Noosa

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

With the SDS on page 8 referencing sub- and non-acute care including palliative care, what provision has been made to ensure increases that will emanate from the review into funding models for Queensland hospices will be available for 2024-25 and ongoing?

ANSWER

Queensland has a proud history of delivering hospice services. These services are highly valued and play an important role in delivering palliative care services within the community, and supporting people to receive care, and die, at home.

Those working in palliative care organisations dedicate their lives to ensuring people are comfortable and dignified in those final days. Demand for palliative care services is increasing, at the same time that operating costs also continue to rise.

The Department of Health, in consultation with relevant Queensland Health Hospital and Health Services, is reviewing funding arrangements for non-government organisations contracted by the Department to provide community-based palliative care services in South East Queensland. The aim of the review is to help these organisations to meet the increasing costs of delivering services and also respond to the increasing demand for these services within the community.

On 23 May 2024, I announced that as a result of the first stage of the review, additional funding of \$4.1 million per year would be allocated across eight non-government organisations. Beneficiaries include Katie Rose Cottage Hospice, Hummingbird House, Karuna Hospital Services, Little Haven Cooloola, Hopewell House, Cittamani Hospice Service, St Vincent's Private, and Toowoomba Hospice.

This increase of \$4.1 million in funding is currently being added to the non-government organisations' service agreements. The extra funding starts in 2024-25 and continues each year for the remainder of the service agreement terms.

The second phase of the review is expected to be completed in 2024-25, with outcomes to be implemented from 2025-26. This phase will focus on developing a long-term, sustainable funding model that allows these services to plan for the future and continue delivering care in their communities.

The additional funding builds upon the strong foundation laid by the Miles Government's *Palliative and End-of-Life Care Strategy* and Queensland Health Specialist Palliative Care Workforce Plan, both released in October 2022.

Pre-hearing Questions on Notice

Crossbench Member Questions

Mr Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN (HON S FENTIMAN)—

QUESTION

In relation to the provision of Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) to treat opioid dependency in Queensland:

Of the \$51 million over 5 years allocated to Hospital and Health Services in 2022-23 to boost community alcohol and other drug treatment, how much has been spent to date on opioid dependence treatment in the community, versus inside prisons?

How many patients who were receiving OST in prison were released into the community in each of the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years?

How many patients are currently on the waitlist for Metro North Mental Health's Opioid Substitution Therapy service?

In the past year, what options have been identified and steps taken to improve access to OST?

ANSWER

More than \$23 million over five years is allocated for specific opioid dependence treatment in public, private and non-government services.

In 2023-24, Queensland Health commenced collecting quarterly data relating to the number of patients receiving Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST) in prison. As of 31 March 2024, 1,172 patients in prisons in Queensland were receiving OST.

Queensland Health does not currently collect data, regarding the number of patients receiving OST in prison that are released into the community.

Metro North Mental Health Service Alcohol and Drug Service operates three different opioid dependence treatment units in Brisbane City, Chermside and a shared service across Redcliffe and Caboolture. All three have different models to accommodate the different populations and demand types safely and efficiently.

New Opioid Dependence Treatment (ODT) clients are routinely allocated a next week appointment at their nearest Metro North Mental Health Alcohol and Drug Service clinic.

The Biala Community Health Service in Brisbane City do not manage a waitlist for new ODT clients.

The Chermside site is currently booked for new registration appointments 10 business days in advance.

The Redcliffe and Caboolture service is split between the Redcliffe and Caboolture Community Health Centers, these services are heavily booked with newly released prisoners from the Woodford Correctional Centre. Appointments are booked up to four weeks in advance. Currently there are:

- Eight people on ODT waitlist. Three of those have booked appointments for July, three are uncontactable and two are waiting to be booked an appointment or be engaged via a cancellation.
- Seven people released from prison are booked for transfer appointments to continue their treatment in the community.
- Thirteen people are currently prescribed ODT by other prescribers and are awaiting transfer to the Redcliffe and Caboolture service.

In instances where consumers who have left prison and are transferred to the community for ODT, are initially uncontactable, their referral is kept open for a period of 6-8 weeks, there are a minimum of three attempts to contact them one week apart. If the person remains uncontactable Metro North will attempt to contact the consumer through a next of kin or family member.

Last year an additional \$9.8 million was allocated to expand primary health care services for people in prison including initiatives to reduce OST waitlists for people in prison and to integrate OST services with other primary health care services to ensure service sustainability.

Work has also commenced with Hospital and Health Services to reduce some of the administrative barriers for people in prison and in the wider community accessing OST, including employing pharmacists to assist HHS's where appropriate and manage changes to scripting requirements as a result of the impact of the Commonwealth PBS reform on Opioid Dependence Treatment.

State-wide consultation to improve ODT and harm reduction services in Queensland is underway. Outcomes from the consultation will inform redesign of the service system to better meet the needs of patients and support services to deliver safe, and responsive care.

Questions on notice and responses – *Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation*

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 1

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister provide a breakdown of funding expended to date of the ‘World-Class Protected Area Management’ announced in the 2023-24 Budget Measures with detail of the projects and work carried out to date.

ANSWER:

In 2023-24, the Queensland Government committed an additional \$38.6 million over five years to continue the delivery of world-class management of protected areas and improve the management of Queensland’s five World Heritage Areas. This funding included \$2.078 million in 2023-24 increasing to \$8.767 million in 2026-27 with an ongoing allocation of \$11.9 million.

It is important to note that this is in addition to existing budget allocations that support protected area management activities.

In 2023-24, the Queensland Government has expended \$1.42 million of the World Class Protected Area Management funds on a range of activities.

This includes expenditure of \$0.07 million contributing to delivery of park management on properties recently acquired including the new The Lakes National Park. The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (the department) delivers park management activities across Queensland that include on-country Indigenous employment activities and partnerships with traditional owners with funding for park management activities sourced from multiple budget allocations. Funds from all sources are utilised to ensure effective on ground management with dedicated rangers and program delivery across the estate (fire, pest, natural resource management and visitor engagement).

Expenditure of \$0.14 million has supported development of a methodology for applying a values-based management approach to marine parks. An initial trial of the methodology has commenced on Great Sandy Marine Park through the selection and assessment of natural key values.

\$1.21 million has been expended on enhanced World Heritage Area activities. This has included the employment of Cairns-based staff as well as engagement with Traditional Owners, either through the Cape York Land Council or directly with the department, to support free, prior and informed consent decisions for the development of the Tentative Listing for Cape York Peninsula. This funding also supported the appointment of a Cape York World Heritage Taskforce Chair and a leading World Heritage expert to assist with the engagement, including community engagement sessions, and the development of the Tentative List submission. The submission was developed with free, prior and informed consent of Traditional Owners and the approval of relevant landholding entities. The Cultural Landscapes of Cape York Peninsula was added to Australia's UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List on 18 June 2024, delivering on a long-term commitment.

The funding has also enabled the commencement of a multi-year project to update existing signage and interpretation on the four terrestrial World Heritage Areas. This includes appropriate First Nations cultural content to improve the presentation of the properties, meet visitor expectations and increase awareness of the significance of World Heritage Areas. The first year of this project has included commencing sign plans and designs and engagement with stakeholders and First Nations groups.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 2

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister provide a breakdown of funding expended to date, by financial year and program, of the 2022-23 announced a) 'Saving Queensland's Koalas' and b) Saving Queensland's Threatened Species funds?

ANSWER:

(a)

The Queensland Government announced new funding in the 2022-23 State Budget of \$24.6 million over four years commencing in 2022-23 and a commitment of \$1 million per annum ongoing to provide for new and scaled-up programs to protect koalas across South East Queensland.

\$21.37 million has been contractually committed or expended as at the end of 2023-24. \$5.13 million was expended in 2022-23 and \$7.24 million in 2023-24. As at 30 June 2024, a further \$9 million has been contractually committed towards Koala habitat restoration, threat mitigation and other programs, and profiled to reflect milestones agreed with delivery partners. The remaining amount will further support on-ground restoration and threat abatement activities.

Key initiatives supported by this funding over the past two years include:

- A significant expansion of koala habitat restoration programs on both private and State-owned land to support achievement of the key target in the *South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2020–2025* (the Strategy) to commence rehabilitation to restore 10,000 hectares of koala habitat. This includes funding commitments of \$5 million to extend the existing Koala Habitat Restoration Partnerships Program in collaboration with the Queensland Trust for Nature and a further \$3.5 million to implement the Restore and Reconnect South East Queensland Koala Habitat Phase 1 project with Healthy Land and Water.
- Targeted investment in threat reduction activities to reduce mortality and support increases in koala populations; including \$4.2 million to deliver South East Queensland Koala Threat Management Initiatives Phase 1 in partnership with Healthy Land and Water and local governments.
- Applied research grants totalling more than \$1.2 million to improve knowledge gaps and develop innovative solutions to support on-ground conservation programs. This also included investment to support the development and registration of vaccines to tackle chlamydial disease in koalas.

- Commitment to invest more than \$500,000 to implement a First Nations Koala Action Plan in partnership with First Nations peoples and Traditional Owners.
- Expansion of awareness and education programs to spur community-based action to support conservation efforts. This included investment of \$1.1 million to extend collaborative arrangements with Griffith University to co-design and implement community awareness and threat mitigation initiatives in partnership with local governments.
- An investment of \$3 million to increase the capacity of the South East Queensland Wildlife Hospital Network to rescue, rehabilitate and release sick, injured and orphaned koalas.
- Targeted investment in the development and refinement of tools to assist in mapping and assessing the condition of koala habitat.
- Funding for dedicated positions within the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (the department) to manage the expanded portfolio of conservation initiatives.

The Queensland Government is providing increased funding of \$31.3 million over four years commencing in 2024-25 and \$8.4 million per annum ongoing for the Saving Queensland's Koalas initiative. This will extend and expand critical actions identified in the Strategy in partnership with other government and non-government organisations to expand community engagement, undertake targeted threat abatement, and scale up restoration activities.

(b)

The Queensland Government announced new funding in the 2022-23 State Budget of \$14.7 million over four years commencing in 2022-2023 and a commitment of \$1 million per annum ongoing to enhance Queensland's protection and recovery of threatened species by implementing the *Threatened Species Program 2020-2040*.

The focus of the Threatened Species Program is on delivering coordinated research and on-ground actions to identify, protect and recover threatened species and mitigate threats.

A total of \$10.42 million has been expended to date, with \$4.48 million expended in 2022-2023 and \$5.94 million in 2023-24. As at 30 June 2024 over \$1.1 million has been contractually committed towards grants programs, with funding profiled to reflect agreed milestones. The remaining amount is allocated to specific programs.

Key initiatives and actions supported by this funding include:

- The development in partnership with CSIRO of a Threatened Species Prioritisation Framework and Decision Support Tool, to guide recovery actions.
- The completion of 532 (97.3 per cent) conservation status assessments for Queensland endemic threatened species misaligned with the Commonwealth listing.
- Allocation of approximately \$2 million over two rounds of Threatened Species Research Grants, with over \$1.3 million expended to date. The grants support 20 partnerships undertaking priority research to fill critical knowledge gaps for threatened species.
- Continuing to grow capacity and partnerships to protect and recover threatened species and mitigate threats through allocation of over \$600,000 to targeted grants for threatened species recovery actions. Of this figure, \$244,000 has been expended.

- Developing the Queensland Threatened Plant Network to promote threatened plant recovery across the State and support community-based member groups to deliver critical recovery actions.
- Enhancing recovery planning and implementation of actions through development and operationalisation of Queensland threatened species recovery teams.
- Expanding existing partnership arrangements with Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger and First Nations groups, including provision of financial support to deliver threatened species recovery projects on Country.
- Funding for dedicated positions within the department to manage the legislation, policy and investment programs that support native wildlife conservation and management.

The Queensland Government is providing increased funding of \$23.5 million over four years commencing in 2024-25 and \$6.3 million per annum ongoing for the Saving Queensland's Threatened Species Program. This will extend and expand critical actions under the *Threatened Species Program 2020-2040*.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 3

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

How many Queensland homes currently have access to a Food Organic Garden Organic (FOGO) kerbside collection service?

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation collects waste and recycling data annually and reports on this through the Recycling and Waste in Queensland Report.

In 2021-22, 12 Queensland councils provided 340,100 households with a kerbside organic waste collection service through which 111,000 tonnes of garden and food organic waste was collected.

In 2022-23, 12 Queensland councils provided kerbside organic waste collection services to 413,509 households, an increase of 21.6 per cent from the previous year. Through the provision of this service, 113,933 tonnes of garden and food organic waste was collected, an increase of 2.6 per cent from 2021-22.

The provision of household waste collection services in Queensland is a local government responsibility. Each council determines the service structure, which will influence the number of households that have access to a food organics and garden organics (FOGO) collection service. These council decisions include whether FOGO is collected, or whether the service collects garden organic (GO) materials only; whether the service is delivered across the council area or in select locations or suburbs; and whether the service is mandatory or whether residents choose to opt-in to the service.

The data available to and reported by the department does not separate the volume of collected waste into amounts for GO and FOGO.

Data collection is underway for the 2023-24 Recycling and Waste in Queensland Report, which is anticipated to be published by the end of 2024.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 4

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Has the Department established an aquaculture working group, and if so, who are the members and how many times have they met?

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) established an aquaculture working group in August 2023.

The objective of the working group is to provide for regular engagement between DESI, other relevant State agencies, universities and the aquaculture industry to work through day-to-day operational and regulatory matters.

The working group members include representatives from the Australian Prawn Farmers Association, Australian Barramundi Farmers Association, licensed prawn and finfish operators, consultants specialising in aquaculture, Griffith University, DESI, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Office of the Coordinator-General.

Since August 2023, the working group has met on six occasions including a one-day in-person workshop in November 2023.

Meetings occur every two months with the next meeting scheduled for 22 August 2024.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 5

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister confirm if the Waste strategy review has been completed and if so, when the final report will be published?

ANSWER:

The Waste Strategy Review (the Review) has been completed. Importantly, it incorporates the most recent data available for the 2022-23 financial year. This data shows that since introduction of the Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy (the Strategy), total waste generated in Queensland has decreased by 15 per cent despite a population increase of 8.5 per cent in the same period. This included a 78 per cent reduction (975,000 tonnes) in waste received from interstate sources.

The Review found that the core elements of the Strategy continue to underpin the vision of Queensland becoming a zero-waste society by 2050. Queensland is currently on track to achieve five out of nine 2025 milestone targets.

The published report is available on the Queensland Government website at:
https://www.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0023/506327/waste-strategy-review-report.pdf.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 6

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Can the Minister explain the additional funding expended on the Newstead House works from \$5.5 million announced in 2021 to \$6.65 million in final costs as announced on 6 July 2024?

ANSWER:

The total funding allocation for the upgrade of Newstead House, associated management of the collection, and trialling a new management model was \$6.65 million. This included funding of \$5.5 million allocated as part of the 2021-22 State Budget to complete urgent conservation works for State heritage listed Newstead House.

In addition to the budget allocation referenced above, the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation contributed funds of \$1.157 million to the project and associated activities since 2019-20.

Funds were provided to support the Board of Trustees of Newstead House with the necessary removal and storage of its large museum collection and to trial a new management arrangement with City Parklands Services Pty Ltd to assist with administration of the place after completion of works.

Given complexities associated with heritage buildings of the age of the House (176 years old) and Substation (94 years old), additional funding also supported necessary detailed investigations into the condition and structural integrity of building components; and specialist advice from heritage architects, engineers, and quantity surveyors. This was vital not only to deliver the conservation objectives of the program but also ensure the building was suitable to reopen for public access.

I am pleased to inform the Committee that all works have been completed and I was pleased to join with The Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM; Member for McConnel and passionate advocate for the refurbishment, the Honourable Grace Grace MP; and Chair of the Board of Trustees, Ms Claire Moore to officially re-open Newstead House on 6 July.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 7

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide the attrition rate for staff of the department, reported separately by service area for say the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years (reported separately)?

ANSWER:

Due to varying definitions of staff attrition rate and movement codes, the information below provides total permanent separations by percentage for each financial year for the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation. This includes separations for a range of reasons including, but not limited to, appointment to another Queensland public sector agency, resignation, ill health, early retirement, and dismissal.

Attrition rates for 2022-23 reported by service area were previously provided in response to Question on Notice No. 1513-2023.

Attrition rates by service area for the 2023-24 financial year were:

Corporate Governance Services - 10.81 per cent;

Environmental Programs and Regulation Services - 11.04 per cent;

Heritage Protection Services - 3.57 per cent;

Parks, Wildlife and Conservation Services - 9.28 per cent;

Science Services - 8.77 per cent.

Innovation joined the department in December 2023 as a part of the Machinery of Government changes. The attrition rate for Advancing Queensland through Innovation for the 2023-24 financial year was 20 per cent. I would note the Innovation branch of the department has a very small number of employees, and accordingly any separation rate is calculated from a low base number.

Multicultural Affairs Queensland joined the department in May 2023 as part of Machinery of Government changes and was transferred from the department in December 2023 due to further Machinery of Government changes. There were no permanent separations while they were a part of the department.

A range of factors underlie separation rates, noting that rates across the agency are broadly in line with those for equivalent occupations across governments. These trends take place against the background of a tight labour market, which often correlates to increased public sector separation rates. The department also has staff with skills that are in high demand in the economy, such as environmental science, data science and research, regulation, and digital skills.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 8

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

With reference to Question on Notice No. 760, asked on 16 August 2022, can the Minister provide an update on funding expended under the Advance Queensland banner by the Innovation Department, with a full breakdown of the funding expended to date, including the departments administering the funding?

ANSWER:

From July 2015 to July 2024, the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) and its predecessor agencies with responsibility for innovation have expended \$414 million of Advance Queensland funding to deliver a range of programs, activities and initiatives.

The Advance Queensland – Innovation for a Future Economy: 2022–2032 Roadmap (the Roadmap) was launched in July 2022, and sets out the direction, key priority outcomes and initiatives for the next phase in Queensland’s innovation journey. The Roadmap is a whole-of-government plan that reflects the innovation efforts and investments by all Queensland Government agencies. DESI’s programs are investing in innovation driven enterprises, talent, infrastructure, translation of research and engaging the community to address some of the biggest challenges faced locally and globally.

A full list of activities delivered by Queensland Government agencies, including DESI, since the Roadmap was released in July 2022 up until 31 December 2023, is available at: <https://advance.qld.gov.au/resources/innovation-for-a-future-economy-2022-2032-roadmap-full-list-of-achievements-for-20232024>.

Advance Queensland continues to invest in economic growth through programs such as the Ignite Ideas suite of programs. In 2023-24, the Queensland Government expended \$4.6 million on Ignite Ideas to support innovative Queensland businesses to bring new products and services to market and develop the skills required to grow in Queensland.

Advance Queensland is also backing collaborations between our world class researchers and industry to accelerate the translation of research and development. In 2023-24 nearly \$5.6 million was expended on the flagship Industry Research Fellowships program on fellowships to leading Queensland researchers.

Support for our female founders is helping them to grow their ideas and their businesses. In 2023-24, almost \$1 million was expended on the Backing Female Founders initiative, including support for the Accelerating Female Founders program and Female Founders Co-Investment Fund.

Advance Queensland is driving collaboration as well as commercialisation, adoption and diffusion of new knowledge, new skills and new technologies through our innovation hubs and precincts.

The Precinct in Fortitude Valley is Queensland's premier startup venue and in 2023-24 DESI expended \$4.8 million towards The Precinct to deliver programs and facilities that support startups to be part of the State's flourishing innovation ecosystem.

Queensland's emerging technology hubs are helping startups and small businesses generate new jobs and business opportunities in the new economy, while the Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places Fund (QIPPF) is helping collaboration and knowledge flow that will create new businesses, jobs and export opportunities. In 2023-24, the department expended \$2 million in support of the Agtech and Logistics, Artificial Intelligence, and Extended Reality Hubs, and \$2.7 million on delivering programs under the QIPPF.

Advance Queensland is committed to accelerating regional economic growth through innovation. The Advance Queensland Regional Futures Initiative expended \$2.7 million across a range of programs that are supporting our regional innovation leaders to collaborate and deliver projects, programs and activities that help local innovation driven businesses to start, grow and stay in regional Queensland.

The Roadmap is not just about a single portfolio. Significant investments are administered by a range of Queensland Government agencies that deliver priority outcomes in the Roadmap and support innovation as a driver of economic growth and jobs for Queensland's future.

The Queensland Government is committed to enhancing the venture capital industry in the State and stimulating new investment into innovative businesses. The \$130 million Queensland Venture Capital Development Fund, managed by the Queensland Investment Corporation, is helping support local investment and stimulating new investment into Queensland. The fund has locked in deals with major venture capital firms who to date have already invested more than \$8 million across seven local startups.

The Queensland Health Clinical Research Fellowships are supporting research into innovation products and services for translation into improved patient care and commercialisation opportunities. In September 2023, over \$2.7 million was awarded to 18 clinicians under the program.

In October 2023, the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training announced that work had commenced on the Big Build \$40 million Robotics and Advanced Manufacturing Centre at Eagle Farm TAFE under the Equipping TAFE for our Future program. The facility will provide improved specialised training in robotics, advanced manufacturing, renewable technologies and telecommunications.

Other key initiatives delivered across government include:

- the Department of Tourism and Sport's ActiveKIT (knowledge, information, technology) program to support innovative solutions within the active industry with \$7.5 million allocated to date;
- \$3.4 million allocated under the Communities Innovation Fund to support innovative and community-led responses to social isolation and loneliness across Queensland;
- \$1.125 billion commitment by Queensland Health to the Queensland Cancer Centre at the Herston Health Precinct, incorporating cutting-edge technology and cancer treatment methods;
- \$4 million allocated by the Department of Tourism and Sport to support tourism business capability, including future-focused Tourism Technology events showcasing best-practice and emerging technologies to support tourism operators.

Whilst DESI provides a publicly available overview on programs and funding allocated by other Queensland Government departments to Advance Queensland activities, detailed information on expenditure are a matter for the administering agencies. Accordingly, I refer the Committee to the relevant agencies.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 9

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

**THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—**

QUESTION:

How many hectares of National Park and other protected areas in Queensland, have been handed back to Traditional Owners since 2015?

ANSWER:

Since 2015, a total of 710,447 hectares of national parks and other protected areas have been handed back to Traditional Owners.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 10

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

**THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—**

QUESTION:

In regard to areas of National Parks and other protected areas in Queensland which have been handed back to Traditional Owners since 2015, what plans does the government have to 'lease-back' these areas from Traditional Owners?

ANSWER:

Since 2015, only part of one national park has been subject to a lease-back arrangement which follows a recommendation from the Aboriginal Land Tribunal in 2016 in regard to a claim by the Waanyi People and Minnie Myboogundji family.

In June 2023, over 79,707 hectares of Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park was granted to the Waanyi Native Title Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC and dedicated as Boodjamulla National Park (Aboriginal land). 202,293 hectares remain dedicated as Boodjamulla (Lawn Hill) National Park.

The Waanyi Native Title Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC has leased back Boodjamulla National Park (Aboriginal land) to the Queensland Government and now co-manages this land through a Cooperative Management Agreement with the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 11

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 2 of the SDS will the Minister advise how the Miles Government is expanding the protected area estate to ensure nature and culture is actively supported to thrive, and protected for future generations?

ANSWER:

Since 2015, Queensland's protected area system has grown by over 1.8 million hectares to be nearly 15 million hectares. The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation continues to implement *Queensland's Protected Area Strategy 2020–2030* through strategic land acquisitions, expansion of private protected areas, and transfers of State forest areas to protected area tenures. In 2022-23, the Queensland Government committed \$262.5 million over four years to expand and manage Queensland's public protected areas.

During 2023-24, over \$111 million of capital funds were spent on protected area expansion, which included the acquisition of new properties. This includes approximately 352,500 hectare Vergemont Station, supported by a \$21 million philanthropic donation brokered by The Nature Conservancy Australia. This unique property contains suitable habitat for the critically endangered night parrot and the highly restricted Opalton grasswren, and will protect perennial waterways, springs and wetlands of significance in the Queensland headwaters of the Lake Eyre Basin.

In addition to Vergemont Station, the Queensland Government also purchased the 138,000 hectare Tonkoro Station near Longreach, which will connect the protected area corridor composed of Diamantina National Park, Mount Windsor Nature Refuge, Pullen Pullen Special Wildlife Reserve and Goneaway National Park to create a total protected area landscape of almost 1.5 million hectares. This year, an additional 8,000 hectares adjacent to The Lakes property (acquired in 2021-22) was also purchased, and together, this land was dedicated as the new Lakes National Park (43,000 hectares).

These acquisitions will see new rangers in regional Queensland, provide a significant boost to ecotourism, and provide contracting opportunities for local trades.

Importantly, these properties and their unique and precious natural and cultural assets, will be open to all Queenslanders to explore and appreciate.

Queensland continues to lead the country in terms of the extent of the private protected estate. Approximately 310,000 hectares were added to Queensland's private protected area network during 2023-24. This included the establishment of the new 244,000 hectare Abingdon Downs North Nature Refuge and the extension of the existing Crystalvale Nature Refuge by approximately 64,000 hectares. This expansion to the private protected area network was incentivised through Round 10 of the NatureAssist program and jointly funded by the Queensland and Australian governments. The Queensland Government has partnered with the Australian Government to deliver the NatureAssist incentive program that supported this protected area growth, with the Australian Government matching \$3 million in funding for NatureAssist Rounds 10 and 11.

The Queensland Government is also committed to the transition of high value State forests to protected area. This year, the first 2,550 hectares of State forest in the South East Queensland Regional Plan area was transferred to protected area, with a further 10,857 hectares planned for transfer later in 2024.

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation has also worked with the Australian Government and other state and territory governments to develop the national framework for recognising Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures. This framework will help Australia meet its national target to protect and conserve 30 per cent of Australia's land by 2030.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 12

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how the Miles government is taking strong action to reduce the risk of negative interactions with native wildlife, specifically wongari (dingoes) on K’Gari, as referenced at page 1 of the SDS?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is implementing new measures to improve the safety of the residents and visitors, whilst also ensuring the protection of wongari (dingo) populations on K’gari. These objectives are being met through the implementation of the Fraser Island Dingo Conservation and Risk Management Strategy (the Strategy), which is recognised as a world-leading conservation and safety initiative.

The Queensland Government has reinforced the management of wongari interactions on K’gari by significantly boosting funding in September 2023 for on ground actions. A total of \$2 million was committed for 2023-24 and \$3 million, indexed annually, ongoing, will deliver additional rangers and technical staff with a focus on enhancing wongari management. This funding will advance community and visitor safety measures and facilitate crucial on-the-ground wongari conservation efforts.

In May 2024, the Queensland Government announced an additional \$14.65 million to further support community safety on K’gari. This funding will contribute to the reopening of the Eurong Information Centre, additional on-island accommodation for rangers and improved information signage for visitors. Funding was also provided to purchase two off-road caravans to support incident management response capability and Be Dingo-safe! briefings in remote parts of the island, such as the western beaches.

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation works with the Butchulla people to deliver the Strategy through education, compliance and enforcement programs, engineering and infrastructure initiatives, research, monitoring and active on-ground management, including:

- disseminating education and safety messages to the community;
- the establishment of fenced campgrounds and township areas to separate people and wongari;
- recording of wongari-human interactions;
- temporary closure of areas in response to high-risk wongari behaviour;
- monitoring public compliance with strict penalties; and
- monitoring and researching wongari health.

The Queensland Government is proactive in continually working to ensure a safe environment for visitors, residents and wongari.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 13

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 2 of the SDS will the Minister provide an update on the continued delivery of the 10-year \$2.1 billion Waste Package?

ANSWER:

The 10-year \$2.1 billion Waste and Resource Recovery Package announced in December 2021 is the largest Government investment into waste management and recycling in Queensland history.

Funded by the waste disposal levy, the package consists of \$1.1 billion for the Recycling and Jobs Fund to support and facilitate Queensland's transition to a circular economy. It also includes \$1 billion to ensure the waste levy does not have a direct impact on households.

Over the first six years of the Waste and Resource Recovery Package, the Queensland Government has committed \$1.66 billion. These commitments include \$231.8 million for investment in the implementation of regional waste management plans; \$147.2 million for industry development and infrastructure; \$28 million contribution to the delivery of the Resource Recovery Industry Development Program and the Queensland Recycling Modernisation Fund; \$30 million to implement the statewide behaviour change program; \$156.7 million for circular economy initiatives, including \$52.7 million for implementation of First Nations' regional waste management plans; \$116.3 million for statewide regulatory compliance, assessment and other operational and staff costs; and \$951.4 million to local councils to ensure households are not directly impacted by the waste levy.

A number of initiatives and programs have been approved for funding from the Recycling and Jobs Fund. A key example is the \$151 million investment for the Growing the Recovery of Organic Waste via Food Organic and Garden Organic (GROW FOGO) program to support local governments to roll out kerbside organics collection services. This includes purchasing bins and kitchen caddies, harmonising bin colours consistent with Australian standards and delivering education to support the new services.

Over \$26 million has been approved so far, to support the cities of Ipswich, Moreton Bay and Gold Coast in rolling out their organics waste collection. Funding has also been approved for a demonstration project in Bundaberg (\$205,000).

The Queensland Government has contributed \$22 million to the construction of the state-of-the-art Nambour material recovery facility, which opened in December 2023. In addition, \$45 million is being administered by the Department of State Development and Infrastructure for resource recovery and recycling businesses to develop large-scale, high-volume projects.

The Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water is administering \$10 million to deliver ReMade in Queensland, supporting Queensland manufacturers and recyclers to use recovered, recycled and reprocessed materials in their products.

Other initiatives include \$7 million for the Regional Waste Management Plan Coordination Program to provide support to Regional Organisations of Councils to implement their regional waste management plans. In addition, \$13.5 million has been allocated for the Let's Get it Sorted Partnership Program to support councils and groups of councils to drive a shift in community attitudes and behaviours towards household waste management and recycling; and \$2.9 million for approved projects under Round 2 of the Food Rescue Program to support organisations who rescue food from waste and distribute to Queenslanders in need.

To support Queensland's transition to a circular economy, the \$5 million Circular Economy Investment Program is now open for applications, closing on 29 July 2024. In addition, \$4 million has been allocated to the Queensland Regional Circular Economy (Industry-Research) Program, establishing circular economy initiatives at the Resources Centre of Excellence in Mackay, the AgTech and Logistics Hub in Toowoomba, and Smart Precinct NQ in Townsville.

These initiatives help set the State on the path towards the 2030 targets set in Queensland's *Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy*.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 14

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise what is being done to improve water quality within the Great Barrier Reef, as referenced at page 1 of the SDS?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is delivering on its commitment to protect the Great Barrier Reef and the tens of thousands of Queensland jobs that rely on it. The cumulative impact of climate change, land run-off and other threats is testing the ability of the Reef to recover from major disturbances. Since 2015, the Queensland Government has committed more than \$1 billion towards protecting Queensland's iconic Great Barrier Reef. This includes \$289.6 million over five years to mid-2026 to continue the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program.

The Queensland Reef Water Quality Program funds priority actions under the joint Australian and Queensland Government Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan and Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan. Working with industry, agricultural producers, communities and Traditional Owners, the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program is delivering actions such as –

- new stream bank repair projects across six priority project areas under a collaborative funding model between the Queensland and Australian governments;
- phase two of the Reef Assist program that will support at least 14 local landscape repair and revegetation projects as well as more than 200 regional jobs from Cape York to Bundaberg;
- a robust regulatory framework with strengthened practice standards for agriculture and industry development in all Reef catchments supported by delivering a bolstered compliance program that has been doubled since 2019;
- ongoing funding of best management practice and practice change programs to reduce the risk of land run-off in the agricultural industry;
- increased capacity to provide technical advice and support through agricultural extension work placements in partnership with Queensland Farmers Federation;
- increased access by the agricultural industry to local fine-scale real-time water quality data to help inform the efforts of landholders in reducing run-off;
- establishing broker agreements and a commitment to purchase up to \$10 million worth of Reef Credits generated by projects in Reef regions acting to reduce sediment and nutrient losses as well as providing diversified income opportunities for farmers and landholders, where brokers opt to sell those Reef Credits to the Queensland Government;

- support for new Reef Place-Based Integrated Projects – built-for-purpose projects, designed and delivered by local partners that deliver water quality whilst also contributing to a broad range of whole-of-catchment outcomes. These projects are consistent with the recent advice from Emeritus Professor Ian Chubb AC, that called for region-specific actions based on local characteristics and designed with local communities;
- support to establish a Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce that will oversee delivery of the Reef Traditional Owner Implementation Plan including programs to improve the health of freshwater, wetlands, mangroves, estuaries, beaches and shorelines;
- an updated Scientific Consensus Statement on ‘Land use impacts on Great Barrier Reef water quality and ecosystem condition’ which is in the process of being finalised and will provide the science underpinnings for the review of the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan; and
- continued tracking of progress through the Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program and Reef Water Quality Report Cards.

Over successive years, the Reef Water Quality Report Card results show that Queensland and Australian government investment, together with the actions of landholders, industries, local governments and partners, has delivered continued progress in reducing land run-off. The increased investment in the current portfolio of projects will accelerate progress towards the water quality targets.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 15

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the State Government's 5-year plastics roadmap will the Minister please advise what is being done to phase out the use of single-use plastic items?

ANSWER:

Queensland's five-year single-use plastic items roadmap (the roadmap), released in July 2022, identifies a range of items for future action, including proposed bans and alternative arrangements. The roadmap also identifies the Queensland Government's plan to continue to consult with suppliers, manufacturers, and businesses along the journey. This allows industry and businesses to provide feedback regarding supply chain challenges, sourcing suitable alternatives and timeframes for replacement, and to prepare for future changes.

On 1 September 2023, the Queensland Government introduced further bans to include cotton buds with plastic stems, expanded polystyrene loose packaging fill and plastic microbeads in rinseable personal care and cleaning products, building on the bans introduced in 2022. Previously banned products included single-use plastic straws, stirrers, cutlery, plates, unenclosed bowls, and takeaway food containers and expanded polystyrene cups. The 2023 action also included a ban on the outdoor release of lighter-than-air balloons.

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation is committed to working with industry to support compliance with the bans and has engaged the National Retail Association to lead this work. The National Retail Association delivered education and awareness activities to industry prior to the bans commencing and has conducted ongoing compliance activities since commencement of the ban.

The National Retail Association has investigated over 160 reports of suspected non-compliance with 95 per cent of these investigations finding the retailers had complied. The National Retail Association continues to work with the remaining businesses to facilitate them becoming compliant, using an education first approach. The National Retail Association has also undertaken over 2,600 spot-checks across Queensland businesses.

In 2023, the Queensland Government ran an Innovation Challenge to identify sustainable alternatives for takeaway coffee cups and lids, as an action identified in the roadmap. The "Beyond Cups" innovation challenge was open to entrepreneurs and innovators to offer solutions in one of three categories: consumption and re-use; game-changing materials; and closing the loop. Successful applicants across each category are now delivering their proof-of-concept projects with an industry partner.

The Queensland Government is a key partner with the newly formed Solving Plastic Waste Cooperative Research Centre, which was established from 1 July 2024. The Cooperative Research Centre involves a consortium of academic institutions led by Griffith University and core government and industry partners. This Cooperative Research Centre will assist in solving Australia's plastic waste problem by enhancing end-user driven collaboration which addresses the current challenges across the entire plastics value chain.

The Queensland Government is committed to phasing out unnecessary and problematic single-use plastics. A harmonised national approach is currently in development for consideration by National Environment Ministers later this year. Collectively these considered and strategic pieces of work, will sustainably guide the next phase of action on plastic pollution in Queensland.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 16

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 2 of the SDS will the Minister provide an update on the delivery of bioregional planning and what will be delivered through the additional \$2 million in the budget over the next two years?

ANSWER:

Bioregional planning has commenced in three pilot locations experiencing development pressures, namely renewable energy in North Queensland, critical minerals in North West Queensland, and urban development in South East Queensland.

Bioregional planning aligns with ShapingSEQ, the Queensland Critical Minerals Strategy and Renewable Energy Zone Roadmap – all of which recognise bioregional planning as contributing to their implementation.

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) has developed a draft methodology for mapping and modelling environmental values and development pressures. This methodology will underpin the pilot plans and ensure they meet the Australian Government's Regional Planning Standard. The draft methodology is currently being reviewed by leading national and international experts in biodiversity and conservation planning.

Developing the pilot plans will be a deeply collaborative process involving industry, community, First Nations peoples, governments, natural resource management organisations, environment groups, and technical experts. DESI plans to commence consultation with key partners in each of the pilot plan locations following completion of the technical review of the draft methodology in late 2024.

The additional \$2 million, with eight full time equivalent positions also being allocated in the 2024-25 Budget over the next two years, will enable the pilot plans to be completed. This includes:

- applying the mapping and modelling methodology to inform stakeholder engagement and consultation;
- collating knowledge, information, and data about environment, social, cultural, and economic values to set regional objectives;
- generating future development scenarios to better understand and manage impacts on environment values;

- developing zones and conditions that better protect areas that matter most for the environment and streamline approval processes by removing assessment under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* when certain types of development are consistent with a bioregional plan;
- undertaking public consultation on draft pilot plans; and
- working with partner agencies to investigate options for integrating bioregional plans into Queensland planning and decision-making frameworks.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 17

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

With reference to page 2 of the SDS will the Minister advise what the Miles Government is doing to protect koalas in Queensland?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is implementing the *South East Queensland Koala Conservation Strategy 2020-2025* (the Strategy), which outlines the Queensland Government's strategic direction in reversing the decline in koala populations across South East Queensland. As part of the Strategy, the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation developed koala habitat mapping that identifies the best habitat for sustaining koala populations. In addition, in 2020 the Queensland Government increased protections of koala habitat in South East Queensland through changes to the planning regulations.

A Consultation Post-Implementation Review of the koala regulations identified that the regulations are largely effective and have increased protections for koalas. In particular, the Review recommended some changes to provide a stronger and more simplified regulatory framework for koala conservation. The Decision Post Implementation Impact Analysis Statement, which set out these recommendations, is available on the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation's website at: https://environment.desi.qld.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0024/345390/decision-post-implementation-ias-2024.pdf. Work is underway to implement these recommendations.

To support implementation of the Strategy, the Queensland Government made an investment of \$24.6 million over four years commencing in 2022-23 and an initial commitment of \$1 million per annum ongoing. This funding provided for new and scaled-up programs to protect koalas across South East Queensland, including additional support for the South East Queensland Wildlife Hospital network.

Key initiatives supported by this funding over the past two years include:

- A significant expansion of koala habitat restoration programs on both private and State-owned land to support achievement of the key target in the Strategy to commence rehabilitation to restore 10,000 hectares of koala habitat. This includes funding commitments of \$5 million to extend the existing Koala Habitat Restoration Partnerships Program in collaboration with Queensland Trust for Nature and a further \$3.5 million to implement the Restore and Reconnect South East Queensland Koala Habitat Phase 1 project with Healthy Land and Water.

- Targeted investment in threat reduction activities to reduce mortality and support increases in koala populations; including \$4.2 million to deliver South East Queensland Koala Threat Management Initiatives – Phase 1 in partnership with Healthy Land and Water and local governments.
- Applied research grants totalling more than \$1.2 million to improve knowledge gaps and develop innovative solutions to support on-ground conservation programs. This also included investment to support the development and registration of vaccines to tackle chlamydial disease in koalas.
- Commitment to invest more than \$500,000 to implement a First Nations Koala Action Plan in partnership with First Nations peoples and Traditional Owners;
- Expansion of awareness and education programs to spur community-based action to support conservation efforts. This included investment of \$1.1 million to extend collaborative arrangements with Griffith University to co-design and implement community awareness and threat mitigation initiatives in partnership with local governments.
- An investment of \$3 million to increase the capacity of the South East Queensland Wildlife Hospital Network to rescue, rehabilitate and release of sick, injured and orphaned koalas;
- Targeted investment in the development and refinement of tools to assist in mapping and assessing the condition of koala habitat.
- Funding for dedicated positions within the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation to manage the expanded portfolio of conservation initiatives.

In the 2024-25 State Budget, the Queensland Government committed a further \$31.3 million allocated over four years from 2024-25 and \$8.4 million per annum ongoing for koala conservation. This funding will extend and expand critical actions identified in the Strategy. The department will work in partnership with other government and non-government organisations to expand community engagement, undertake targeted threat abatement, and scale up restoration activities.

This investment by the Queensland Government has been complemented by the Australian Government's investments as part of the National Recovery Plan for the Koala.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 18

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how the Department's Regulator is proactively managing and monitoring environmental risks as part of its administration of the Environmental Protection Act 1994, as referenced at page 3 of the SDS?

ANSWER:

As Queensland's environmental regulator, the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation undertakes regulation proportionate to environmental risk. Environmental regulation begins with the assessment of regulated activities to ensure approvals have appropriate conditions to prevent or minimise environmental harm. The department then undertakes compliance monitoring to ensure those approvals are being complied with. Resourcing is generally focussed towards those activities and projects which have the potential to cause the greatest environmental impact. When non-compliance is detected, the department takes its enforcement role seriously and it has a suite of enforcement tools at its disposal to secure compliance.

In assessing applications for new or amended activities under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, where prescribed eligibility criteria are met, lower risk activities are regulated through a set of standard conditions. This provides consistent environmental expectations for lower risk activities without increasing administrative burden. For activities with potentially greater environmental impacts, the Act provides for a rigorous assessment process by the department, which may require activities to be supported by complex technical studies and in some cases may even require an Environmental Impact Statement to be undertaken.

For those activities with potentially greater risk of environmental harm, a science-based assessment of potential impacts is conducted by the department, and if the activity is approved, conditions are imposed specific to the activity's environmental risk. This includes a range of requirements for licence holders to monitor potential environmental impacts, take steps to respond to any identified impact and notify environmental incidents or non-compliance to the department.

The department's compliance monitoring involves both proactive and reactive compliance activities. Environmental risk is central to compliance monitoring investment and the department implements a compliance prioritisation model that informs the compliance program. The model highlights a range of risk variables associated with regulated sites, including but not exclusive to previous compliance history, the inherent risks associated with a particular activity and their proximity to sensitive receiving environments, including the community. Compliance officers then consider this information along with local knowledge and intelligence secured through the department's intelligence team in order to determine when and where to visit.

Compliance monitoring is undertaken by authorised officers and the department recruits its officers from either a degree qualified science or enforcement background. The department also develops the capability of its workforce to ensure they have the knowledge and technical skills to competently use complex and technical environmental monitoring instrumentation and equipment to ensure the department's enforcement approach is underpinned by contemporary science and technology. Compliance effort and monitoring is further informed and supported through the use of satellite imagery, monitoring networks at high-risk locations, remote sensing and drone capability to identify and target emerging risks and to collect evidence that underpins its enforcement actions.

The department is committed to holding individuals and companies to account and to prevent environmental harm. The department publishes its enforcement guidelines online and has an escalating approach from education, statutory notices and penalties through to prosecution for more serious offences. The Environmental Protection Act continues to be reviewed and updated by the department, and in 2023 an Independent Review into the adequacy of the powers and penalties available under the Act was published along with a Government Response in May 2023. The Review resulted in additional legislative amendments this year which further strengthened the environmental regulator's power to prevent harm to the community and the environment.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 19

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide an overview of how the department is supporting emerging industries and Queensland's science industry?

ANSWER:

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation has a strategic portfolio of science and innovation programs, informed by international best practice, that support emerging industries and Queensland's science sector.

The \$83.7 million Queensland Quantum and Advanced Technologies Strategy builds on over 30 years of quantum-related science in the State, leveraging these strengths to develop a thriving industry-research ecosystem. On 13 June 2024, programs worth \$53.81 million were opened to applications, supporting commercialisation, challenges and missions, talent-building and investment to help build this important sector. In the 2024-25 State Budget, the Strategy was augmented with a further \$6 million to support the Queensland Quantum Academy, which will engage schools and TAFE to help build the pipeline of quantum-related skills that the State will need.

The Research Infrastructure Co-investment Fund ensures our scientific community has access to world-class research infrastructure and technology to support collaboration and knowledge translation into benefits for Queensland. The current \$15 million round of the Research Infrastructure Co-investment Fund has leveraged over \$76 million in co-investment from the Australian Government, universities, and industry.

The \$7 million Regional University Industry Collaboration Program aims to make Queensland's science sector more competitive and impactful through collaboration with regional industries and businesses and accelerating spin-off and spin outs from our regional universities.

Supporting international science partnerships is important as it helps our researchers build global links and enhance their reputation and competitiveness, in turn opening up new opportunities for innovation and development. For example, the Queensland Government has provided \$600,000 to support collaboration between researchers in Queensland and the German state of Bavaria, one of the main economic powerhouses in Europe. Identified areas of potential partnership include artificial intelligence, health, and sustainable energy.

Advance Queensland features a wide range of initiatives to support Queensland innovators, industry, researchers and communities to stay at the cutting-edge of technology and science developments.

Advance Queensland support is provided for several technology hubs, including immersive technologies, artificial intelligence, ag-tech and logistics. This has shifted the dial for Queensland industry and businesses in emerging technologies.

Established in 2020 with Advance Queensland funding, the AgTech and Logistics Hub has been a catalyst for an innovative, competitive and more sustainable industry. As a result, there is uptake of technology by Queensland's agricultural sector using robotics, automation, drones and the Internet of Things to change the way the industry operates.

Immersive technology like virtual and augmented reality is another emerging technology where Queensland has world-class capabilities. The Queensland XR Hub, funded by Advance Queensland, helps industry understand how these technologies can be applied and showcases the exceptional talent of local immersive technology businesses in Queensland.

Advance Queensland programs like the long-running Industry Research Fellowships and the more recent Industry Research Projects program support industry and researchers to collaborate and translate research findings into practical outcomes and commercial opportunities. Recent rounds of these programs have supported a range of emerging industries and technologies such as photovoltaics, artificial intelligence, robotics, and autonomous systems.

Further, the department supports Queensland's science sector through research partnerships that deliver world class science for its state-wide environmental science programs. This allows others to access Government science capabilities, training and data to deliver innovative mapping, modelling and monitoring programs and decision support tools that align with mutual priorities of Government, universities and research institutions.

The department also plays other key roles that support applied research and innovative Queensland companies to develop new products.

The first is as a lead customer for emerging technologies that can transform service delivery. An example is the development of ReefScan, an automated marine monitoring system that can give unique and standardised insight into the state and health of marine ecosystems, such as coral reefs. The department has partnered with the Australian Institute of Marine Science and innovative companies, with the aim to not only transform marine monitoring, but also to improve ranger safety by providing an alternative to the use of manta tow surveys.

The department has also initiated and sponsored two successful ARC Linkage projects, led by University of Queensland scientists. These directly address research needs of the agency, and focus on the use of airborne eDNA to support conservation efforts for the endangered northern bettong, and new methods to identify sources of contaminants entering wastewater systems.

Finally, the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation remains the largest departmental provider of datasets on the Queensland Government Open Data portal.

Not only does this support transparency, but it also enables companies to use open data to create new products and services.

Through these initiatives and many more, the department provides critical support for Queensland's trailblazing emerging industries and world-standard science sector.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

No. 20

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER
REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how the department is contributing to the delivery of the Advance Queensland Roadmap?

ANSWER:

The Advance Queensland vision is for Queensland to become a leading and sustainable, world-class innovation economy by:

- increasing investment for companies to start, stay and grow in Queensland
- focusing research on commercialisation and industry collaboration
- ensuring existing and emerging priority industries and talent are globally competitive
- harnessing innovators to solve community, industry and government challenges
- ensuring Queensland has world-class digital and physical infrastructure to build a well-connected, inclusive and thriving innovation ecosystem.

Launched in July 2022, the *Advance Queensland – Innovation for a Future Economy 2022–2032 Roadmap* set us on the next phase in Queensland’s innovation journey.

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation’s programs are investing in innovation driven enterprises, talent, infrastructure, translation of research and engaging the community to address some of the biggest challenges faced locally and globally.

A full list of activities delivered by Queensland Government agencies, including the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI), since the Roadmap was released in July 2022 up until 31 December 2023, is publicly available at:

<https://advance.qld.gov.au/resources/innovation-for-a-future-economy-2022-2032-roadmap-full-list-of-achievements-for-20232024>.

Other key initiatives which DESI has delivered include:

- \$3.3 million announced for 26 innovative businesses from South East Queensland, the Whitsundays and Toowoomba regions in Round 11 of the Ignite Ideas Fund to support Queensland innovators to commercialise their innovative products and services to market and grow their businesses.
- \$2.2 million announced for 30 innovative businesses from as far as Mount Isa, Cairns and the Atherton Tablelands in the inaugural funding round of the Ignite

Spark Program to assist Queensland innovators to develop functional prototypes so their innovative products and services are ready to enter the market.

- More than \$5 million announced for 19 Queensland-based PhD qualified researchers in Round 6 of the Industry Research Fellowships to support Queensland researchers to undertake projects in collaboration with industry partners such as Meat and Livestock Australia, Rio Tinto, Glencore Technologies, Sea World Foundation and Aurizon Operations to address real world problems faced by industry.
- The Regional Futures Collaborative Projects Program which has funded projects from the Torres Strait to the Sunshine Coast and in-between, bringing leaders and innovation partners together to solve local challenges.
- The Accelerating Female Founders Program which has funded organisations to develop and deliver business support initiatives for innovative Queensland female founders, supporting more than 500 participants across the State.
- More than \$4 million announced for 13 recipients in the inaugural funding round of the \$15 million Queensland Innovation Precincts and Places Fund to help collaboration and knowledge flow from business, industry and researchers to bring new ideas to life and commercialise them.
- The appointment of 12 new members to the Innovation Advisory Council who are champions for innovation in Queensland and play a critical role in helping to connect ecosystem stakeholders, attract investment, and build a resource base for accelerating innovation through entrepreneurial action across Queensland.
- The Private Sector Pathways Program which is supporting partnerships between global leaders Boeing and Frucor Suntory and innovative Queensland small to medium businesses to bring leading-edge solutions to their training and compliance challenges.
- The NRL Magic Round Tech Showcase and a new three-year Innovation Partnership with the National Rugby League to help solve its pressing challenges, with the help of Queensland-made innovations.
- Supporting the 2024 Tropical Innovation Festival, held in Cairns, which is attracting growing interest from a national and international audience with more than 1,500 participants attending this year's Festival from all parts of the innovation ecosystem and globe providing new investment opportunities for Queensland-based innovative businesses.
- Announced \$1.5 million for the First Australians Capital Business Acceleration Program which includes a Business Acceleration Program and Enterprise Loans to enable Indigenous entrepreneurs to pursue innovative ideas and projects, providing them with the necessary resources to take calculated risks and drive growth.
- Launched \$53.81 million of grant programs from the \$89.7 million Queensland Quantum and Advanced Technologies Strategy and Academy, which will:
 - provide greater opportunities for regional universities, women and other under-represented groups to participate in quantum skilling and research
 - create new facilities to support commercialisation of products utilising quantum and advanced technologies
 - leverage quantum technology to solve challenges relating to decarbonisation and the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games
 - attract new investment to accelerate the development of Queensland's quantum and advanced technologies ecosystem.
- Announced more than \$750,000 for the Yarrabah Innovation and Technology Hub and Deadly Coders Program – these are seed projects for the \$1 million Deadly Quantum program.

- Announced the \$7 million Regional University Industry Collaboration Program, part of the \$17 million Science into Industry Initiative, which will strengthen regional universities' capacity to collaborate with regional businesses and industries, accelerate commercialisation and attract new funding.
- Commitments under the \$10 million Science into Industry Co-investment Program include a \$650,000 investment to support the Queensland University of Technology led \$11.8 million ARC Industrial Transformation Research Hub, which will involve six universities and 42 partner organisations. Co-investment funding is also supporting Queensland led research and industry collaborations in areas relating to mRNA vaccines and therapies and national infrastructure for federated learning in digital health, quantum biotechnology, Indigenous and environmental histories, and futures, and automated vehicles in rural and remote regions.
- Awarded nearly \$15 million of contracts in 2024 under the Research Infrastructure Co-investment Fund to eight research facilities for projects in critical minerals, quantum, biomedical, renewable energy and natural capital priority areas. These 2024 commitments leverage over \$76 million co-investment from the Australian Government, universities and industry.
- Awarded \$500,000 to 28 recipients under the 2024 Engaging Science Grants Round to 28 recipients to increase participation in science-based activities and engagement between scientists and the community.
- Recruited the next cohort of flying scientists ready to visit regional and remote Queensland during 2024/25 to address the shortage of science related events convened outside South East Queensland.
- Provided \$750,000 to develop and implement the Queensland Circular Economy (Industry-Research) program. This is a pilot program working through three regional centres in Mackay, Townsville and Toowoomba to develop innovative approaches and technology that improves the effectiveness of their region's circular economy.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

Crossbench Member Question

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

MS S BOLTON ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

With the SDS on page 2 only committing funds to the QPWS firefighting capacity and with QPWS being underfunded compared with other states, and with an increase in land under the care of QPWS, why has the government not increased funding for environmental management by providing an uplift of \$200m to ensure our National Parks are appropriately managed?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government recognises the significant value Queensland's national parks provide across the environmental, social and economic sectors.

During the 10-year period from 2015-16 to 2024-25, over \$1 billion of additional funds (including centrally held funds) have been allocated for the management of Queensland's protected area estate, State forests, marine parks, fish habitat areas, threatened species and world heritage areas.

The Government has allocated \$262.5 million to grow the protected area estate. It is recognised that with the acquisition of additional properties, there are management requirements that are necessary to ensure the lands are conserved and protected, now and for future generations. Importantly, these acquisitions will see new rangers in regional communities, provide significant opportunities for local contractors and boost ecotourism, and deliver enhanced pest, weed and fire management on the properties.

In 2023-24, the Government allocated \$38.6 million over five years with ongoing funding of \$11.9 million to support continuation of *Queensland's Protected Area Strategy 2020-2030* and improve the management of Queensland's World Heritage Areas. From this allocation, funds are supporting management of the newly acquired properties as they transition to protected area.

Acknowledging the important role the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has in managing fire and protecting neighbours, the Government has allocated additional funding of \$39.2 million in the 2024-25 financial year. This foundational investment includes an allocation of 39 additional personnel and \$21.1 million to enhance the delivery of fire management activities across Queensland's parks and forests. The funding also includes \$18.1 million to invest in fireground capability including new heavy plant and equipment, new fire appliances, upgrades of fire lines and equipment for fireground operations.

This funding will enhance community safety, support greater First Nations involvement in land management, and improve collaboration with our partner agencies, including the newly established Queensland Fire Department.

This Government has a strong track record of supporting Queensland's national parks and will continue our efforts to ensure they are well managed, protected and conserved for all Queenslanders.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Pre-Hearing Question on Notice

Crossbench Member Question

Asked on Wednesday, 10 July 2024

MR M BERKMAN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

In relation to resources used to educate industry and ensure compliance with the requirements under s28 of the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2023* regarding banned plastic shopping bags:

- (a) Is the Minister able to explain why the Government's webpage on Queensland's single use plastics ban refers to '80% post-consumer recycled material', while s 128(1)(b) of the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2023* refers simply to '80% recycled plastic content'?
- (b) Is the Minister able to confirm that non-compostable bags must be at least 80% certified post-consumer recycled content, or can they include pre-consumer recycled material (commonly known as factory offcuts or waste)?
- (c) What work has the Department done to ensure industry compliance with these new requirements?

ANSWER:

- (a) Section 28(1)(b) of the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2023* states that one of the conditions for a plastic shopping bag to not be subject to the ban, is that it contain at least 80% recycled plastic content. The information on the Queensland Government website has been amended to ensure consistency with the legislation.
- (b) Carry bags made of non-compostable plastic must contain at least 80% recycled plastic content, which may include pre-consumer or factory off-cuts.
- (c) The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation is committed to working with industry to support compliance with the new requirements and has engaged the National Retail Association to work directly with industry in the delivery of education and awareness activities prior to bans commencing and to conduct compliance activities post-ban commencement.

In the lead up to the commencement of the 2023 regulatory amendments in relation to banned plastic shopping bags, the National Retail Association visited retail precincts around the State and held information sessions with the supply chain to understand industry's ability to comply with the new requirements.

As a result, a Transitional Support Program was established and delivered by the National Retail Association to support industry, with 536 suppliers and retailers registering. Since the end of the Transitional Support Program in February 2024, compliance checks have been undertaken by the National Retail Association, having visited 317 retailers around the State.

The department is working with the National Retail Association to source testing equipment to be available in Queensland. The Queensland Government is a foundational partner and is working with the Solving Plastic Waste Cooperative Research Centre on a project to improve verification and traceability of recycled plastic content.

Questions on notice and responses – *Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities*

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

Could the Minister advise the number of eligible commercial fishing licence holders who fish in the Mary River above the yellow zone, by year, 2015 to present.

ANSWER:

According to the logbook records held by Fisheries Queensland, between 2015 to present, an average of 11 commercial fishing licence holders have fished in the Mary River above the yellow zone.

The greatest use of commercial fishing licences in the area occurred in 2017 with 16 commercial fishing licence holders fishing in the area. In 2022, seven commercial fishing licence holders fished the area with low activity, likely influenced by the flooding events in the area in 2022.

In the first half of this year, five commercial fishing licence holders have recorded fishing activity in the Mary River above the yellow zone.

Fisheries Queensland will continue to monitor fishing activities in the region.

Year	Licences Operating
2015	10
2016	10
2017	16
2018	13
2019	12
2020	12
2021	11
2022	7
2023	12
2024	5

Table 1: Number of licences operating in the Mary River above the yellow zone.

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 2

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 8 and staffing service areas – Will the Minister provide a breakdown of staff numbers specifically broken down by location base, into the following categories reported separately for 2023-24:

- i. agriculture
- ii. biosecurity
- iii. fishing
- iv. forestries
- v. Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) and
- vi. the number of graduate roles, what the roles are, and if they are aligned with a particular service area?

ANSWER:

As at 30 June 2024, the active Full Time Equivalent (FTE) was 2,171.27. The ability to respond to changing circumstances is fundamental to the department achieving its purpose. To this end, multi-disciplinary teams that work across disciplines and with other agencies, including industry, are critical so that adequate capability and capacity exists to support Queensland's thriving agricultural sector.

A number of contractors are also used across the department to meet evolving needs, including research and biosecurity activities.

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN	i Agriculture	ii Biosecurity	iii Fisheries	iv Forestry	TOTAL
Brisbane CBD	95.68	118.14	77.65	36.43	327.90
Central	80.84	21.97	21.20	18	142.01
North	146.89	78	51.40	11	287.29
South	469.63	394.75	89.28	54.85	1,008.51
Corporate Allocation	84.34	72.91	22.17	11.14	190.56
TOTAL	877.38	685.77	261.70	131.42	1,956.27

Above numbers exclude 215 FTE servicing other departments.

LOCATION BREAKDOWN	i. Agriculture	ii. Biosecurity	iii. Fisheries	iv. Forestry	TOTAL
Airlie Beach			6.6		6.6
Applethorpe	4				4
Atherton				2	2
Ayr	4				4
Bamaga		2			2
Basalt	8				8
Berrinba		142.95			142.95
Biloela	3.9	2			5.9
Blackall		1			1
Boogan	22.1	17			39.1
Boonah	0.33	2.6			2.93
Bowen	9.6	1.6		2	13.2
Brisbane City	95.68	118.14	77.65	36.43	726.46
Bundaberg	3	7	5		15
Caboolture	3	4		3	10
Cairns	20.6	23.57		8	53.17
Charleville	5.2	3			8.2
Charters Towers	13.63	10.83			24.46
Cleveland	7	1	5		13
Cloncurry		1			1
Coopers Plains	28.16	61.7			89.86
Dalby	2	6		7	15
Duaringa				2	2
Dutton Park	129.46	36.55	15.16		181.17
Eagle Farm					2
Emerald	21.94	1.3		1	24.24
Garbutt	28.86	13.6	12.6		55.06
Gatton	26.4	7			33.4
Gayndah	8.1	2			10.1
Gladstone	0.6		4		4.6
Goondiwindi	3.55	1.75			5.3
Gympie	8.6	2.8		9.35	20.75
Hughenden		2		1	3
Ingham	1		5.02		6.02
Inglewood				2	2
Injune				4	4
Karumba			2		2
Kingaroy	8.36	6.66	3	3	21.02
Laidley		12			12
Longreach	4	2			6
Mackay	8	7.07	4	1	20.07
Main Beach		0.8	7.9		8.7
Mandalay		1			1
Mareeba	37.7	6			43.7
Maryborough	0.8	1		8.6	10.4
Mitchell				1	1

LOCATION BREAKDOWN	i. Agriculture	ii. Biosecurity	iii. Fisheries	iv. Forestry	TOTAL
Molendinar		5			5
Monto				4.9	4.9
Mooloolaba			7		7
Mossman		1			1
Mundubbera				3	3
Nambour	51.14	12.6	25.28		89.02
Noosaville			3.6		3.6
Parkhurst	32.8	5		10	48.8
Peak Crossing		7.44			7.44
Pinkenba			10.74		10.74
Port Douglas			2		2
Portsmith	5		27.78		32.78
Proserpine		1			1
Quilpie		5			5
Richmond	1				1
Roma	4.36	11			15.36
Roslyn			6.6		6.6
Rubyanna	22.69				22.69
Salisbury	14.1				16.1
Theodore				2	2
Thursday Island		1			1
Toogoolawah		1			1
Toowoomba	96.94	22.7		9	129.64
Urangan		1	4.6		5.6
Wacol		27.4			27.4
Walkamin	5				5
Warwick	23.04	2.8	2		27.84
Weipa			2		2
Woorim	19.4				19.4
Corporate Allocation	84.34	72.91	22.17	11.14	190.56
Total	877.38	685.77	261.70	131.42	1,956.27

Above numbers exclude 215 FTE servicing other departments.

v. **QRIDA**

Location Breakdown	Temporary	Permanent	FTE
Brisbane	39.68	84.26	123.94
Bundaberg		2	2
Cloncurry		1	1
Emerald		1	1
Innisfail		2	2
Kingaroy		3	3
Mackay		1	1
Rockhampton		1	1
Roma		2.8	2.8
Toowoomba	2	8	10
Townsville		1	1
Regional Other *	28.7	21.26	49.96
TOTAL	70.38	128.32	198.7
Total Regional FTE	30.7	44.06	74.76
Regional Percentage			38%

Note Regional Other* is any employee who works remotely AND lives outside of Brisbane.

- As at 30 June 2024, QRIDA's actual FTE was 198.7.
- To best service the rural and regional community, QRIDA currently has some 33% of its workforce based regionally.
- QRIDA uses a flexible staffing model for processing applications for financial assistance and temporary staff are engaged and fluctuate in alignment with the incoming volumes of applications. Engaging temporary staff ensures QRIDA's processing times for financial assistance applications deliver these much-needed funds to Queenslanders as quickly as possible.

vi. **GRADUATES**

- As at 30 June 2024, the number of DAF graduate roles was 46
 - 36 graduate roles form part of the DAF Graduate Connect Program.
 - Nine graduate roles form part of the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) Digital Graduate Program.
 - One graduate role forms part of Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) Policy Futures Program.
- QRIDA joined the department's graduate connect program in 2023 with the addition of two graduates. The total number of DAF graduate program roles across QRIDA and DAF is 48.

ALL GRADUATE ROLES						
LOCATION BREAKDOWN	i. AGRICULTURE	ii. BIOSECURITY	iii. CORPORATE	iv. and v. FISHERIES and FORESTRY	vi. QRIDA	TOTAL
Berrinba		1				1
Biloela	1					1
Brisbane City	7	4	14	3	2	30

Charleville	1					1
Darling Downs		1				1
Dutton Park	2	1				3
Emerald	2					2
Nambour	1			1		2
Rockhampton	2					2
Toowoomba	2	1				3
Townsville	2					2
TOTAL	20	8	14	4	2	48

DAF GRADUATE CONNECT PROGRAM			
BUSINESS GROUP	BUSINESS / PROGRAM AREA	ROLE	LOCATION
Agriculture	Agri-Science Queensland, Crop and Food Science	Graduate Research Scientist	Emerald
Agriculture	Rural Economic Development	Graduate Agribusiness Development Officer	Townsville
Agriculture	Agri-Business and Policy, Agribusiness Operations	Graduate Policy Officer	Brisbane City
Agriculture	Agri-Business and Policy, Ag Tech Innovation Partnerships and Skills Policy	Graduate Policy Officer	Brisbane City
Agriculture	Customer and Business Services	Graduate Project Officer (Data Analyst)	Brisbane City
Agriculture	Customer and Business Services	Graduate Project Officer (Business Analyst)	Brisbane City
Agriculture	Agri-Business and Policy, Agribusiness Policy	Graduate Policy Officer	Brisbane City
Agriculture	Agri-Business and Policy, Agribusiness Policy	Graduate Policy Officer	Brisbane City
Agriculture	Agri-Business and Policy, Industry Analytics and Systems	Graduate Data Analyst	Brisbane City
Agriculture	Rural Economic Development	Graduate Agribusiness Development Officer (Economics)	Townsville
Agriculture	Agri-Science Queensland, Horticulture and Forestry Science	Graduate Plant Pathologist	Dutton Park
Agriculture	Agri-Science Queensland, Crop and Food Science	Development Extension Officer, Sustainable Farming Systems RD&E	Biloela
Agriculture	Agri-Science Queensland, Animal Science	Extension Officer, Beef and Sheep RD&E	Rockhampton
Agriculture	Agri-Science Queensland, Horticulture and Forestry Science	Graduate Soil Ecologist, Nematology program	Dutton Park

Agriculture	Agri-Science Queensland, Crop and Food Science	Research Agronomist, Crop Improvement RD&E	Toowoomba
Agriculture	Rural Economic Development	Graduate Agribusiness Development Officer (Economics)	Rockhampton
Agriculture	Agri-Science Queensland, Crop and Food Science	Development Extension Officer, Grains	Emerald
Agriculture	Agri-Science Queensland, Animal Science	Extension Officer, Beef and Sheep RD&E	Charleville
Agriculture	Agri-Science Queensland, Crop and Food Science	Graduate Project Officer	Toowoomba
Agriculture	Agri-Science Queensland, Horticulture and Forestry Science	Forestry Ecologist, Steak N' Wood Program	Nambour
Biosecurity Queensland	Office of the Deputy Director-General	Graduate Project Officer	Brisbane City
Biosecurity Queensland	Invasive Plants and Animals	Graduate Policy Officer	Dutton Park
Biosecurity Queensland	Plant Biosecurity and Product Integrity	Graduate Policy Officer	Brisbane City
Biosecurity Queensland	Animal Biosecurity and Welfare	Graduate Project Officer	Darling Downs
Biosecurity Queensland	National Fire Ants Eradication Program	Graduate Data Scientist	Berrinba
Biosecurity Queensland	Animal Biosecurity and Welfare	Graduate Project Officer	Brisbane City
Biosecurity Queensland	Strategy, Investment and Performance	Graduate Policy Officer	Brisbane City
Biosecurity Queensland	Invasive Plants and Animals	Graduate Policy Officer, Policy and Stakeholder Engagement	Toowoomba
Corporate	Office of the Deputy Director-General	Graduate Business Support Officer	Brisbane City
Corporate	People and Culture	Graduate Data Analyst	Brisbane City
Corporate	Digital Enterprise Office	Graduate Business Analyst	Brisbane City
Corporate	Information Technology Partners, Applications	Graduate Data Analyst	Brisbane City
Corporate	Finance and Asset Management	Graduate Data Analyst	Brisbane City
Fisheries and Forestry	Resource Management and Systems	Graduate GIS Analyst	Brisbane City
Fisheries and Forestry	Reporting, Information and Digital Solutions	Fisheries Resource Officer	Brisbane City
Fisheries and Forestry	Fisheries, Management and Reform	Graduate Officer	Nambour
QRIDA	Corporate Capability and Programs	Finance Graduate	Brisbane City
QRIDA	Business Development and Policy	Graduate Officer	Brisbane City

TMR DIGITAL GRADUATE PROGRAM			
BUSINESS GROUP	BUSINESS / PROGRAM AREA	ROLE	LOCATION
Corporate	Information Technology Partners, Security Management	Security Analyst	Brisbane City
Corporate	Information Technology Partners, Information Policy and Governance	Graduate Information Officer	Brisbane City
Corporate	Information Technology Partners, Human-centred design	Graduate User Experience Officer	Brisbane City
Corporate	Information Technology Partners, Delivery Centre	Graduate Officer	Brisbane City
Corporate	Information Technology Partners, Web Services	Graduate Officer	Brisbane City
Corporate	Information Technology Partners, Data Centre and Network Operations	Graduate Officer	Brisbane City
Corporate	Information Technology Partners, Data Centre and Network Operations	Graduate Officer	Brisbane City
Corporate	Information Technology Partners, Delivery Centre	Graduate Officer	Brisbane City
Corporate	Information Technology Partners, Applications	Graduate Officer	Brisbane City

DPC POLICY FUTURES PROGRAM			
BUSINESS GROUP	BUSINESS / PROGRAM AREA	ROLE	LOCATION
Fisheries and Forestry	Fisheries Management, Fisheries Queensland	Graduate Policy Officer	Brisbane City

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 3

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 8 and staffing service areas – Will the Minister (a) provide a breakdown of the (i) position name and (ii) location bases of the additional 525 FTEs funded in the budget for “Queensland Biosecurity Services”, and (b) provide a breakdown of the (i) position name and (ii) location bases for 19 FTEs that are being cut from “Enabling Industry Growth”?

ANSWER:

(a) The additional 525 FTEs funded in the budget for Queensland Biosecurity Services, consist of 499 Core Biosecurity FTEs of which 495 are allocated to the National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP) and four are allocated to strengthening the department’s leadership across Queensland’s and Australia’s biosecurity systems, and will contribute to stronger enforcement and evidence. Twenty-six FTEs is the Corporate allocation.

SERVICE AREA	WORK UNIT	POSITION NAME	FTE NUMBERS	LOCATION
Queensland Biosecurity Services	NFAEP	Field operations, aerial and drone activities, treatment, surveillance, compliance, business support, communications, engagement, policy, science, strategy, and innovation*	495	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moreton Bay• Logan• Ipswich• Gold Coast
	Biosecurity (excl NFAEP)	Director Operational Capability	1	Brisbane CBD
		Intelligence/Compliance Officers	2	Locations subject to operational requirements
		Senior Risk Assessor	1	Location subject to operational requirements

*Note: position names and locations in NFAEP will be determined by operational requirements.

(b) The 2024-25 Enabling Agriculture Industry Growth FTEs of 894, is comprised of 824 Core Agriculture FTEs and 70 Corporate FTEs. There has been no reduction in Core Agriculture FTEs, only a redistribution of Corporate FTEs to Queensland Biosecurity Services.

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 4

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 1, fire ant detection and treatment – Will the Minister outline (reported separately by year from 2020 – 2024 and Local Government area) the:

1. number of reports of fire ant detection
2. number of sightings
3. number of treatments, and
4. treatment methods used by DAF officers?

ANSWER:

- 1 Number of Reports of Fire Ant Detection
 - The National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP) detects fire ants through multiple channels. These include surveillance detections by NFAEP workers and engaged community members who lodge a suspect ant report by contacting the Program on 13 25 22 or online. Not all suspect ant reports are positive for Fire Ants.

Suspect Ant Reports received by LGA each year – by Financial Year and LGA						
LGA	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	LGA Total
ACT	0	0	0	1	2	3
Albury City Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Armidale Regional Council	0	0	0	1	1	2
Ballina Shire	0	0	0	6	14	20
Balone Shire	0	1	0	0	1	2
Banana Shire	1	1	1	5	2	10
Bass Coast Shire	0	0	0	1	0	1
Bathurst Regional Council	0	0	0	1	0	1
Baw Baw Shire	0	0	0	0	1	1
Bayside Shire	0	1	0	0	0	1
Bellingen Shire Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Blacktown City Council	1	0	0	1	3	5
Blanks / No location listed	304	145	114	51	134	748
Blue Mountains City Council	0	0	0	1	0	1
Boroondara City	0	0	0	0	1	1
Brisbane City	2,596	3,445	3,172	3,516	3,921	16,650
Bundaberg Regional	13	12	14	22	13	74
Burdekin Shire	1	0	0	2	1	4
Burwood Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Byron Shire Council	0	0	0	7	10	17
Cabonne Shire Council	0	0	0	1	0	1
Cairns Regional	5	4	9	24	1	43
Campbelltown City Council	0	0	0	0	3	3
Canterbury-Bankstown Council	0	0	1	2	2	5

Casey City	1	1	0	1	1	4
Cassowary Coast Regional	0	2	1	8	0	11
Central Coast Council	0	0	1	3	14	18
Central Highlands Regional	0	2	1	6	3	12
Cessnock City Council	0	0	0	1	1	2
Charters Towers Regional	3	2	0	1		6
Circular Head Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
City of Albany	0	0	0	0	1	1
City of Busselton	0	0	0	1	0	1
City of Canada Bay Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
City of Cockburn		0	0	1	0	1
City of Holdfast Bay	0	0	0	0	1	1
City of Melville	0	0	0	1	0	1
City of Onkaparinga	0	1	0	0	1	2
City of Parramatta Council	0	0	0	1	1	2
City of Port Adelaide Enfield	0	0	0	0	2	2
City of South Perth	0	0	0	0	1	1
City of Stirling	0	0	0	0	1	1
City of Victor Harbor	0	1	0	0	0	1
Clare And Gilbert Valleys Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Clarence Valley Council	1	0	0	7	5	13
Cloncurry Shire	1	1	0	2	0	4
Coffs Harbour City Council	0	0	0	3	7	10
Cook Shire	0	0	0	3	0	3
Council of the city of Sydney	0	0	0	1	1	2
Cowra Shire Council	0	0	0	1	0	1
Cumberland Council	0	0	0	1	1	2
Darebin City	0	0	0	0	2	2
Darwin Municipality	0	0	1	0	0	1
Douglas Shire	1	0	0	1	0	2
Dubbo Regional Council	0	0	1	0	0	1
Flinders Shire	0	0	0	2	0	2
Fraser Coast Regional	15	25	19	21	27	107
Georges River Council	0	0	0	3	2	5
Gladstone Regional	11	16	15	12	11	65
Glen Eira City	0	0	0	1	1	2
Glen Innes Severn Shire Council	0	0	0	1	0	1
Gold Coast City	1,147	2,061	1,525	3,267	3,652	11,652
Goondiwindi Regional	0	3	0	3	2	8
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	0	0	0	1	1	2
Greater Geelong City	0	0	0	0	2	2
Griffith City Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Gunnedah Shire Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Gwydir Shire Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Gympie Regional	11	10	21	14	13	69
Hawkesbury City Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Hinchinbrook Shire	0	0	1	1	0	2
Hornsby Shire Council	0	0	0	3	9	12
Hume City	0	0	2	0	0	2
Inner West Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Inverell Shire Council	0	0	1	0	0	1
Ipswich City	2,864	3,890	4,349	3,093	4,573	18,769
Isaac Regional	1	1	0	3	2	7
Kempsey Shire Council	0	0	0	2	2	4
Knox City	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ku-Ring-Gai Council	1	0	0	3	2	6
Kyogle Council	1	0	0	0	3	4
Lake Macquarie City Council	0	0	0	4	13	17
Lane Cove Municipal Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Lismore City Council	1	0	3	3	10	17
Liverpool City Council		0	0	1	1	2
Livingstone Shire	0	3	4	6	6	19

Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire	0	0	0	1	0	1
Lockyer Valley Regional	96	112	141	197	145	691
Logan City	4,921	7,594	7,352	7,506	9,938	37,311
Longreach Regional	1	1	0	0	0	2
Mackay Regional	6	2	2	8	1	19
Maitland City Council	0	0	0	1	0	1
Manningham City	0	0	0	2	1	3
Maranoa Regional	2	1	1	5	0	9
Mareeba Shire	0	0	0	0	3	3
Mareeba Shire	1	1	0	7	0	9
Maribyrnong City	0	0	0	1	1	2
Maroondah City	0	0	0	0	3	3
Mid Murray Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mid-Coast Council	0	0	0	2	4	6
Mid-Western Regional Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Monash City	0	0	1	1	0	2
Moonee Valley City	0	0	0	0	1	1
Moree Plains Shire Council	0	1	0	0	0	1
Moreland City	0	0	0	0	1	1
Moreton Bay Regional	312	280	508	561	549	2,210
Mosman Municipal Council	0	0	0	1	1	2
Mount Isa City	1	0	1	1	0	3
Murrindindi Shire	0	0	0	0	1	1
Murweh Shire	1	0	0	1	0	2
Muswellbrook Shire Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Nambucca Shire Council	0	0	0	0	3	3
Newcastle City Council	0	0	0	2	3	5
Nillumbik Shire	0	0	0	1	0	1
Noosa Shire	19	16	12	12	16	75
North Burnett Regional	1	3	5	1	2	12
North Sydney Council	0	0	1	0	0	1
Northern Beaches Council	0	0	1	1	6	8
Paroo Shire	0	1	0	0	1	2
Penrith City Council	0	0	0	1	2	3
Port Augusta City Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council		0	1	2	2	5
Port Phillip City	0	1	0	1	0	2
Port Stephens Council	0	1	0	1	1	3
Randwick City Council	0	0	0	1	1	2
Redland City	243	275	274	637	1029	2,458
Richmond Shire	1	0	0	0	0	1
Richmond Valley Council	0	0	0	2	2	4
Rockhampton Regional	5	8	2	7	7	29
Roper Gulf Region	0	0	0	0	1	1
Ryde City Council	0	0	2	2	1	5
Scenic Rim Regional	223	387	290	470	767	2,137
Shellharbour City Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Shire of Broome	0	0	0	0	1	1
Shire of Derby-West Kimberley	0	0	0	1	0	1
Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup	0	0	0	1	0	1
Shire of Esperance	0	0	0	0	1	1
Shire of Kalamunda	0	0	1	0	1	2
Shire of Murray	0	0	0	1	0	1
Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley	0	0	0	0	1	1
Somerset Regional	67	68	63	69	65	332
South Burnett Regional	5	5	5	12	12	39
Southern Downs Regional	7	8	9	23	21	68
Strathfield Municipal Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sunshine Coast Regional	91	72	63	105	232	563
Surf Coast Shire	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sutherland Shire Council	0	0	0	3	0	3
Sutherland Shire Council	0	0	0	0	2	2

Tabelands Regional	0	2	2	5	0	9
Tamworth Regional Council	0	0	0	1	1	2
The Hills Shire Council	0	0	0	1	1	2
The rural city of Murray Bridge	0	0	1	0	0	1
Toowoomba Regional	47	29	41	228	242	587
Town of Port Hedland	0	0	0	0	1	1
Townsville City	17	12	4	14	2	49
Tweed Shire Council	1	1	0	62	108	172
Uralla Shire Council	0	0	0	0	1	1
Wagga Wagga City Council	0	0	1	0	0	1
Warren Shire Council	0	0	0	0	2	2
Waverley Council	0	0	0	0	3	3
Western Downs Regional	4	4	6	12	12	38
Whitehorse City	0	0	0	1	0	1
Whitsunday Regional	5	2	2	4	3	16
Whittlesea City	0	0	0	1	0	1
Wingecarribee Shire Council	0	0	0	0	2	2
Wodonga City	0	0	0	0	1	1
Woollongong City Council	0	0	1	6	0	7
Wyndham City	1	0	0	0	1	2
Yarra City	0	0	0	0	1	1
Yarra Ranges Shire	1	0	1	0	3	5
TOTAL reports per year	13,059	18,515	18,050	20,115	25,718	95,457

2 Number of Sightings (Confirmed)

Number of Fire Ant nests recorded by LGA each year						
LGA	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
Ballina Shire Council					6	6
Brisbane City	4,461	4,798	2,847	2,642	2,337	17,085
Gold Coast City	1,555	2,011	1,264	1,856	1,466	8,152
Ipswich City	6,045	6,885	5,862	3,239	3,573	25,604
Lockyer Valley Regional	34	20	768	335	184	1,341
Logan City	9,968	12,026	7,563	6,495	6,737	42,789
Moreton Bay City	13	17	9	53	112	204
Redland City	310	297	213	508	552	1,880
Scenic Rim Regional	738	1,259	1,739	1,611	960	6,307
Somerset Regional	49	216	54	13	13	345
Sunshine Coast Regional					15	15
Toowoomba Regional				2	83	85
Tweed Shire Council				5	1	6
Total per year	23,173	27,529	20,319	16,759	16,039	103,819

3 Number of treatments

- Every nest that returned a confirmed positive sample has been treated. There were 103,819 positive samples retrieved from 2020 to 2024. The number of treatments an area receives is dependent on the characteristics of the site, scientific assessment of the nest, and whether it is in the eradication treatment area or the suppression area. Eradication treatment consists of multiple rounds of insect growth regulator treatment over multiple years.

4 Treatment methods used by DAF officers

- NFAEP has developed multiple capabilities to enable efficient and effective delivery of treatment dependent on the needs of the site receiving treatment. These include direct nest injection, field treatment using hand spreaders, blower trucks, utility terrain vehicle, drones, helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. The method used is based on accessibility, terrain and, critically, how the bait is best applied to ensure it meets the requirements of the permits for its use and at all times ensures the safety of people, animals and the environment.

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 5

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 4 and Biosecurity Queensland's operations, will the Minister outline the breakdown of the state government's funding for general biosecurity projects and programs:

- a) animal measures and plant based measures (reported separately 2020-24)
- b) cattle tick monitoring and enforcement measures (reported separately 2020-24)
- c) fire ant monitoring, eradication and enforcement measures (reported separately 2020-24)?

ANSWER:

- a) Animal measures and plant-based measures (reported separately 2020-24)

2019-20 (\$)	2020-21 (\$)	2021-22 (\$)	2022-23 (\$)	2023-24 (\$)
65,037,292	64,940,421	45,539,959	55,081,749	80,893,764

The above figures are State Appropriation excluding that provided for Animal Welfare and Product Integrity, inclusive of eradication programs

- b) Cattle tick monitoring and enforcement measures (reported separately 2020-24)

2019-20 (\$)	2020-21 (\$)	2021-22 (\$)	2022-23 (\$)	2023-24 (\$)
943,101	655,325	675,651	550,215	480,664

- c) Fire ant monitoring, eradication and enforcement measures (reported separately 2020-24)

2019-20 (\$)	2020-21 (\$)	2021-22 (\$)	2022-23 (\$)	2023-24 (\$)
14,062,000	16,135,000	128,000	2,718,000	14,432,000

The above figures are State Appropriation for the National Fire Ant Eradication Program and the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST).

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 6

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to the Service Delivery Statements (SDS) page 9 relating to DAF's capital program for 2023-24 – Will the Minister provide a list of approved projects including:

- the budget and scope of each project for 2022-23 and 2023-24 reported separately and
- the scheduled date of completion (reported in table format)?

ANSWER:

The DAF capital program is focused on developing and upgrading research facilities, existing infrastructure, and land improvements to support service delivery outcomes for the agriculture, biosecurity, fisheries, and forestry sectors.

The first table below reflects the published capital program budget for 2022-23 that includes both capital purchases and capital grants.

DAF 2022-23 CAPITAL PROGRAM			
CAPITAL PURCHASES IN 2022-23			
Capital Project Name	Scope	2022-23 Budget \$'000	Scheduled Date of Completion
Computer Equipment	Enhancements of Information Technology Network services	3,187	Ongoing
Assets formerly held by Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC)	Finalise long-term decisions on the future of assets formerly held by the QATC, including a new Central Queensland Smart Cropping Centre at Emerald.	2,700	30/06/2025
Heavy Plant and Equipment	Purchase of agricultural machinery such as tractors, irrigators and all- terrain vehicles.	2,586	Ongoing
Upgrade to Mareeba Research Facility	Continue the upgrade of fruit handling laboratories enabling scientists to provide research services to the expanding and new horticultural industries at Mareeba.	2,520	30/06/2023
Research Facilities Development	Upgrades and replacement of infrastructure such as laboratories and glasshouses at research facilities.	1,796	Ongoing
Scientific Equipment	Purchase of scientific equipment such as microscopes, autoclaves, centrifuges, ultra-low temperature freezers,	1,762	Ongoing
Wild Dog Barrier Fence	Enhancements to Wild Dog Barrier Fence and office equipment.	1,400	Ongoing

Minor Works	Upgrades and replacement of infrastructure such as sheds and sewerage systems at operational facilities.	1,327	Ongoing
Gatton Smart Farm	Upgrade infrastructure and equipment to support horticulture productivity and profitability.	1,200	30/06/2024
Fit-out of Ecosciences and Health and Food Sciences Precincts (HFSP)	Replace and upgrade fit-out equipment such as cold-rooms and shade-sails.	953	Ongoing
Other Property, Plant and Equipment	Purchase of livestock and enhancement of office equipment	673	Ongoing
Longreach Office Upgrade	Upgrades to aged air conditioning at the Longreach office	600	30/06/2023
Vessels and Marine Equipment	Continue to replace vessels and marine equipment for fisheries research and regulatory functions.	552	Ongoing
Maroochy Research Facility Spillway Upgrade	Design and project management of new dam spillway at Maroochy Research Facility.	300	30/06/2023
Gatton Research Facility Fire Hydrant Upgrade	Upgrade to aged fire hydrant system at Gatton Research Facility.	270	30/06/2023
Tor Street Toowoomba Complex Fire Hydrant Upgrade	Upgrade to aged fire hydrant system at Tor Street complex.	150	30/06/2023
TOTAL CAPITAL PURCHASES FOR 2022-23		21,976	
CAPITAL GRANTS IN 2022-23			
Capital Grant Name	Scope	2022-23 Budget \$'000	Scheduled Date of Completion
Assets formerly held by Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC)	Finalise long-term decisions on the future of assets formerly held by the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges.	4,000	30/06/2023
Young Animal Protection Society Upgrade	Contribution towards the upgrade of adoption facilities in Cairns.	1,000	30/06/2023
Queensland Country Women's Association Building Restoration and Renovation	To continue minor works upgrades to infrastructure, including community halls	500	30/06/2024
TOTAL CAPITAL GRANTS FOR 2022-23		5,500	
TOTAL CAPITAL PURCHASES AND GRANTS FOR 2022-23		27,476	

The table below reflects the published capital program budget for 2023-2024 that includes both capital purchases and capital grants.

DAF 2023-24 CAPITAL PROGRAM			
CAPITAL PURCHASES IN 2023-24			
Capital Project Name	Scope	2023-24 Budget \$'000	Scheduled Date of Completion
Computer Equipment	Enhancements of Information Technology Network services	4,290	Ongoing
Assets formerly held by Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC)	Finalise long-term decisions on the future of assets formerly held by the QATC, including a new Central Queensland Smart Cropping Centre at Emerald.	2,075	30/06/2025
Scientific Equipment	Purchase of scientific equipment such as microscopes, autoclaves, centrifuges, ultra-low temperature freezers,	1,477	Ongoing
Research Facilities Development	Upgrades and replacement of infrastructure such as laboratories and glasshouses at research facilities.	549	Ongoing
Heavy Plant and Equipment	Purchase of agricultural machinery such as tractors, irrigators and all- terrain vehicles.	1,700	Ongoing
Minor Works	Upgrades and replacement of infrastructure such as sheds and sewerage systems at operational facilities.	1,943	Ongoing
Gatton Smart Farm	Upgrade infrastructure and equipment to support horticulture productivity and profitability.	1,512	30/06/2024
Brands information system replacement	Development of a replacement information technology system for Brands.	1,404	30/06/2024
Vessels and Marine Equipment	Continue to replace vessels and marine equipment for fisheries research and regulatory functions.	1,406	Ongoing
Wild Dog Barrier Fence	Enhancements to Wild Dog Barrier Fence and office equipment.	1,428	Ongoing
Queensland aquaculture transformation	Development of a diverse aquaculture industry.	965	30/06/2024
Other Property, Plant and Equipment	Purchase of livestock and enhancement of office equipment	969	Ongoing
Longreach Office Upgrade	Upgrades to aged air conditioning at the Longreach office	585	30/06/2024
Longreach office fire information panel & smoke detectors upgrade	Upgrade of the Dry Fire Services (including fire indicator panel, smoke detectors, early warning systems) to Australian Standards.	276	30/06/2024
Fit-out of Ecosciences and Health and Food Sciences Precincts (HFSP)	Replace and upgrade fit-out equipment such as cold-rooms and shade-sails.	820	Ongoing
Gatton Research Facility Fire Hydrant Upgrade	Upgrade to aged fire hydrant system at Gatton Research Facility.	270	30/06/2024
Maroochy Research Facility Spillway Upgrade	Design and project management of new dam spillway at Maroochy Research Facility.	265	30/06/2024
Maroochy Research Facility fire hydrant water mains upgrade	Upgrade to aged fire hydrant system at Maroochy Research Facility.	254	30/06/2024
TOTAL CAPITAL PURCHASES FOR 2023-24		22,189	

CAPITAL GRANTS IN 2023-24			
Capital Grant Name	Scope	2023-24 Budget \$'000	Scheduled Date of Completion
Assets formerly held by Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges (QATC)	Finalise long-term decisions on the future of assets formerly held by the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges.	4,000	30/06/2024
Young Animal Protection Society Upgrade	Contribution towards the upgrade of adoption facilities in Cairns.	600	30/06/2025
Queensland Country Women's Association Building Restoration and Renovation	To continue minor works upgrades to infrastructure, including community halls	500	30/06/2024
TOTAL CAPITAL GRANTS FOR 2023-24		5,100	
TOTAL CAPITAL PURCHASES AND GRANTS FOR 2023-24		27,289	

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 7

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 4 under Biosecurity service area's objective to 'mitigate the risks and impact of animal and plant pests and disease and weeds' – Will the Minister outline the Government's spending for the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years to directly combat the following diseases:

- (a) Japanese encephalitis
- (b) African swine fever
- (c) Foot and mouth disease
- (d) Deadly lumpy skin disease
- (e) Bovine Johne's disease
- (f) varroa mite
- (g) white spot disease

ANSWER:

The expenditure listed in the provided table represents total expenditure specific to address each threat and does not take into consideration core business prevention and preparedness effort that is relevant to these pests and diseases.

There is a significant amount of resourcing of day-to-day business operations that is directly relevant to prevention and preparedness for these specific threats. For example, promotion of better on-farm biosecurity is helping protect industry from these pests and diseases.

Also, prevention and preparedness for one threat has benefits for other threats. For example, preparedness work that had been undertaken in relation to African swine fever had the flow on benefit of ensuring that the pork industry built its capability across the full spectrum of threats and is managing key biosecurity risks, which greatly supported the response to Japanese encephalitis in 2022.

Disease	2022-23 Expenditure	2023-24 Expenditure
Japanese encephalitis	1,090,605.92	589.69
African swine fever	1,927,479.52	2,560,214.16
Foot and mouth disease	73,115.64	78,983.64
Lumpy skin disease	250,000.00	-
Bovine Johne's disease (BJD)*	-	-
Varroa mite	1,939,975.81	7,010,846.39
White spot disease(WSD) **	-	-
Total	\$5,281,176.89	\$9,650,633.88

*BJD is not an emergency animal disease and is consider endemic in Australia and thus managed by industry.

**There were no direct combat activities for WSD in Queensland in 2022-23 or 2023-24 with efforts focused on surveillance and compliance.

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2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 8

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline the costs expended by the Queensland Government on the National Fire Ant Eradication program, listed separately by year from 2015 to 2024?

ANSWER:

The National Fire Ant Eradication Program is a nationally cost shared program as a priority pest for Australia. The funding model used is described as a 'deed-like' response that mirrors contributions made under the national environmental biosecurity response agreement (NEBRA). The Commonwealth contributes 50% and the state/territory party's share of the remaining 50% contribution equals the number of people in a jurisdiction divided by the total number of people potentially affected in Australia. Queensland's annual contribution under this agreement is outlined in the table below.

National Fire Ant Eradication Program Expenditure			
National Arrangement	Financial Year	Agreed Qld Contribution	Actual Qld Contribution
One year funding agreement	2014-15	\$4,695,046	\$4,695,046
One year funding agreement	2015-16	\$5,251,172	\$5,251,172
One year funding agreement	2016-17	\$4,099,082	\$4,099,082
Ten-year Plan 2017-2027 total funding contribution by all jurisdictions \$411.426M Queensland Total Contribution \$43.231M	2017-18	\$3,864,600	\$3,864,600
	2018-19	\$3,959,940	\$9,169,070*
	2019-20	\$4,057,631	\$14,062,054*
	2020-21	\$4,157,733	\$16,135,221*
	2021-22	\$4,260,304	\$137
2022-23	\$4,365,406	\$0	
Response Plan 2023-2027 total funding \$592.846M (GST exclusive) over four years. Queensland Total Contribution \$60.945M	2023-24	\$13,682,064	\$13,682,064

*From 2018-19, Queensland and the Australian Governments commenced bringing forward approved funds for the out years of the ten-year plan 2017-2027.

By 2021-22, Queensland had brought forward all approved contributions under the ten-year plan resulting in a smaller contribution in 2021-22 and zero in 2022-23. The other jurisdictions used their approved funds to fund the national program in these two years.

While outside the scope of the National Fire Ant Eradication Program and associated cost sharing, the Queensland Government committed an additional \$37.1 million from 2021-26, to support eradication efforts through the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST).

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 9

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to the GRASS program for beef producers in the Burdekin, Fitzroy and Burnett Mary regions, please advise the total number of producers who have received 'financial incentives' under this program, the combined dollar value of 'financial incentives' and what measures producers were required to implement as a condition for receiving these monies.

ANSWER:

The Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) is funded through the Queensland Government's Queensland Reef Water Quality Program (QRWQP) and delivered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF), Burnett Mary Regional Group, Fitzroy Basin Association and NQ Dry Tropics. The program is administered by the Queensland Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI).

The GRASS program supports graziers to develop and implement a tailor-made action plan for land management. The action plan assists graziers to improve and then maintain their land condition with a specific focus on improving ground cover and pasture. Improving land condition can enhance production, provide economic benefits and environmental outcomes.

DESI can provide comprehensive information on the incentive scheme including combined dollar value of 'financial incentives' and what measures producers were required to implement as a condition for receiving these monies.

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 10

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

Please advise how many producers in Reef Adjacent areas have signed up for the Reef Credit Scheme and how much income these producers have earned through their involvement in the scheme, after the cost of participation in the scheme have been deducted (please provide as a combined total).

ANSWER:

Oversight of the Reef Credit Scheme falls within the portfolio of the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation. However, I can provide an answer based on publicly available information.

The Reef Credit Scheme is managed by independent, not-for-profit company, Eco-Markets Australia.

For a project or action to be eligible to earn Reef Credits, it must follow certain rules - the Reef Credit Standard - and be undertaken in a certain way using a particular method or methods.

These rules are administered by Eco-Markets Australia to ensure the reductions in nutrient or sediment run-off can be measured and verified. All Reef Credit projects must be registered with Eco-Markets Australia to earn Reef Credits.

The Queensland Government has committed \$10 million to help kick-start the Reef Credit market, recruiting brokers to work with landholders to establish Reef Credit projects on grazing and sugarcane properties, and to secure potential buyers for the Reef Credits generated. Brokers - Palladium and Greencollar - have been awarded contracts through an open procurement process.

The Eco-Markets Australia website states that 13 projects have been registered and 50,059 credits issued. As an emerging market, information on income and costs for producers is commercial in confidence and not publicly available.

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2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 11

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to the SDS page 1, will the Minister advise how DAF is supporting Queensland's rural economy by assisting the Commonwealth on labour?

ANSWER:

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) works collaboratively with relevant Australian Government agencies to investigate, collaborate, monitor, report on, and have strategic oversight of the workforce and skills needs for the Australian agriculture and processing sectors. This includes the strong support provided to the Australian Government's Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), which has responsibility for the onshore operations of the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme. DAF is a trusted partner among PALM stakeholders and we continue to work collaboratively with DEWR as the scheme helps address much of the low-skilled and semi-skilled worker shortfalls in Queensland.

DAF also administers the Rural Jobs Initiatives and the Backing Bush Communities Fund – Workforce Training which directly support key labour initiatives across Queensland's rural economy.

Since being established in 2015, the Rural Jobs Initiatives has received funding of over \$11.9 million. This sustained investment demonstrates the Queensland Government's commitment to connect with and support Queensland agribusiness efforts to attract, develop and retain skilled workers and seasonal labour.

The Rural Jobs Initiatives comprises the Rural Jobs and Skills Alliance (RJSA) and the Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network (QAWN).

QAWN is a regional network of seven industry-based agriculture workforce officers who work directly with producers and operators across the supply chain and supports agribusinesses to attract and retain workers in a competitive labour market.

The RJSA is coordinated by Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) and brings together multiple peak bodies including AgForce, CANEGROWERS, Growcom and Cotton Australia, as well as poultry, irrigation, and forestry and timber stakeholders. The RJSA was instrumental in providing expertise, strategic advice and access to networks to inform and guide the development of the Queensland Agriculture Industry Workforce Plan 2022-2027 (QAIWP) that was released in July 2022.

The Rural Jobs Initiatives have aligned activities to support outcomes under the industry led QAIWPs four action areas of Adaptability and Capability; Workforce Attraction and Diversity; Workforce Retention; and Workforce Skilling.

DAF is also administering an \$8M investment by the Queensland Government over four years in grant funding to QFF and AgForce for industry programs to upskill the agriculture workforce.

This funding is part of the \$160M Bush Boost investment announced in August 2023 aimed at supporting regional economies to grow and diversify.

QFF, its members, and AgForce are receiving \$4M each between now and 2027 to deliver industry training initiatives that recognise and complement existing workforce skilling initiatives aligned with the QAIWP.

Delivery of this \$8M investment in workforce skilling initiatives will support:

- Queensland agribusinesses and their workforce to adopt contemporary technologies, management practices and innovations
- a diverse and capable workforce that is attracted to careers and employment in agriculture throughout their working lives
- an agriculture workforce with access to flexible pathways to pursue rewarding careers and employment opportunities, and
- an appropriately skilled agriculture workforce supported by flexible training and education pathways that are industry-led and responsive to industry trends.

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 12

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to page 1 of the SDS, regarding climate change variability and assisting agribusiness to lower greenhouse emissions, will the Minister advise how DAF is supporting industry to actively contribute to the overall government targets?

ANSWER:

The agriculture sector has the potential to make significant contributions to Queensland's decarbonisation agenda and at the same time capitalise on the opportunities presented by a low carbon economy. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) is working closely with the agriculture sector to maximise these opportunities and contribute to Queensland's whole-of-economy emissions reduction targets.

In 2021, Queensland's land sector became a net carbon sink for the first time, and this sink has continued to grow in the 2022 national greenhouse gas inventory reporting. Much of this carbon sequestration has occurred on agricultural lands, and Queensland's agriculture sector can be proud of the emissions reduction outcomes it has delivered for the State.

In March 2023, I proudly launched the Queensland Low Emissions Agriculture Roadmap 2022-2032 (the Roadmap) alongside the President and Chief Executive Officer of the industry peak body AgForce. The Roadmap is a high level strategy - co-designed and co-owned by industry and Government - to facilitate the transition to low emissions agriculture production. The Roadmap contains 30 strategic actions across five pathways that detail how Government and industry can work together to achieve low-emissions production practices and technologies, improve landscape management, and grow the sector within a decarbonised economy, such as through the development of new cropping varieties for the production of biofuels and bioplastics. Importantly, the Roadmap also contains 21 enterprise-level actions that outline what producers and landholders can do, think about and plan for now, to lower emissions and prepare for the low-carbon production systems of the future.

DAF continues to work with the Roadmap Stakeholder Advisory Committee, comprising representatives from industry, academia, conservation and First Nations organisations, to drive the delivery of the Roadmap pathways and actions. A full mid-term review of the Roadmap will be undertaken in 2027 to ensure the actions and pathways reflect the best available science and are updated as needed to continue accelerating the decarbonisation effort.

From March 2024 to June 2025, DAF will invest \$1.8 million from the Farm Business Resilience Planning program to deliver a pilot carbon outreach extension program.

This program aims to upskill Queensland producers, agri-service providers and other extension specialists such as Natural Resource Management officers, on low emissions

production options and landscape carbon management. The program will focus on a 'train the trainer' approach, empowering existing service providers within the sector with the knowledge and skills to build low emissions and carbon positive advice into existing extension and agri-service programs. This approach will ensure a longer-term legacy from the program, and land managers will have access to knowledgeable advisors who are armed with up-to-date expertise.

The extension program will deliver 50 workshops or engagement events across Queensland, with sessions tailored to the livestock/extensive grazing, horticulture and broadacre cropping sectors. The DAF investment will complement the Australian Government's Carbon Farming Outreach Program being delivered in Queensland by an industry consortium. Investment through the Farm Business Resilience Planning program will more than double the number of carbon outreach workshops and engagement events being delivered in Queensland, giving even more landholders access to low-emissions production and management advice.

On 1 July 2024, the Zero Net Emissions Agriculture Cooperative Research Centre (ZNE-Ag CRC) commenced operations. The ZNE-Ag CRC is a 10-year investment that aims to develop technologies and solutions to reduce emissions in agriculture, mitigate risks to future investment and trade, and secure the economic future of the agricultural sector.

DAF was instrumental in the establishment of the ZNE-Ag CRC, partnering with the University of Queensland to broker the initiative. It brings together a consortium of 73 partners across industry, education and government with the common goal to achieve zero net emissions in Australian agriculture and boost the \$70 billion sector. As a Tier 1 partner in the ZNE-Ag CRC, DAF will work with the Board and other partner organisations to plot the initial pathway of the CRC and determine the priority fast-track projects for immediate investment and delivery.

In addition to the ZNE-Ag CRC, DAF continues to deliver world leading research, development and extension projects that will help land managers to make informed decisions to lower emissions, meet industry sustainability frameworks and consumer requirements, and maintain favourable trade arrangements. For example, Steak 'n Wood is a collaborative project between DAF and Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) to quantify the productivity, greenhouse gas emissions mitigation and ecosystem services of silvopastoral systems as a pathway to become carbon neutral by 2030.

In early 2024, DAF completed the four-year Method to Market project, again in partnership with MLA. This highly successful and well-regarded project worked with producers in central and south-west Queensland and sought to overcome the technical and economic barriers to participation in ecosystem services markets such as generating carbon, biodiversity and water quality credits while also delivering a profitable livestock operation. The project found that currently the greatest capacity to reduce emissions in extensive livestock operations is to increase production efficiency through best management practices. The development of new carbon farming methodologies and technologies to minimise methane production in livestock may provide landholders with more diverse management options in the future.

The Queensland Government's ongoing investment in other DAF research and extension programs, such as the Reef Water Quality Program and Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions program include significant research and extension to work with producers to lower their fertiliser use, improve soil health, and better manage grazing systems. While not directly targeting carbon emissions, the production technologies and systems encouraged through these programs often result in reduced carbon emissions and other environmental co-benefits.

DAF is engaged in a range of policy, science and engagement activities with governments, landholders and other land-sector stakeholders to address climate change and ensure that the agriculture sector's achievements in emissions reduction are recognised as contributing to Queensland's emissions reduction targets.

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 13

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS Page 3 - will the Minister advise on the current drought status for Queensland?

ANSWER:

Effective 1 May 2024, no part of Queensland is drought declared (zero per cent).

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 14

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 3 - will the Minister advise on the information that is available to producers when it comes to drought assistance?

ANSWER:

Queensland delivers research, development and extension services to support primary producers adopt drought and climate resilient practices principally through the Drought and Climate Adaptation Program (DCAP).

DCAP partners with a number of other agencies, academia and industry to deliver projects that can assist producers manage drought. In particular, under the DCAP umbrella is the Farm Business Resilience Program (FBRP) (a partnership with the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund) that delivers structured training and workshops for farmers and graziers to prepare for and manage business and climate risks.

An outcome of the FBRP is for producers to develop Farm Business Resilience Plans that will assist them to identify and manage and respond to risks to their primary production enterprise such as drought.

Queensland has undertaken a major reform of its drought assistance measures which are no longer contingent on drought declaration. In place of the Drought Relief Assistance Scheme which will no longer be offered in future droughts, Queensland delivers a suite of grants and loans administered by the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA) that are intended to help producers proactively manage the risks identified in their Farm Business Resilience Plan. Further information on DCAP and the FBRP can be found on the website: www.longpaddock.qld.gov.au/dcap/.

The Queensland Government has actively promoted the drought preparedness measures that are available with a comprehensive webpage linking to the available drought assistance on the website: www.daf.qld.gov.au/news-media/campaigns/drought-assist.

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2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 15

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 3 - will the Minister outline some of the external arrangements Agri-science has with external providers?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government supports the growth of Queensland's agriculture and food sector by investing in agricultural research, development and extension (RD&E).

In 2023-24, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) managed an RD&E portfolio of over 330 projects worth approximately \$589 million.

Agri-Science Queensland, DAF's research arm of the department delivers RD&E outcomes both internally and through external arrangements with partners, such as industry and the university sector. This investment in RD&E is a critical tool in delivering positive impact for the sector and growing Queensland's agriculture and food industries.

Agri-Science Queensland collaborates with over 200 different organisations across Australia, and a further 36 international organisations from 19 countries. These collaborations deliver high-value scientific research outcomes for producers and for Queenslanders, ensuring Queensland, Australian and global consumers have access to safe, affordable, trusted, sustainable and nutritious products.

As part of this investment, DAF has well established alliances with the university sector. These are an important part of external investment into RD&E. These external arrangements also have the benefit of being able to access funding sources not available to DAF, such as the Australian Research Council, which helps maintain high-value scientific research outcomes for producers and Queenslanders.

In 2024-25, DAF will fund a total of \$9.635 million for RD&E delivered through university alliances including:

- \$8.938M with the University of Queensland (UQ) through the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation; a research collaboration between UQ and the Queensland Government to work together on key agricultural industry challenges
- \$497,300 with the University of Southern Queensland through the Broadacre Cropping Initiative. This partnership delivers research in wheat and summer grain pathology, agricultural systems modelling, agricultural engineering and winter crop nematology
- \$200,000 with UQ for the Centre for Future Timber Structures, providing solutions to the widespread adoption of massive timber construction in medium- to high-rise construction.

DAF will also invest \$2.85 million in 2024-25 in sugar RD&E through Sugar Research Australia.

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2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 16

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 3 - will the Minister outline some key agri-tech innovations that benefit Queensland producers?

ANSWER:

Queensland agriculture is embracing technologies (AgTech) such as artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, sensors, protected cropping structures, fresh produce packaging, machinery, and biotechnology, delivering real benefits to producers. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' (DAF) modelling estimates that over the next 10 years, AgTech will add more than \$7 billion to Queensland's economy and support over 14,000 jobs.

Integrated AgTech solutions are transforming agriculture, creating an opportunity to mobilise regional economic activity and new skilled job opportunities that will:

- support the viability of our agriculture sector to provide safe, nutritious and affordable food for consumers as they manage cost of living pressures
- drive productivity and sustainability improvements, including input cost reductions for energy, water and fertiliser, enhancing resilience and reducing emissions
- maintain and grow exports of agricultural commodities and value-added products, diversify into new natural capital markets, and grow new AgTech products and services
- strengthen traceability and verification systems, including enabling agribusinesses to quantify and verify their environmental, social and governance impact
- support biosecurity preparedness and response through remote sensing, traceability and integrated pest management systems including tech-enabled biological controls.

Queensland is actively driving AgTech innovation to benefit its producers through the Queensland AgTech Roadmap 2023–2028. The AgTech Roadmap outlines the plan to strengthen the innovation ecosystem; activate the infrastructure that supports adoption and export of AgTech; build AgTech capability and digital literacy; connect to domestic and global opportunities; and coordinate the policies and programs needed to make all this happen.

The Digital Transformation in Agribusiness Initiative (the Initiative) programs and services are supporting the delivery of activities that are unlocking data-driven, innovative, digital solutions. The Agribusiness Digital Solutions Grant Scheme is one of the key investments under the Initiative, providing grants that are matched with funding by industry organisations to deliver projects that provide industry-wide outcomes. Two rounds have been delivered, with \$1.615 million invested in projects to boost confidence and trust in AgTech.

The projects that have been funded support agribusinesses to integrate digital solutions into their operations and navigate the challenges that are sometimes difficult to tackle alone. Round two funded projects advance the adoption of digital monitoring and management systems, farm data collection tools, real-time machine learning applications and robotic solutions.

The Initiative has also unlocked a collaboration between DAF and Infarm that uses cutting-edge advances in artificial intelligence and field computing technology to build an automatic cattle detection, identification, and tracking herd management system. The CattleCam project will create new streams of data to help Australian cattle producers make more informed management decisions. Cameras will be trained to identify changes in behaviours, symptoms of disease, lameness, and other issues such as bottle teat, and report the findings to the producer. The CattleCam has also been able to keep track of feral and native animals and monitor watering points.

Queensland Smart Farms offers innovators, researchers and AgTech developers the ability to test and showcase the real benefits of technology to give producers confidence in the technology that they use. Smart Farms work with agribusinesses to discover how technology can benefit their business, helping them make informed decisions on which AgTech they should adopt.

The award-winning Gatton AgTech Showcase attracted over 800 participants to Gatton in November 2023 which led vegetable producers to adopt autonomous seeding and weeding technology. This technology allows producers to seed and weed vegetable crops without the need for labour.

Under the Smart Farm Initiative, DAF has established an Agricultural Weather Station Network across the Lockyer Valley, Eastern Darling Downs and the Granite Belt. Free access to fifty weather stations is available to assist producers with decision making.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 17

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 4 - will the Minister outline the requirements around a General Biosecurity Obligation?

ANSWER:

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, all Queenslanders have a General Biosecurity Obligation to take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent or minimise a biosecurity risk.

A General Biosecurity Obligation applies to anyone who deals with a living thing, disease or contaminant or undertakes another activity that is likely to pose a biosecurity risk.

Guidance on what is reasonable and practical is provided in many ways, including through fact sheets, demonstrations and other educational tools.

The main benefit of the General Biosecurity Obligation is the flexibility it provides. However, it is still important to maintain some regulations and codes of practice, and prescriptive requirements may be necessary in some circumstances, such as where only certain steps are effective in managing a high-risk pest.

This General Biosecurity Obligation can be enforced to protect our economy, environment, human and animal health and way of life from biosecurity risks. If individuals know or ought to know that they should do something to prevent or minimise a biosecurity risk but decide not to, they may be guilty of an offence with a very significant maximum penalty including a biosecurity order requiring them to do something specific to address the risk within a stated timeframe to meet their obligation.

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2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 18

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 4 - will the Minister detail the nature of the national program and FAST regarding red imported fire ants?

ANSWER:

The National Fire Ant Eradication Program (NFAEP) is a nationally cost-shared biosecurity response, with every State and Territory Government and the Australian Government providing funding to eradicate this pest.

In 2021, the then Steering Committee, commissioned an Independent Strategic Review of the Program. The aim was to examine the Program's effectiveness; the feasibility of achieving fire ant eradication; and alternative strategies for achieving the eradication objectives.

The Strategic Review concluded that fire ants can still be eradicated, pending changes to the response at National, State, and Local levels. As a result, the Program developed the Fire Ant Response Plan 2023-27.

In July last year, all Agriculture Ministers endorsed the Fire Ant Response Plan 2023-27 to continue the eradication effort.

The Response Plan is underpinned by \$592.846M (GST exclusive) in funding over four years. All cost share partners have committed to the four years, except for Western Australia, which has currently committed to the first two years of the Response Plan.

The Response Plan leverages learnings from the Program, uses the best available science, technology, and employs innovative approaches to address the Strategic Review's 27 recommendations.

The plan employs proactive baiting beyond the outermost confirmed infestation with the aim of containing the infestation. This involves treating in a continuous band from Moreton Bay, west to the Lockyer Valley, through the Scenic Rim to the Gold Coast.

Another key recommendation of the Strategic Review was for the Queensland Government to fund and coordinate suppression activities in the area inside of the NFAEP's eradication treatment zone. This recommendation culminated in the establishment of the Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST).

The Miles Government's \$37.1 million Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce (FAST) complements the NFAEP's work. FAST mobilises Local, State, and Australian governments, communities and businesses to suppress fire ant populations to control and reduce their density in support of future eradication efforts.

The collaborative effort between FAST and the NFAEP aims to minimise risk of the spread of fire ants, protect the overall eradication investment and ensure effective eradication.

Without the NFAEP, modelling tells us that conservatively fire ants would have spread as far south as Canberra, north to Bowen and west to Longreach, potentially costing the Australian economy more than \$1.65 billion per year.

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 19

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 5 - will the Minister provide an update on the sustainable fisheries strategy?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government continues to implement the actions in the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027 (the Strategy). After seven years of reforms, the sustainability of Queensland's fisheries is vastly improved, ensuring fish for future generations to enjoy.

Fisheries Queensland remains on track to deliver all 33 actions in the strategy by 2027. Key remaining items for delivery are independent onboard monitoring for high-risk fisheries, and development of a harvest strategy for the Gulf of Carpentaria inshore fishery.

The continued delivery of the Strategy will support sustainable fisheries, including a successful commercial industry, healthy recreational fishing sector and enhanced First Nations opportunities.

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2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 20

THE HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

With reference to SDS page 5 – will the Minister provide an update on the importance of WTOs to fisheries?

ANSWER:

All Australian fisheries that export product must be approved under the Australian *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)*, by either being assessed and accredited as a Wildlife Trade Operation, or WTO, or assessed as a low sustainability risk and exempt from export controls.

Thirteen Queensland fisheries have export accreditation under the EPBC Act with some key products being prawns, coral trout, tropical rock lobster and Moreton Bay bugs.

Fisheries are also separately accredited under Part 13 of the EPBC Act, which means that fishers who injure or kill a listed, threatened, migratory or marine species in Australian waters, such as in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, are not committing an offence under the *EPBC Act*.

Maintaining EPBC Act export approvals and Part 13 protected species accreditation is critical in allowing continued employment in the fishery, and maintains export markets for industry.

These approvals continue to demonstrate Queensland's fisheries, in particular those operating in the Great Barrer Reef World Heritage Area, are sustainably managed, while contributing to the Queensland economy.

Mr Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

[Crossbench Member Question]

MR MICHAEL BERKMAN MP, MEMBER FOR MAIWAR, ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

In relation to Queensland's Shark Control Program and whale entanglements in nets and drumlines:

- a) What practical work has the Department conducted to test the efficacy of electronic warning devices (whale pingers) on shark nets and drum lines?
- b) Was any other Minister, Department or local government involved in the decision not to remove shark nets from Queensland waters during whale migration season in 2020 and each year since, including specifically the Premier at the time?

ANSWER:

Successive governments have recognised the vital role the Shark Control Program plays in protecting human life at popular beaches, which attract tourists from all over the world. The Queensland Government will always put the safety of people first and will not make changes, including the removal of shark nets, until effective alternatives are identified, trialled and proven for Queensland conditions.

The Queensland Government is committed to reviewing and adapting the Program in line with emerging science and technology. The Government will continue to do everything it can to ensure the safety of water users at beaches with Program equipment, while minimising impacts on other marine life. For example, the Program uses the latest technology in acoustic whale and dolphin alarms (pingers) to alert animals of the location of Program apparatus. The aim is to reduce the risk of entanglements while continuing to ensure the safety of water users is not compromised.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will continue to work with external research organisations to better understand how whales and dolphins react to pingers. We will continue to use the latest technology in acoustic whale and dolphin pingers as a precautionary approach to alert whales and dolphins to the presence of Program apparatus.

In 2021, the department released the *Queensland shark management plan 2021-2025* (the Plan) which sets out how the Queensland Government will continue work to reduce the risk of shark bites through the traditional program, while researching and trialling new shark mitigation technologies and boosting community education on SharkSmart behaviours. As part of this Plan, an independent review of the Program will commence in late 2024 and will provide recommendations and advice to government on future options for the Program.

I reiterate, the Queensland Government will continue to put the safety of people first and will not make changes, including the removal of shark nets, until effective alternatives suitable for Queensland conditions are identified and proven.

Ms Sandy Bolton MP, Member for Noosa

2024 ESTIMATES PRE-HEARING

QUESTION ON NOTICE

[Crossbench Member Question]

MS SANDY BOLTON MP, MEMBER FOR NOOSA, ASKED THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES:

QUESTION:

Referring to fishing license buyback on page 178 of Budget Paper No. 4, what processes are being initiated and funding allocated to identify further locations where commercial fishing licenses will be bought back?

ANSWER:

Our State's fisheries resources are important to all Queenslanders.

Fisheries Queensland is committed to a sustainable wild-caught seafood industry that provides the quality products that consumers appreciate, while protecting our unique marine environments.

Licence buyback programs have been initiated to implement specific government policy decisions in the Gulf of Carpentaria, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park World Heritage Area, and the Great Sandy Strait Marine Park rezoning plan.

There are no plans at this time to initiate new processes and funding allocations to identify locations where commercial fishing licences will be bought back.

Correspondence

Correspondence	
1	1 July 2024 - Leader of the Opposition - Seeking leave for self and Members to attend Estimates hearing 25 July 2024
2	24 July 2024 - Mr Jimmy Sullivan MP, Member for Stafford – Seeking leave to attend Estimates hearing 25 July 2024
3	24 July 2024 - Mr Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar - Advising attendance at Estimates hearing 25 July 2024



David Crisafulli MP

Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Tourism

1 July 2024

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee
Attention: Mr Aaron Harper MP, Chair

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

Dear Mr Harper

I refer to your Committee's consideration of 2024/25 portfolio budget estimates.

Pursuant to section 181(e) of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, I seek leave for the following Members to attend the public hearing scheduled for Thursday 25 July:

1. David Crisafulli MP
2. Jarrod Bleijie MP
3. Fiona Simpson MP
4. Ros Bates MP
5. Amanda Camm MP
6. Tony Perrett MP
7. Brent Mickelberg MP
8. Andrew Powell MP
9. Ann Leahy MP
10. Dale Last MP
11. Bryson Head MP

Should you have any queries, please contact my office.

Yours sincerely



DAVID CRISAFULLI MP

Leader of the Opposition

Shadow Minister for Tourism

Member for Broadwater

cc: Andrew Powell MP
Rob Molhoek MP

From: Jimmy Sullivan
Sent: Wednesday, July 24, 2024 2:06 PM
To: Aaron Harper <Aaron.Harper@parliament.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Gust Member at Estimates hearing

Dear Chair,

I seek the permission of the Health, Environment and Agricultural Committee to join as a guest Member at the Estimates Hearing to be held Thursday 24 July.

I will obviously work in with you as Chair around appropriate times to ask questions, and will of course take your advice and work with other members of the committee in that regard.

Kind regards,

Jimmy Sullivan
Member for Stafford

From: [Michael Berkman](#)
To: [HEAC](#); [Maiwar Electorate Office](#)
Cc: [HEAC](#)
Subject: Re: Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee - Estimates 2024 – Responses to Pre-Hearing Questions on Notice
Date: Wednesday, 24 July 2024 5:28:00 PM

Hi Rhyll - Thanks for sending these through.

I also advise, in accordance with the assembly's motion on 14 June 2024, that I plan to attend tomorrow's hearing.

Cheers
Michael

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: HEAC <HEAC@parliament.qld.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, July 24, 2024 12:31:24 PM
To: Michael Berkman [REDACTED] Maiwar Electorate Office
[REDACTED]
Cc: HEAC <HEAC@parliament.qld.gov.au>
Subject: Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee - Estimates 2024 – Responses to Pre-Hearing Questions on Notice

Good afternoon

In relation to the Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee's Estimates hearing on Thursday 25 July 2024, please find attached answers to pre-hearing Questions on Notice received from:

- Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women
- Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities
- Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation.

Regards

Rhyll Duncan
A/Committee Secretary
Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee



QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE
Parliament House
Cnr George and Alice Streets Brisbane Qld 4000
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
www.parliament.qld.gov.au

Members granted leave to attend public hearing on 25 July 2024



Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee Estimates 2024

Members granted leave to attend Estimates hearing

Mr David Crisafulli MP, Leader of the Opposition, Member for Broadwater
Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, Member for Kawana
Ms Fiona Simpson MP, Member for Maroochydore
Ms Ros Bates MP, Member for Mudgeeraba
Ms Amanda Camm MP, Member for Whitsunday
Mr Tony Perrett MP, Member for Gympie
Mr Brent Mickelberg MP, Member for Buderim
Mr Andrew Powell MP, Member for Glass House
Ms Ann Leahy MP, Member for Warrego
Mr Dale Last MP, Member for Burdekin
Mr Bryson Head MP, Member for Callide
Mr Jimmy Sullivan MP, Member for Stafford

Answers to questions taken on notice at hearing – 25 July 2024

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Question taken on Notice at the Hearing

No. 1

Asked on Thursday, 25 July 2024

MR S O'CONNOR ASKED THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (MR MERRICK)—

QUESTION (Page 105 of the Transcript):

How much funding has been allocated towards the management of weeds and other pests in the Burleigh Heads National Park and what data has been collected by the department to establish whether the objectives of the Management Plan are being met?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, within the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation addresses weed and pest management at Burleigh Head National Park through employment of six rangers at the Burleigh Head Management Unit.

The Management Unit is responsible for the management of Burleigh Head National Park and other protected areas across the southern Gold Coast, with an annual salary and operating budget of \$632,583 in the 2023-24 financial year.

The duties of these rangers include management of weeds and other pests which in urban national parks such as Burleigh Head present ongoing challenges due to high visitor use. The urban setting and high usage makes the National Park susceptible to weed incursions, most notably as escapees from adjoining properties. This requires ongoing vigilance by rangers as well as the efforts of park volunteers such as the Friends of Burleigh Head National Park group.

In the 2023-24 financial year, the Burleigh Head Management Unit purchased a spray unit and pest management equipment to assist staff with appropriate treatments.

In addition to rangers undertaking specific tasks to manage weeds within operational budgets, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service provides support to volunteer groups in the form of personal protective equipment, herbicide supply and small hand tools.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service undertakes 'health checks' of the National Park's key values in line with the department's Values-Based Management Framework across seven sites in Burleigh Head National Park to collect data regarding the condition and trend of the Park's values to measure progress towards the goals and objectives of the Management Plan.

Monitoring of weed species and incursions is also undertaken as part of regular park patrols.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Question taken on Notice at the Hearing

No. 2

Asked on Thursday, 25 July 2024

MR S O'CONNOR ASKED THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (MR MERRICK) —

QUESTION (Pages 111 to 112 of the Transcript):

I want to ask about the scientific evidence around PFAS levels. What scientific evidence has the department gathered to use this as a realistic and attainable limit for composting facilities?

ANSWER:

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) can persist in the environment long-term, bioaccumulate in living organisms and are highly mobile in water and soils. Globally, scientific knowledge is expanding on the long-term nature and adverse environmental and human health impacts of PFAS.

The finished compost PFAS limits are similar to guidance values for unrestricted re-use of PFAS impacted soils in other states, including South Australia and Victoria. They also align closely with residential soil use in the draft PFAS National Environmental Management Plan 3.0.

Monitoring programs undertaken in 2017 and 2023 indicate that the majority of composters are already producing compost below the PFAS limit.

The environmental regulator is currently working with environmental authority holders to modernise conditions of their authorities to ensure a safe, sustainable composting industry moving forward. This includes working to set appropriate PFAS limits for finished compost based on the best available science to protect environmental values, including human and ecological health.

The PFAS limits established for finished compost are similar to the trigger values in the Biosolids End of Waste Code. They are though more conservative given the unrestricted use of compost products.

The biosolids PFAS limits were derived to protect health and food quality based on the uptake rates of PFAS by plants and livestock in an agricultural setting. A similar methodology was used to determine the finished compost limits, but considered other factors as well given the wider use of compost not just in agriculture.

The derivation of the PFAS limits for compost considered multiple national and international studies, peer-reviewed research, and sources of scientific information, including:

- a range of international literature;
- the relationship between PFAS in soil and leachability (e.g. partition coefficients);
- the bioaccumulation factors of different PFAS into plants and animals based on various studies, including soil to plant transfer factors for edible portions of fruit and vegetable plants;
- direct soil toxicity results (e.g. reptiles in contact with contaminated soil);
- wildlife dietary guidance including total daily intake recommendations for different animals (e.g. mammals and birds);
- studies determining how much PFAS is offloaded into animal products (e.g. milk, eggs etc.);
- guideline values that are available in Australia and overseas, including:
 - Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code;
 - Australian and New Zealand Water Quality Guidelines;
 - Food Safety Australia and New Zealand trigger values in food products such as meat and milk;
 - PFAS National Environmental Management Plan 2.0 and draft 3.0 (including species protection levels, health investigation levels (soil) and other guidance values);
 - maximum concentration of PFAS in meat products permitted entry into the European Union; and
 - others.

These multiple lines of evidence were used to estimate the PFAS soil concentrations necessary to meet the relevant guideline value (e.g. maximum food concentrations for consumer safety, recreational water use guideline values, wildlife diet, 99 per cent species protection values).

The limits are based on achieving the appropriate guideline values that provide adequate protection for a range of uses (e.g. environmental protection, agricultural use, recreational use, food consumption etc.).

Due to different toxicities, leachability and uptake into plants and animals of various classes of PFAS (including PFOS, PFHxS, PFOA, C8 Perfluoroalkyl sulfonamides, Long Chain PFCA, N:2 Fluorotelomer sulfonates, Short-chain PFCA and PFBS), different limits were derived for each class of PFAS.

Unlike the biosolids end of waste code where there are restrictions on how and where products can be used and requirements for post application monitoring, compost products have unrestricted use and may be used in a range of different settings. Therefore, a range of objectives were developed to form the basis of deriving the appropriate limits for compost for each type of PFAS in order to protect the environment and human health:

- protecting use in home gardens for producing fruit and vegetables, including those with high (up to 50%) home consumption;
- maintaining safety of agricultural produce, including meat and milk products;
- maintaining suitability of agricultural produce, including fruit and vegetable products;
- protecting suitability of land uses used for meat production for export;

- minimising exposure of persons to PFAS in accordance with health regulator's advice;
- protecting suitability of soil compost/soil conditioner to produce fodder for stock animals;
- ensuring risks from related substances (perfluoroalkyl acid precursors) are managed with reference to the risks posed by their ultimate transformation products;
- protecting secondary terrestrial ecological consumers from secondary poisoning due to PFAS in soils;
- minimising risks of environmental harm to multiple environmental values of waters, ecological and human uses, due to PFAS leaching from products;
- minimising risks of compost product users inadvertently breaching offence provisions of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* due to PFAS leaching from products into stormwater and waters; and
- preventing persistent organic pollutants listed or proposed for listing under the Stockholm Convention being dispersed throughout the Queensland environment without practicable restriction.

The PFAS limits have been set out in the model operating conditions for compost since 2021. In 2024, the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation considered it desirable to combine some of the limits for individual PFAS families to provide a degree of flexibility for environmental authority holders without reducing the protection provided. These PFAS groupings were determined based on their toxicity and fate and transport in the environment.

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

Estimates Question taken on Notice at the Hearing

No. 3

Asked on Thursday, 25 July 2024

MS CAMM ASKED THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, INNOVATION, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (MS DIFFEY)—

QUESTION (Pages 117 to 118 of the Transcript):

With regard to the Female Founders Co-Investment Fund, what is the length of time of those contracts (once they are in place), or is it quite specific to the applicant and the business model they are operating?

ANSWER:

The standard Female Founder Co-Investment Fund contract is for a term of 15 months. This covers the 12 month project delivery period, with a further three months for the reporting of outcomes and acquittal of funds.

Documents tabled at hearing – 25 July 2024

Documents tabled at hearing – 25 July 2024	
1	Document, undated, titled <i>National Fire Ant Eradication Program - Fire ant response plan</i> , tabled by Hon Mark Furner MP, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities
2	Document, undated, titled <i>National Fire Ant Eradication Program - Fire ant eradication treatment</i> , tabled by Hon Mark Furner MP, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities
3	Joint media statement, dated 26 June 2024, titled <i>Miles Doing What Matters: A strong, sustainable future for Queensland timber</i> , tabled by Hon Mark Furner MP, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities
4	Letter, dated 25 July 2024, from Hon Steven Miles MP, Premier of Queensland to the Chief Executive Officer, Timber Queensland, tabled by Hon Mark Furner MP, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities
5	Social media post, Facebook, dated 7 May 2024, titled <i>Protect Beautiful Queensland</i> , tabled by Mr Sam O'Connor MP, Member for Bonney
6	Letter, dated 20 June 2024, from Waste, Recycling Industry Association of Queensland, Australian Organics Recycling Association, and Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia to Hon Leanne Linard MP, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation, tabled by Mr Sam O'Connor MP, Member for Bonney



NATIONAL
Fire Ant
Eradication
PROGRAM

Fire ant response plan

Our plan to eradicate fire ants from Australia by 2032 – protecting our environment, economy, health, and outdoor way of life.



Surveillance

We conduct extensive surveillance in this area to ensure fire ants don't escape.

Property owners and tenants can help by providing easy access to their land and reporting fire ants promptly for quick treatment.



Eradication treatment

We treat 100% of targeted properties in this area multiple times. Treatment is quick, easy, and safe.

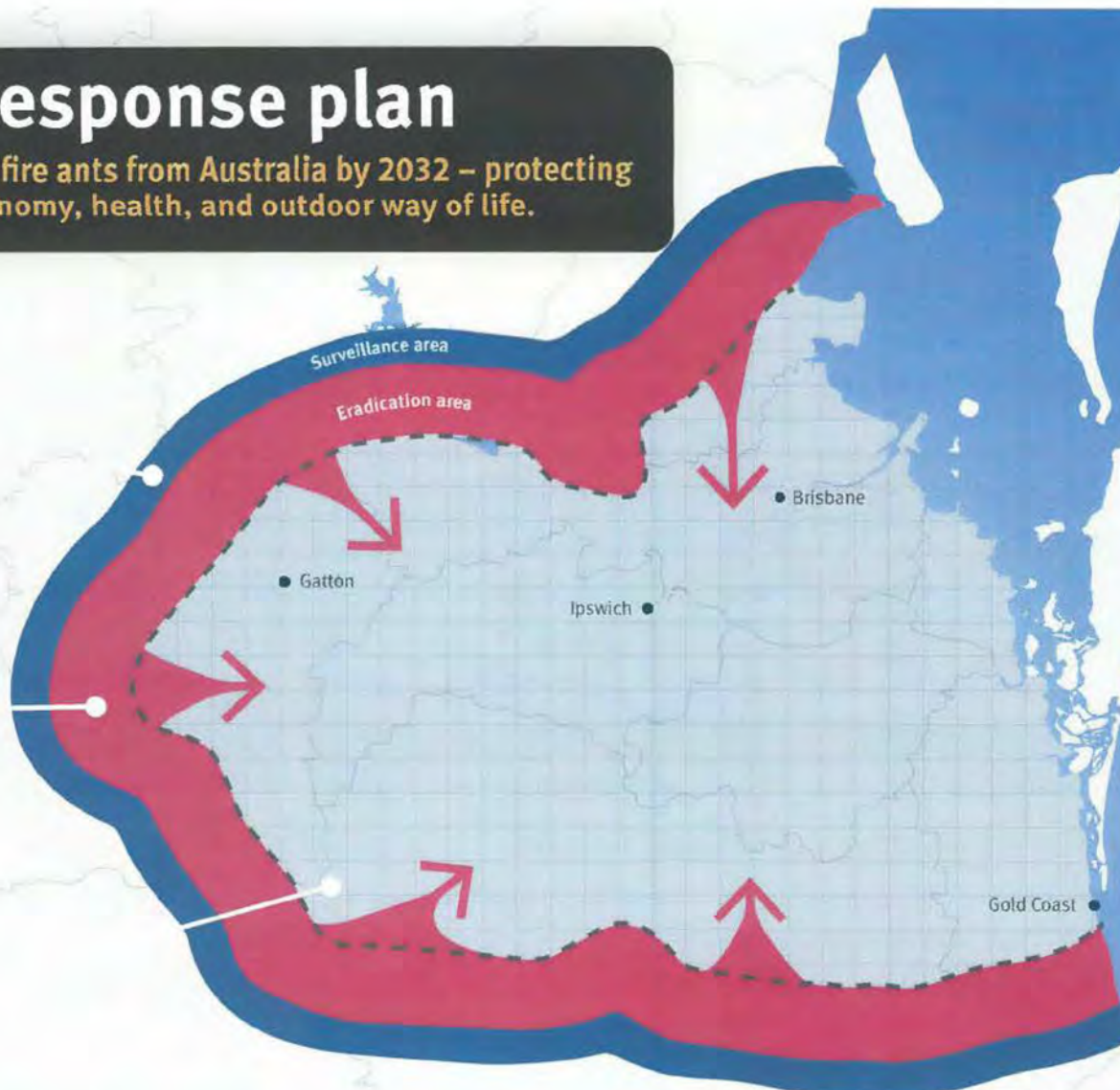
As we complete eradication treatment in an area, the band moves inward until all areas are treated.

Property owners and tenants can help by providing easy access to their land.

Suppression

The Fire Ant Suppression Taskforce assists property owners and tenants to self-manage fire ants in this area.

Property owners and tenants need to look for, report, and treat fire ants on their properties until eradication treatment reaches their area.



Fire ant spread

■ Potential ■ Current

Without intervention, fire ants would have spread north to Townsville, west past Longreach, and south to Albury by now.

Without action

Fire ant damage could cost:

- \$536 million** per year to households for health and lifestyle impacts*
- \$381 million** per year to agriculture*
- \$250 million** per year to infrastructure*
- \$84 million** per year to environment*

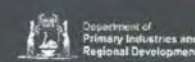
*Figures based on the Central Queensland University cost-benefit analysis in 2021.


*Conceptual map

2023 • Eradication timeline • 2032



AGRICULTURE VICTORIA



Tabled by: Minister Furner
At: Estimates Hearing
Time/date: 2:43 pm 25/7/2024
Signature: 



NATIONAL

Fire Ant Eradication

PROGRAM

Fire ant eradication treatment



Eradication of fire ants is a national priority, and it is the only way we can protect our way of life from this invasive pest.

Fire ants can destroy crops, damage machinery, and render paddocks, parks, playgrounds and backyards unusable.

The presence of fire ants on our landscape is a much greater risk to local wildlife, pets, farm animals and humans than the treatment itself.

What does this mean for me?

If your property is in our eradication treatment area, you can expect our teams to visit your property.

Fire ant eradication involves:

- treating 100% of targeted properties, whether you see signs of fire ants or not
- using a product that is safe for humans, animals and pets
- treating properties multiple times over several years.

One missed nest could jeopardise national eradication efforts.

What is the treatment?

Fire ant treatment contains the same active ingredients found in household flea and mosquito control products but at a significantly lower concentration.

It is small pieces of corn grit, similar to couscous, soaked in soybean oil and infused with an insect growth regulator (pyriproxyfen or s-methoprene).

Pyriproxyfen is registered to treat pests on food crops and used on everyday products such as animal flea collars and fly sprays.

S-methoprene is commonly used in drinking water to prevent mosquitos and mosquito-borne disease. It is also used in topical flea and tick treatment for household animals.

For a 500 m² residential block, just 100 g of product is applied containing only half a gram of the active ingredient. This equates to using just one-third of one flea collar on your property or 5 flea control tablets.

On a 10 ac (4 ha) property, 8 kg of the product is applied containing only 40 g of insecticide. This equates to using less than 27 flea collars on your property or 400 flea control tablets.



How will my property be treated?

We tailor eradication treatment to your property type and have a range of different methods available. We may use one or more of the following:

- handheld treatment spreaders
- utility terrain vehicles
- aircraft (helicopters, fixed wing aircraft and drones)

We typically treat smaller residential properties using spreaders and larger properties using a combination of spreaders, utility terrain vehicles or aircraft.



To report fire ants,
call us on **13 25 23**
or visit fireants.org.au



NATIONAL

Fire Ant Eradication

PROGRAM

The treatment product is thinly distributed across backyards, garden areas, parklands and paddocks.

Who conducts fire ant eradication treatment?

Our program is responsible for all fire ant eradication activities and our officers are authorised under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* to do this important work.

This means that our eradication officers can conduct treatment on your property. They will not need access to your house or other buildings.

They will drive a vehicle displaying our program logo and always carry Queensland Government identification.

How does treatment work and is it safe?

Fire ant treatment is specifically designed to kill fire ants. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority has assessed and approved the use of our treatment products and deemed them safe for humans, animals and pets.

We conduct fire ant treatment in accordance with all product labels and relevant permit requirements.

It works by preventing the fire ant queen from producing viable offspring. If she cannot replenish her workforce, the colony will naturally die out.

The presence of fire ants on our landscape is a much greater risk than the treatment itself.

Globally fire ants have led to population declines in various species, including 45% of birds, 38% of mammals, 69% of reptiles and 95% of amphibians.

The treatment products break down quickly and are undetectable in treated areas within days.

What do I do after my property is treated?

To give treatment the best chance of success, it is important not to disturb the treated area for at least 48 hours. This includes not watering, mowing or moving materials.

This gives the ants time to collect the treatment product and take it back to the nest.

Is treatment required if I don't see signs of fire ants?

Yes, fire ants can be present even if they or their nests are not visible on the surface of the ground. Fire ant nests can take months to appear above the ground or they may be hiding on a neighbouring property.

Fire ants pose an immediate risk to you, your home, and the wider community jeopardising our eradication efforts.



How do I report fire ants?

If you see suspect ants or nests on your property or someone else's, take a photo or video and let us know immediately.

For more information or to report fire ants, scan the QR code, visit fireants.org.au or call 13 25 23.



Tabled by: Minister Furner
At: Estimates Hearing
Time/date: 2:56pm 25/7/2024
Signature:



Queensland
Government

Media Statements (/)

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Miles Doing What Matters: A strong, sustainable future for Queensland timber

Published Wednesday, 26 June, 2024 at 10:30 AM

JOINT STATEMENT

Premier

The Honourable Steven Miles

Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment

The Honourable Cameron Dick



Member for Maryborough Bruce Saunders, Deputy Premier Cameron Dick, Premier Steven Miles, Mark Raguse AWU, Fraser Coast Mayor George Seymour

- Miles Labor Government releases landmark 30 year Queensland Sustainable Timber Industry Framework.
- Backed by a \$200 million package that will support the future of the industry – securing good timber jobs and timber supply.
- New Greater Glider Forest Park to be established, protecting high value ecosystems and threatened species.

Premier Steven Miles and Deputy Premier Cameron Dick yesterday joined timber workers in Maryborough to embark on developing a landmark, 30-year framework for the timber industry.

The terms of reference for the framework were released today, outlining the Miles Government's commitment to a sustainable long-term future for Queensland's timber industry.

As a critical employer and supply source for Queensland's \$107 billion Big Build, it's important that the industry has the certainty it needs to support jobs now, and into the future.

The Queensland Sustainable Timber Industry Framework will be backed a \$200 million package, announced today.

This package will support the development and implementation of actions out of the framework, including:

- Support for timber plantation expansion and innovation in timber processing.
- Potential subsidies to assist industry with increased transport costs.
- Increased accreditation and certification support.
- An education and extension program with landholders and traditional owners.
- A comprehensive state-wide assessment of biodiversity values mapping to establish best management of native forests and support decision-making.
- Additional rangers.

Securing sustainable timber supply to ensure Queensland's housing needs are met is also a key commitment of the framework.

That is why, the Framework will start from a baseline that there should be no reduction in current overall timber supply levels between 2025 and the end of 2034.

Detailed work will be undertaken to understand the full supply and demand picture and consider how to best secure future sustainable supply including potentially through harvesting in central and northern regions, while new plantations progress.

The regulatory framework for private native timber will also be updated and improved including the establishment of a new 'Category F' under the Forestry Act 1959.

Best practice forest management on private land will also be supported through an education and extension program with landholders and traditional owners.

The Framework will be in place by mid-2025 and will be finalised with support from a dedicated stakeholder advisory group.

While the Framework is developed, harvesting permits for the Eastern Hardwoods, other than areas transitioning to Natural Capital Reserve, will be issued by the end of July 2024 for a further two years to the end of 2026. The existing forestry code will also continue until it is replaced at the end of 2026.

The Miles Government is on track to deliver an existing commitment to transfer up to 20,000 hectares of state forest to protected area by the end of 2024.

Quotes attributable to the Premier Steven Miles:

"Queensland's timber industry is the backbone of the housing and building sectors.

"That's why I'm doing what matters to support timber workers and the industry to continue building our state, while also increasing our protected area estate.

"The terms of reference released today map out our priorities as a government – that is, timber supply security, environmental protections, jobs and diverse employment opportunities.

"I want to thank the stakeholders who have worked with us to develop this plan, who will be invaluable parts of the framework's development moving forward.

"Queensland is the envy of the world with beautiful and iconic locations, and only my government is ensuring it stays that way for my kids, your kids and generations of Queenslanders to come."

Quotes attributable to Deputy Premier and Treasurer Cameron Dick:

"Our Government is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of businesses and jobs in Queensland's traditional industries like forestry, mining, agriculture and tourism.

The COVID pandemic reminded us of the importance of strong local supply chains, and there's no supply chain more important right now than being able to build more homes for Queenslanders.

"By protecting traditional jobs, housing materials supply and our environment, we are doing what matters for Queenslanders."

Further information:

Queensland's timber industry is made up of both hardwoods and softwoods, with approximately 60% of hardwood coming from private land and 40% from state forests.

The softwood plantation sector makes a significant contribution to the Queensland economy accounting for around 80 per cent by volume, of the locally grown timber processed in Queensland.

More than 1.8 million cubic metres of softwood plantation timber is currently harvested each year in Queensland.

Softwoods from plantations are a key input for housing construction accounting for the vast majority of construction wood use by volume – mostly for frames and trusses.

[The Terms of Reference are available online here \(https://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/publications/categories/plans/qstlif.aspx\).](https://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/publications/categories/plans/qstlif.aspx)

Key actions:

The Queensland Sustainable Timber Industry Framework will include six priority areas:

- **Priority Area 1** – Securing sustainable timber supply.
- **Priority Area 2** – Adding value to forest and timber supply chains.
- **Priority Area 3** – Realising the potential of forest-related markets for industry, landholders and the environment.
- **Priority Area 4** – A future forest workforce and strong timber industry.
- **Priority Area 5** – Growing Queensland's protected area estate.
- **Priority Area 6** – Fostering First Nations forestry employment and enterprise opportunities.

ENDS



Premier of Queensland

Tabled by: Minister Furner
At: Estimates Hearing 25/7/2024
Time/date: 4:33 pm
Signature: _____

For reply please quote: *EPP/EC – TF/24/14386 – DOC/24/146612*

25/07/2024

Mr Mick Stephens
Chief Executive
Timber Queensland
mick.stephens@timberqueensland.com.au

1 William Street Brisbane
PO Box 15185 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7000
Email ThePremier@premiers.qld.gov.au
Website www.thepremier.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Stephens

I am writing in response to your emails of 5 July 2024 to the Honourable Scott Stewart MP, Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals and the Honourable Mark Furner MP, Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities, regarding commitments related to the *Queensland Sustainable Timber Industry Framework* (the Framework).

Thank you for joining me; the Honourable Cameron Dick MP, Deputy Premier and Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment; Mr Bruce Saunders MP, Assistant Minister for Train Manufacturing, Regional Development and Jobs; Councillor George Seymour, Mayor of Fraser Coast Regional Council; and Mr Mark Raguse, Australian Workers Union, Queensland Executive Officer, at the DTM Timber mill, to launch the Terms of Reference for the Framework on 25 June 2024.

The Framework is backed by a \$200 million package and will present the Queensland Government's 30-year plan across six priority areas, to secure domestic timber supply, grow jobs and foster opportunities for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, protect forest values and balance the many ways Queensland's forest estate is used.

Thank you also for agreeing to participate in the Timber Stakeholder Advisory Group that will support delivery of the Framework by mid-2025. Participants will soon receive correspondence to support the establishment and commencement of the Timber Stakeholder Advisory Group.

I can confirm that the development of the Framework is based on the Queensland Government's 10-year commitment that there should be no reduction in overall timber supply levels from 2025 to the end of 2034.

Detailed work will be undertaken to understand the full supply and demand picture and consider how to best secure future sustainable supply including, potentially, through harvesting in central and northern regions, while new plantations progress.

The regulatory framework for private native timber will also be updated and improved including the establishment of a new 'Category F' under the Forestry Act 1959.

Best practice forest management on private land will also be supported through an education and extension program with landholders and traditional owners, including to help ensure that Queensland's timber industry retains social licence.

The existing forestry code will continue until it is replaced at the end of 2026, and will be revised in the context of the Framework.

The Queensland Government's \$200 million package will support development and implementation of the actions of the Framework. This will include funding for transport subsidies to assist industry with increased transport costs from future supply areas determined as part of the Framework, with the cessation of harvesting state forests in the *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031* in 2024, as originally envisioned by the 1999 South East Queensland Forests Agreement.

Importantly, the Framework will recognise that industry needs contractual certainty. It will provide long-term security of supply for a viable industry, support for extension services and harvest security for private native forestry.

Again, thank you for writing to me and I look forward to working with you further on the development of the Framework.

Yours sincerely



STEVEN MILES MP
PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND



Protect Beautiful Queensland

7 May · 🌐

...

We've got a long way to go to double Queensland's protected areas by 2030, so it's great to hear when state leaders have the same vision.

Queensland Environment Minister Leanne Linard MP shares the goal of doubling protected areas in the state to 17 percent of total land mass.

Follow the link in the comments and join us to preserve unique animals, landscapes and cultural heritage found nowhere else on earth.

"The vision...of Protect Beautiful Queensland is to **double Queensland's protected areas by 2030 in public parks, private parks and indigenous protected areas.**

And can I say that you have no greater ally in this aim than Premier Steven Miles and our Labor Government, because of course we share the same goal."

Queensland Minister for the Environment Leanne Linard



Member for Bonney
Tabled by: Leanne Linard
At: 25/7/10
Time/date: 5:37pm
Signature:



The Hon. Leanne Linard, MP
Minister for the Environment
and the Great Barrier Reef
Minister for Science and
Minister for Multicultural
Affairs 1 William Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
Email: [REDACTED]

20 June 2024

Dear Minister

Re: The Queensland Organics Industry

It is with great regret that we find ourselves as representatives of the organics industry in Queensland, writing to you again to express both our frustration and concern at the problematic approach that continues to be taken by Queensland government towards our valuable industry - directly compromising industry's viability in Queensland.

The diversion of food and garden organics away from landfill to create a high-quality compost product, is pivotal to Queensland meeting its stated greenhouse gas (GhG) emissions targets as well as a great opportunity to create almost 700 jobs across the state and facilitate millions of dollars of investment in both metropolitan and regional locations. In fact, the Queensland government has adopted and commenced funding several strategies including its statewide Organics strategy and the SEQ Waste Management Plan that have compost production from diverted organic material as the centerpiece.

The Queensland Organics Strategy 2022- 2032 was adopted by the Queensland government over two (2) years ago. All three (3) Associations and our members have worked with this strategy and participated for a number of years in good faith, on the Queensland Organics Stakeholder Group to develop a safe and viable roadmap for maximizing the diversion and recovery of food and garden organic material. A number of member companies have invested heavily in Queensland in preparation for the roll out of this adopted government strategy in anticipation of the Queensland Government's initial priority- diverting household food organics and garden organic material (FOGO) from landfill.

However, from October 2023 we have found that there has been a marked shift in the approach and actions of the Queensland Government in its dealings and approach towards compost processors and the growth (or not) of the organics industry in Queensland. As an industry we had worked closely with the Department throughout 2023 to identify how we can de-risk compost production (noting processors receive this material from others such as local government) and actively advocated for the removal of packaging from this material stream given the prevalence and risk that PFAS can present. It is vital to note that our sector does not place PFAS on the market, rather it is everywhere with little government or generator action to address.

In October 2023 we were forced to write to you to raise our concerns that despite there being no regulation to stop the sale of products containing PFAS in Queensland, the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI) had elected to develop (and now adopt) a *Regulatory Position Statement - PFAS in organic material processing (ESR/2024/6783)* the established limit of one (1) to three (3) parts per billion in finished compost. This level has now also been included in the Model Operating Conditions (MOC) for ERA 53. This level has been adopted by Queensland despite advice from industry that it cannot be consistently met. Testing in both NSW and Victoria confirms this (and neither state is prepared to accept this level) and whilst the Draft PFAS National Environmental Management Plan (NEMP) Version 3.0

Tabled by: Member for Bonney
At: Estimates Hearing 25/7/2024
Time/date: 6:39 pm
Signature: [REDACTED]

remains outstanding (despite consultation closing in January 2023), there is no national agreed standard in existence.

Queensland's unilateral approach to establishing this limit for a manufactured organic product of one (1) to three (3) parts per billion (ppb) of PFAS from regulated organic facilities, when doing nothing to address the placing of products containing far higher levels with greater human contact, such as dental floss at 15 parts per billion (which is placed in people's mouths), makes no sense. The introduction of this new enforceable level throwing in to doubt the ability to make compost to this level in Queensland occurred after the adoption of the Organics Strategy, and after the significant investment of \$151 million to GROW FOGO in Southeast Queensland alone.

The fact that Queensland could introduce such drastic changes to the regulatory environment at this time, creates real risk and uncertainty for all that participate in this sector in Queensland. You may recall in the correspondence and meetings we held with you and DESI directly in October 2023, we foreshadowed that this would have significant adverse financial and regulatory impacts on Queensland councils and the FOGO industry. Queensland, by going it alone and placing unreasonable levels and conditions on processors of organic material that no other state considers it necessary to adopt, has created an un-level playing field for Queensland businesses when competing with product manufactured in other states, putting the whole industry in jeopardy.

However, the operating environment has only continued to deteriorate for Queensland compost processors in the last two (2) months as a result of further actions by DESI, which have further impacted both industry and local government confidence in Queensland. These being –

1. Consultation on compost facility standards, deeming composting facilities to be highly odorous; and requiring significant capital investment in infrastructure, and;
2. End of Waste code approvals for abattoir sludge and paunch (effectively removing them from the compost feedstock stream and allowing this unprocessed material to be spread on land with no testing).

In relation to point 1. - industry absolutely supports best practice facility management, however it is the fact that government 'keeps changing the goal posts' and has elected to develop and consult on these standards on 9 May 2024 without either local government or industry prior engagement, despite there being two (2) DESI Organics Working Groups in existence. Further these standards will have a material impact on the cost of processing compost material in Queensland making it very challenging for operators to provide long term tender prices to councils for proposed FOGO services while this standard is on exhibition, noting that these councils have in fact been funded by the Queensland government to progress these services.

As industry advised in October 2023, the impact of these ongoing regulatory and policy changes by government will have a hugely adverse impact on Councils' ability to progress FOGO in Queensland. This has now been clearly borne out by the recent decisions of Ipswich and Brisbane City Councils. Ipswich City Council this week recommended that despite the \$9 million grant from state government to roll out FOGO it can no longer proceed with this and will instead return to the Garden Organics service only, due to –

Deeming of FOGO as a "highly odorous" material by the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (DESI).

Amendment and changes to processing license conditions being placed on the composters (ERA 53 Modernisation).

Scale, scope and cost of infrastructure upgrades to meet above conditions.

Timeframe and investment certainty from the market to even build and deliver the required infrastructure in a reasonable time.

Flow through impact of these factors on projected future prices, to process materials with a Food Component.



All of the above issues were raised with yourself and DESI in late 2023, hence we urged the Department to work with industry to find solutions to these challenges to ensure that the state government funds were able to be utilised to ensure the successful roll out of FOGO in Queensland. What we are now seeing is Queensland Councils that have been provided grants by state government being frustrated in their efforts... by state government!

In relation to point 2. the approval of two (2) End of Waste Codes (EOW) for abattoir waste allowing for direct land application of these *unprocessed* wastes is yet another inconsistency suggesting that the composting industry is not on a level playing field with the waste generator in this instance. We note that both were approved (or at least advised) after the Regulatory Position on PFAS came into place, and unlike the PFAS position for the composting industry there is no testing for any contaminants in these EOW codes, despite DESI insisting in the industry working groups and in published policy position papers that Abattoir Waste is a high-risk waste for possible PFAS contamination. The WARR industry does find this approval very hard to accept in its current form as it contradicts everything that we have been told to date in relation to risk of compost material.

Industry is at a complete loss to understand what controls are in place under the EOW protocol to enable safe reuse of this valuable organic waste, that previously was an integral part of the feedstocks for the composting industry, and why government has elected to remove this from a regulated pathway (composting facilities) with all the necessary regulatory conditions in place. Unlike compost, it appears DESI is prepared to allow these waste streams to be applied direct to land with very few checks and balances in place.

The WARR industry is concerned that these EOWs were sought by waste generators following advice by composters that charges would increase due to the additional capital and operational costs required to meet the new standards being set by the Queensland government. Government has now however facilitated a less regulated path with a cheaper *disposal* cost for meat processors to be adopted, bypassing the need for the material to be composted prior to land application, which undermines government's own policies. The organics industry has been consistently clear to government that upgraded facilities will come at a substantial capital cost, so it is profoundly disappointing that we now find that government has compounded the economic impact by facilitating the removal of a significant feedstock and income stream from compost operators.

Further we do not understand how government can have such a strong 'safety' approach to FOGO from the home, yet such a cavalier approach to abattoir material. This inconsistency and the precedent set by enabling application of unprocessed materials to land will in all likelihood result in further attempts from other organic waste generators to take advantage of the double standard set by the EOW protocol, putting in doubt the viability of many good Queensland composting businesses, and undermining future investment plans for anaerobic digestion.

Industry has stated repeatedly that for the significant investment required to achieve the outcomes of the Queensland Organic Strategy there needs to be certainty of feedstocks, confidence that there will be acceptable levels of risk to business, and a reliable market for the product. Despite adopting the strategy in October 2022, since October 2023 Queensland appears to have done all it can to make the FOGO industry in Queensland unviable. We seek an urgent meeting with you to address this inconsistent and almost punitive approach to good composting businesses that had hoped to grow and invest in Queensland.

Yours sincerely



Alison Price
CEO
WRIQ



Greg Whitehead
Queensland Director
AORA



Gayle Sloan
CEO
WMRR