



Estimates Committee B

2006

Report to the Legislative Assembly

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Standing Order 167(3) the Legislative Assembly, by Order made on Friday, 21 April 2006, referred to Estimates Committee B for investigation and report certain proposed expenditures contained in the *Appropriation Bill 2006*. Organisational units within the portfolios of the following Ministers were allocated to Estimates Committee B:

- Minister for Health
- Minister for Child Safety
- Minister for Police and Corrective Services

The committee held a public hearing on Wednesday, 12 July 2006. A transcript of the committee's hearing is on the Internet at:

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Hansard/>

Prior to the public hearing, the committee put 20 questions on notice to each Minister. Responses to all the questions were received.

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

- the budget papers
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice
- oral evidence taken at the hearing
- documents tabled at the hearing
- answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing

Answers to questions on notice and questions taken on notice at the hearing, together with minutes of the committee's meetings, are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.

HEALTH

The proposed 2006-07 budget provides for a 24.2% increase in the Department of Health's operational budget to \$6.649 billion.

The following table sets out details of the proposed appropriation for 2006-07 compared to the previous financial year.

	2005-06 \$'000	2006-07 \$'000
Departmental Outputs	2,938,733	4,171,238
Equity Adjustment	266,057	289,192
Administered Items	..	3,220
Vote Total	3,249,790	4,463,650

Key health areas to be targeted in 2006-07, include:

- *Cancer services* – funding of \$87.9 million for new and existing cancer services across the State.
- *Emergency departments* – \$48.6 million to support existing emergency department services.
- *Intensive care units* – \$39.8 million to relieve existing pressures on intensive care services.
- *Cardiac services* – \$40.8 million for new and existing cardiac services across the State.
- *Mental health services* – \$37.8 million for mental health services.
- *Elective surgery* – \$27.3 million in additional funding in 2006-07 (in addition to \$259.7 million in just over five years) to support hospital-based initiatives aimed at reducing the number of 'long wait' elective surgery patients.
- *Chronic disease* – \$14.6 million in increased funding in 2006-07 (\$155 million over four years) for the prevention, management and treatment of chronic disease.
- *Renal services* – \$8.9 million in increased funding in 2006-07 (\$44.5 million over five years) for new and existing renal services.
- *13 HEALTH* – \$5 million in increased funding in 2006-07 to support 13 HEALTH, a 24 hours per day, seven days per week, State-wide health contact centre to provide health information, triage and referral services.
- *Mater Hospitals redevelopment* – \$24.9 million in additional funding in 2006-07 (\$157.1 million over four years) for the Mater Hospitals redevelopment project.

Funding increases are provided for enhanced wages and conditions and recruitment and retention initiatives, which include:

- \$642.6 million for enhanced wages and conditions for Queensland Health staff.
- \$25.4 million in increased funding (\$127 million over five years) for workforce training and recruitment initiatives for medical, nursing and allied health staff.

Funding increases are also provided for initiatives to restore trust and accountability in the public hospital system, including:

- an increase of \$5 million for the Health Quality and Complaints Commission, providing a total annual budget of \$7.7 million.
- a new independent, community-based Consumer Health Council to provide a State-wide patient advocacy and support service.

Issues canvassed in questions on notice and at the hearing included:

- the new funding model based on population and regional needs and case mix funding through hospitals.
- improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- funding for the Mater Hospitals redevelopment project
- funding for acute inpatient services
- funding for lithotripsy services
- the \$9.7 billion Health Action Plan.
- the Clinical Services Capability Framework for rehabilitation
- the implementation of recommendations from the review of Maternity Services in Queensland
- the Heath Hearing Screening program
- funding initiatives for people with cerebral palsy
- consultants
- internal audits
- newspaper display advertising and TV and radio advertising
- medical and other services limited, reduced, or withdrawn
- the number of doctors, nurses, nurses aids and other ancillary nursing staff, ancillary and support staff, cleaners and similar maintenance workers, administration staff, clerical and managerial staff and miscellaneous staff
- the budget for mental health
- capital works expenditure for hospitals, community health centres and primary health care centres

- compensation payments to patients who have suffered malpractice, negligence or other claims
- financial incentives to encourage doctors, nurses and specialists to relocate to rural and regional Queensland
- mental health beds
- the appointment of Mr. Mike Allsop
- the appointment of Dr John Youngman to head the new Health Quality and Complaints Commission
- the performance of the Caboolture Hospital emergency department under Aspen Medical
- breast screening – review of mammograms
- wages and conditions for Queensland’s public sector doctors and nurses
- medical workforce recruitment targets
- new strategies to attract and retain doctors and nurses in the public hospital system
- initiatives to improve training and career opportunities for doctors and nurses
- procedures to speed up the registration of doctors wanting to practise medicine in Queensland
- figures for elective surgery patients receiving category 1 and category 2 treatments within specified time frames
- figures pertaining to acute in-patient episodes of care
- timeliness measures for patients being treated in emergency departments
- beds for people with mental illnesses requiring in-patient treatment
- funding for and episodes of mental health acute in-patient episodes of care or acute in-patient care
- the number of hours for which home based and centre based respite care is provided
- the number of Meals on Wheels meals to be provided
- initiatives to improve patient flows and reduce access blocks in hospitals
- Queensland compared with other states and territories on elective surgery waiting times
- improving waiting times for specialist outpatient appointments
- initiatives to reduce waiting times and improve the performance of hospital emergency departments

- pharmaceutical co-payments and the review by Allen Consulting Group
- the outcomes of the Aon Consulting occupational health and safety audit of Queensland Health facilities
- funding to better equip hospitals to attend to patients or carers demonstrating poor, confronting or violent behaviour
- funding for non-government mental health organisations
- funding for mental health in-patient care
- allocations to deal with the waiting times and the waitlist for oral health in the Gladstone area
- the collocation program for oral, mental and community health into the hospital precinct of Gladstone
- the 13HEALTH number – waiting times
- the establishment of a full renal dialysis program at the Gladstone Hospital
- the regional accommodation program
- the proportion of Queensland Health’s total budget spent on bureaucrat wages
- openness and accountability in Queensland Health - greater public reporting by Queensland Health
- the status of school based vaccination programs in Queensland
- initiatives to improve workplace culture and leadership in Queensland Health
- follow-up surgical procedures, counselling, and ongoing support services for former patients of Dr Jayant Patel
- Queensland’s level of preparedness to deal with an influenza pandemic
- reforms to forensic and scientific services delivered by Queensland Health Scientific Services
- community awareness campaigns - the Go for 2 and 5 campaign
- initiatives to be delivered through the Chronic Disease Strategy 2005-2015
- measures to ensure that children are protected from convicted paedophiles while in Queensland Health facilities
- the unexpended capital works budget
- opening a full service emergency department at the Prince Charles Hospital
- access to general dental treatment

- initiatives to encourage people into mental health nursing and improve training for mental health nurses
- forensic mental health services
- measures to address potential abuse of the elderly in aged care facilities

CHILD SAFETY

With an operating budget of \$503.1 million, the proposed 2006-07 budget would deliver a funding increase of almost 28% on the 2005-06 allocation of \$393.5 million.

The following table sets out details of the proposed appropriation for 2006-07 compared to the previous financial year.

	2005-06 \$'000	2006-07 \$'000
Departmental Outputs	390,453	498,797
Equity Adjustment	53,389	33,873
Administered Items
Vote Total	443,842	532,670

Key elements in the 2006-07 Budget include:

- *Foster care* - \$6 million to address the increased number of children entering general foster care, as well as the growth in kinship carers and planned respite for foster carers.
- *Care options for children with complex needs* - \$10 million to secure further placement options for children in care with complex and extreme needs.
- *Therapeutic services* - \$4 million in capital in 2006-07 and \$3.4 million recurrently, starting in 2007-08, to establish and run two residential therapeutic services in south-east Queensland.
- *Frontline staffing* - \$7.6 million to employ 50 new frontline Child Safety staff, and to attract, recruit and retain frontline staff in regional, rural and remote Queensland.
- *Information technology* - \$19.1 million operating funds and \$8.9 million capital funds to continue the rollout of the Integrated Client Management System (ICMS) and other information technology initiatives.
- *Accommodation expansion* - \$18.2 million to continue the state-wide expansion of child safety service centre accommodation for frontline staff.
- *Indigenous* - \$2.6 million to develop service delivery hubs in remote Indigenous communities, and \$810,000 in capital funding to support the hubs.

- An additional \$3 million to support Indigenous recognised entities, bringing total funding for recognised entities to \$15.6 million in 2006-07.
- *Family reunification* - \$3.1 million to extend the network of family reunification services for children in care.
- *Sexual abuse counselling* - \$800,000 to expand sexual abuse counselling services for children in care.

Issues canvassed in questions on notice and at the hearing included:

- improving the quality of university graduates entering the child protection workforce
- education support plans for children in care
- funding for the blueprint for child protection.
- the Child Safety Director's Network
- strategies to address increases in notifications
- investment in additional alternative care placements for children in the care and protection of the State
- initiatives to assist families who wish to adopt children
- avenues to raise concerns and make complaints
- case plans for children in care
- support provided to foster carers
- consultants
- employees referred for assessment of their mental or physical incapacity pursuant to Section 85 of the *Public Service Act*
- internal and operational audits in relation to the Ministerial Portfolio Statement for Child Safety
- newspaper display advertising (excluding classified advertising) and TV and radio advertising
- claims referred to Workcover
- conferences, workshops, training sessions, seminars, and symposiums conducted by the department, agencies or associated portfolio entities
- the information renewal initiative
- the paedophile register
- accommodation of children in motels
- the implementation of recommendations in the CMC's *Protecting Children* report
- investment in information technology initiatives
- reporting on auditing of child protection system notifications involving foster-carers

- aggregation and state-wide reporting of data on 24-hour notifications requiring investigation
- the new licensing process for partnerships with non-government agencies
- the threshold for notification
- the budget for child protection
- the percentage of Department of Child Safety staff on temporary contracts compared with the Public Service average
- steps to address 4,000 notifications that are yet to be commenced
- projections for notifications
- ensuring that foster and kinship carers in Queensland are suitable
- selection of Indigenous foster carers
- Department of Child Safety staff survey
- Department of Child Safety's approach to employee support
- action to ensure that departmental appointments are free of internal influence
- the child health passport initiative
- alternative care placements
- children or young people in the care of the department or known to the department over the past three years who have died in the past 12 months
- delays in delivering new child safety service centres and upgrading of existing facilities
- the effect of the High Court's recent decision on former children in care claiming compensation for abuse suffered as wards of the state
- on-site supervision of children accommodated in commercial accommodation
- alternative care placements – residential services outside South East Queensland
- budget allocations to alleviate pressures on foster carers
- referral of cases to the Queensland Police Service where a child is identified as having a sexually transmitted disease
- confidentiality provisions contained in the *Child Protection Act 1999*
- recruitment campaigns for foster carers
- adoption initiatives

POLICE AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES

Department of Corrective Services

The proposed Department of Corrective Services' operating budget for 2006-07 is \$416.2 million, which would represent an increase of \$10.5 million or 2.6% over 2005-06.

The following table sets out details of the proposed appropriation for 2006-07 compared to the previous financial year.

	2005-06	2006-07
	\$'000	\$'000
Departmental Outputs	389,233	402,226
Equity Adjustment	11,410	195,373
Administered Items
Vote Total	400,643	597,599

Key initiatives funded in 2006-07 include:

- \$57.5 million over five years to establishing a new Probation and Parole Service for offenders – the most significant reform initiative in community corrections since 1988.
- A further \$207.7 million over three years to expand and redevelop the Townsville, Arthur Gorrie and Sir David Longland prisons, as well as construct a new women's prison in Townsville.
- An extra \$14.1 million over the next three years for maintenance of correctional facilities across the State.
- The continuation of the \$30 million, five year program to maintain and upgrade perimeter security systems at all secure custody facilities.
- In conjunction with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, spending \$2.7 million in capital and \$0.729 million in recurrent funding to introduce videoconferencing in correctional centres around the State.

Issues canvassed in questions on notice and at the hearing included:

- escapes from high security facilities
- new armour-plated, four-wheel-drive vehicles for perimeter security patrols at Queensland correctional facilities
- the budget for facility based containment services
- assets written down by the Department of Corrective Services in 2005-06
- filling positions in the new probation and parole service
- training for staff appointed to the probation and parole service

- the establishment of an interagency group to develop a consistent approach to the management and accommodation of sex offenders under the department's supervision
- rehabilitation programs for sex offenders
- escapes from secure custody
- the review of *the Corrective Services Act*
- the construction of a new 150-bed women's correctional centre on the existing Townsville Correctional Centre site
- sites for a new 4,000 bed prison in south-east Queensland
- the establishment of the Sexual Offenders Program Unit
- provision of protection by Corrective Services staff in watch-houses
- drug testing on-site at community corrections area offices
- recruitment and professional development for prison officers
- community based correction orders as an alternative to custodial intervention
- work camp programs
- the introduction of the integrated justice information system

Queensland Police Service

The proposed Queensland Police Service's operating budget for 2006-07 is \$1.3 billion, an increase of \$121.9 million or 10.3% over 2005-06.

The following table sets out details of the proposed appropriation for 2006-07 compared to the previous financial year.

	2005-06	2006-07
	\$'000	\$'000
Departmental Outputs	1,153,314	1,263,166
Equity Adjustment	89,380	121,495
Administered Items	376	391
Vote Total	1,243,070	1,385,052

Major initiatives in 2006-07 include:

- Increasing police numbers by an extra 350 sworn police positions.
- \$94.4 million (\$68.6 million in recurrent and \$25.8 million in capital funding) will be spent over four years to fund the State-wide rollout

and expansion of QPRIME, the new police computer system.

- \$12.7 million to provide more policing hours on traffic enforcement.
- Planning for new Caboolture and Coomera Police Districts.
- \$0.636 million for three command and control vehicles.
- Training new passive powder drug detection dogs.
- \$8.2 million to purchase a barge to patrol southern Moreton Bay, three Class One 18 metre vessels at Cairns, Yeppoon and Thursday Island, and six extra smaller vessels to be deployed across the State.
- A further \$97.3 million over the next four years for new and upgraded police stations, watchhouses, police beats and police housing across the State in 2006-07.

Issues canvassed in questions on notice and at the hearing included:

- the Thuringowa Crime Prevention Partnership and the Building Safer Communities Action Team
- the Police State Housing Program
- the Queensland Police Service's capital works program
- the State-wide rollout and expansion of QPRIME, the new police computer system
- training of passive detection drug dogs for use at public events and in public places
- the site in south-east Queensland for a new prison
- drug courts
- funding for Water Police
- enhancement of the Police Service's information and communications technology
- internal, operational, technical and clinical audit processes
- the use of consultants, contractors and external legal services providers
- employees referred for assessment of their mental or physical incapacity pursuant to section 85 of the *Public Service Act 1996*
- claims referred to WorkCover
- police academies and training of recruits to become full-time operational police
- efforts to clear the backlog in processing of DNA crime scene samples

- consideration of proposed locations for speed camera units by the Traffic Advisory Committees in each police region
- police numbers in the Gladstone, Tannum Sands, Calliope, Mt. Larcom and Many Peaks police stations
- funds expended investigating commissioned and non-commissioned officer complaints by the Ethical Standards Command
- investigation of the fraudulent issuing of load-shifting licences
- re-employment by the Queensland Police Service of former Special Emergency Response Team officers
- one-officer patrols
- planned additional police numbers
- bikie gangs
- the Queensland Police Service capital works program
- 24-hour police stations
- Task Force Agros and Operation Auxin
- the accuracy and relevance of the information on the paedophile register
- criteria for access to the paedophile register
- projected income from SPER fines and the pursuit of payment of old fines
- speed camera revenue
- the proposed rollout of a digital secure communication network
- the effectiveness of the police radio communications in the Redcliffe district and rental issues relating to a new base station
- the current resources and capability of the Public Safety Response Team

RECOMMENDATION

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the *Appropriation Bill 2006* for the organisational units and portfolios allocated to it, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

Andrew McNamara MP
Chair

August 2006

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr Andrew McNamara MP,
Member for Hervey Bay (Chair)

Dr Bruce Flegg MP
Member for Moggill (Deputy Chair)

Ms Peta-Kaye Croft MP
Member for Broadwater

Mrs Liz Cunningham MP
Member for Gladstone

Mrs Rosemary Menkens MP
Member for Burdekin

Mrs Christine Smith MP
Member for Burleigh

Ms Barbara Stone MP
Member for Springwood

SECRETARIAT

Mr Rob McBride (Research Director)
Jaana Hokannen (Senior Research Officer)
Jodie Martin (Executive Assistant)

STATEMENT OF RESERVATION FOR ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

ROSEMARY MENKENS

Tuesday, 1 August 2006

Chair
Estimates Committee B
Parliament House
BRISBANE 4000

Dear Mr McNamara

I refer to the report of Estimates Committee B.

I would express the following general reservations in relation to the Estimates Committee Process that led to that Report.

- The whole Estimates Committee process does not enable the detailed scrutiny of the expenditures provided for in the Queensland Budget
- The inappropriate grouping of Departments for each Estimates Committee limits the capacity to pursue whole of government issues
- Insufficient time is devoted by each Committee to the performance of its allocated task of reviewing expenditures
- Insufficient time is devoted by each Estimates Committee to the consideration of Individual Ministerial Program Statements
- The limit on the Number of Questions on Notice able to be asked on each Ministerial Program Statement prevents the pursuit of important issues
- The receipt of replies to Questions on Notice less than 24 hours prior to the actual commencement of Committee hearings limits the capacity to understand the answers and research their failure to provide adequate answers to the questions posed
- The structured nature of Committee proceedings into blocks of questions from Government and Non Government Members which prevent Members being able to follow a line of questioning in a logical and consistent manner to finality
- The limiting of each block of questions to 20 to 30 minutes generally thus preventing detailed consideration of particular issues because of time constraints
- The break-up of time within particular Ministerial Program statements to particular areas of Departments of Agencies thus limiting consideration of particularly important elements of a particular Department or agency
- The Capacity of Ministers to answer questions in such a manner as to avoid the issue being investigated
- The inability of Estimates Committees to ask questions directly of senior public service administrators
- The use by Government Members of questions to Ministers that enable those Ministers to utilise the time of the Committee to make propaganda statements , grandstand and undertake media stunts instead of addressing issues in relation to proposed expenditures

Whilst noting the Report that has been prepared I would also express the following Specific Reservations in relation to that Report.

Whilst the Opposition welcomes the increased funding made available to the Department concerns remain that the operations of the Department have not improved proportionately. During the hearings I made reference to the data obtained by the Department in its baseline survey which indicated that there was considerable disquiet among staff regarding progress. Whilst the Minister has dismissed this criticism as being outdated because of the age of the data it is instructive to compare the criticisms with the statements made by the Minister during the same hearings 12 months ago.

During evidence the Minister confirmed that there were three occasions when the Department failed to respond to 24 hour notifications within the required time frame although he was able to confirm that these cases were prioritised and responded to within 36 hours.

The Opposition continues to have concerns at the time being taken to implement the recommendations of the CMC's Protecting Children Report. The Minister advised that committee that 15 recommendations are still to be implemented some two and a half years after the report was published.

The outstanding recommendations are

- 5.2 dealing with the increase in frontline staff;
- 5.3 an empirically rigorous means of calculating workloads and projecting future staff numbers;
- 5.4 That frontline staff numbers be increased annually in line with workload increases;
- 5.7 That it be mandatory for case workers to successfully complete induction training before assuming casework responsibilities;
- 5.17 Completion of the upgrade of the information systems as a matter of the highest priority;
- 6.9 Implementation and resourcing of a non government service delivery strategic framework;
- 6.12 A quality assurance strategy be implemented for all services including a minimum standard for licensing of non- government services;
- 7.3 The evaluation of the effectiveness of placement options;

- 7.4 Identify the need for residential care, identify the children who would most benefit from these services, develop service models, staffing, monitor and evaluate residential care services;
- 7.22 Caseworkers be trained in evidence based parenting practices;
- 7.30 Consideration be given to mentoring programs for foster carers and children in foster care;
- 7.32 Foster carers receive appropriate remunerations to cover the costs of caring for a child and additional payments to attend training;
- 7.33 Investigate the introduction of a tiered system of payments for foster carers recognising skills necessary to care for children with more complex needs;
- 7.34 Allocation of additional payments on a needs basis and need and entitlements be clearly detailed in the child's case plan;
- 8.3 The nature of both service agreements and the funding of Indigenous Care Agencies be carefully reviewed.

I have noted the Ministers absolute assurance that these recommendations will be implemented by January 2007 but I take this opportunity to note my reservations about the Government's ability to meet that deadline.

An examination of the outstanding recommendations reveals that they include the highest priority recommendations including three fundamental reforms viz.

- The implementation of the integrated computer data base;
- Measurement of workloads and appropriate staffing levels;
- Appropriate remuneration for foster carers.

I noted the Minister undertaking to the Committee that the Integrated Client Management System is to be fully implemented state wide in November this year. This system has the potential to significantly improve case management. Even though the system is overdue it is critical that the system is adequately evaluated and stress tested prior to roll out to ensure its stability. Given the significant change that child safety front line staff have undergone in the past 2 years the implementation of a problematic core information system has the potential to seriously impede case responses.

During the hearings the Minister made mention of a number of separate inquiries or investigations regarding aspects of the Departments operations. I have expressed concern that many such inquiries take place internally and subsequently no report on the findings is made public. The Minister inevitably refers to the necessity for privacy and the need to protect the identity of the children involved a genuine concern that I acknowledge., however I believe that there needs to be a mechanism where the outcome of these matters can be subject to public scrutiny which was a key commitment expected by the CMC in establishing the strategic focus for the Department (*page 136 protecting children report CMC*)

The Opposition acknowledges the considerable progress made in implementing the CMC recommendations and in particular the continued dedication and hard work of the vast majority of staff who work in on of the most complex and difficult areas of the Government.

Rosemary Menkens

DISSENTING REPORT FOR ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

BRUCE FLEGG MP, SHADOW MINISTER FOR HEALTH

I place on record my thanks to the Chairman and congratulate him on a professional job in handling the Committee.

Also my thanks and appreciation to Rob and the staff for their efficient running of the Committee.

The Committee process itself however is clearly not delivering good value for the people of Queensland nor is it producing the level of openness and accountability that Queenslanders deserve.

There was clearly a strategy on the part of the Minister for Health that questions be deflected to members of his staff or department. Whilst I have no problem with departmental officers answering some of the technical questions that one would not expect a minister to know, clearly many of these questions were within the gambit one would expect a minister to be able to handle and clearly this was a politically designed strategy to shield the Minister from thorough scrutiny.

The format of a relatively small number of questions and uninterrupted answer without the possibility of asking supplementary questions or requesting the Minister address the pertinent issues where they are being ignored is a very restrictive format that limits scrutiny.

The opening statements by Ministers are generally of a propaganda nature and often are repeats or similar to ministerial statements made to the full parliament.

This is not contributing anything to the Estimates process and the ruling that only the Minister during his introductory remarks can be filmed for media purposes is clearly a political decision. There is no reason in my view why proceedings should not be available to the Queensland public by film.

In addition to these general observations, the following specific matters were in my view not dealt with in a satisfactory manner.

- The failure of the Beattie Government to make independent appointments to vital senior positions such as the Chairman of the Health Quality and Complaints Commission and the Director of Planning for the Planning & Development Unit was highlighted and not satisfactorily addressed by the Minister.

Clearly these were made from internal sources of applicants with chequered and questionable backgrounds within Queensland Health ahead of people outside Queensland Health who would be better qualified and would certainly inspire more public confidence than keeping everything “in-house” as it were.

- Again the Government failed the openness and accountability test when it came to Government contracts. In particular, in relation to the Aspen contract about which the Government has continually refused to answer questions about. Revelations were further made and not denied by the Minister of secret penalty payments within this contract. Given that this contract was only ever effectively offered to one party who appears to have been privy to a series of visits and meetings the public are entitled to ask serious questions about the integrity of the process.

- The Minister again failed the openness and accountability test in relation to Breastscreen when it was revealed that over 9,000 women had to have mammograms re-checked. Many had to have them done again and some were found to have cancer having previously been reported as normal and yet the Minister failed to notify the Queensland public.
- If the Queensland Government via Breastscreen writes to women saying that their mammograms were fine and there is subsequently evidence that the quality of reading may not have been up to scratch, those women are entitled to know that their original advice may have been incorrect.
- The Government's "what they don't know won't hurt them" approach has now damaged confidence across the State in whether the reports women received from Breastscreen are in fact accurate.
- Government failed to meet its own benchmarks for Category 1 and Category 2 elective surgery but offered the people of Queensland nothing more than excuses.
- The Government's performance and accountability on capital works in health was appalling with little over \$60 million spent out of a \$200 million plus budget for hospital and health centre capital works is a pitiful response to the capital works needs of a growing State.

The Government's appalling performance in delivery of mental health services, in particular in-patient mental health services was highlighted and not only inadequately answered by the Government but clearly in my view, the answers given misled the Committee. On page 12 of the Hansard transcription the Minister passed a question in relation to the number of declining in-patient treatments to Dr Groves who claimed that the declining number of treatments represented greater complexity which meant greater lengths of stay. On page 23 the Director of Mental Health, Dr Groves claimed that 2003/04 average length of stay was 10.5, 2004/05 was 11.3 and they projected 11.8 for 2006, yet in the ministerial portfolio statement for 04/05 it indicated that the average length of stay that year was 12.3 days and that there had in fact been a decline to 11.8 days average duration and furthermore the target for 06/07 year was unchanged from the 05/06 year of 9 to 9.5 days, a significant reduction in the actual length of stay over the past three years.

I believe that the 11.3 days average length of stay for 04/05 was misleading to the Committee indicating a lengthening of stay when in fact it should have been 12.3 days a massive difference of almost 10% and given that the Government is targeting a further reduction I think this evidence was misleading at best and the committee has the right to expect to be told the truth.

- The decline in hours for home based and centre based respite care. The Government failed adequately answer why these services including Meals on Wheels were being cut.

- Again the decline in general dental patients by an alarming extent was not adequately explained.
- Questions in relation to staffing numbers were responded to with a confusing mish mash of different definitions of what constitutes staff. Clearly this should not be a complicated matter and given the hundreds of millions of dollars pumped into IT in the Health Department it is ludicrous that the Government does not have at its fingertips simple measures of what is happening with staffing issues in Queensland Health.
- Minister failed dismally to establish a case that \$16.5 million spent on advertising on top of the blatantly political advertising on health coming from other sources of the Budget benefited the health of Queenslanders sufficiently to justify its diversion from other parts of the health Budget.
- Clearly again the Government was embarrassed to have to admit they employed a known paedophile in a public hospital where there was possibility of contact with Queensland families and children.
- The Minister completely failed to explain how a huge increase in the dental budget could result in a slump in general dental clinic services and school dental services. His explanation about professional dental staff was not supported by his statements elsewhere.

Bruce Flegg MP
Shadow Minister for Health