



Annual Report 2020 – 2021

**Report No. 11, 57th Parliament
Community Support and Services Committee
October 2021**

Community Support and Services Committee

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Acknowledgements

The committee acknowledges the assistance provided during the year by the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, and the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.

All web address references are current at the time of publishing.

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Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the Community Support and Services Committee's activities during the 2020-21 financial year.

The committee considered a series of bills, subordinate legislation and referred inquiries during the 2020-21 financial year in relation to the committee's areas of portfolio responsibility.

On behalf of the committee, I thank those individuals and organisations who generously contributed to the committee's work during the year by providing submissions or attending committee briefings and hearings. Their contribution is invaluable to the committee's work. I also thank my fellow committee members and our Parliamentary Service staff.

I commend this report to the House.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "C. McMillan".

Corrine McMillan MP

Chair

1 Community Support and Services Committee

1.1 Role of the committee

The Community Support and Services Committee (committee) is a portfolio committee of the Legislative Assembly which commenced on 26 November 2020 under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* (PoQA) and the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.¹

The committee's areas of portfolio responsibility are:

- Communities, Housing, Digital Economy and the Arts
- Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
- Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs.

In addition, the committee has a monitor and review function in relation to the performance of the functions of the Family Responsibilities Commission.

The functions of a portfolio committee include the examination of bills and subordinate legislation in its portfolio area to consider:

- the policy to be given effect by the legislation
- the application of fundamental legislative principles
- matters arising under the *Human Rights Act 2019* (HRA)
- for subordinate legislation – its lawfulness.²

Portfolio committees also have responsibility for scrutiny of public accounts and public works which relate to their portfolio. Committees also consider reports of the Auditor-General and other referrals from the Legislative Assembly and may initiate an inquiry into any other matter they consider appropriate.

2 Annual Report

In accordance with section 108 of the PoQA, the committee is required to table an annual report within 4 months and 14 days after the end of each financial year. The report must include:

- a list of meetings of the committee and the names of members attending or absent from each meeting
- a summary of issues considered by the committee, including a description of the more significant issues arising from the considerations
- a statement of the committee's revenue and spending for the year
- a brief description of responses by Ministers to recommendations of the committee.

This report provides a summary of the activities of the committee in the 2020-21 financial year.

3 Inquiries and reports

The committee considered a series of bills, subordinate legislation and referred inquiries during the 2020-21 financial year, as well as reporting on its annual activities.

Overall, the committee tabled 6 reports across the year.

¹ PoQA, s 88; Standing Order 194.

² PoQA, s 93; HRA, ss 39, 40, 41 and 57.

Copies of these publications are available from the committee's webpage.³

3.1 Bills and subordinate legislation

The committee examined four bills and ten pieces of subordinate legislation in accordance with its responsibility under section 93(1) of the PoQA, and tabled two bill reports and three subordinate legislation reports, as outlined below.

In examining this proposed legislation, the committee considered:

- the policy to be given effect by the legislation
- the application of fundamental legislative principles to the legislation
- for proposed legislation notified or referred to the committee after 1 January 2020, the compatibility of the proposed legislation with the HRA, including considering the compatibility statement and human rights certificate tabled with bills and subordinate legislation respectively, and
- for subordinate legislation – its lawfulness.

3.2 Examination of Bills

3.2.1 Report No. 2 – 2020-21 Budget Estimates and Volume of Additional Information

On 1 December 2020, the Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 2020 was introduced and referred to the committee for its examination and report on the 2020-21 portfolio budget estimates within the committee's areas of responsibility, as set out under Schedule 6 of the Standing Orders.

The committee held a public hearing on 15 December 2020 at which it questioned the following Ministers regarding the proposed expenditure for their portfolio areas:

- Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts
- Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
- Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

The committee also questioned the chief executives of statutory entities within its portfolio areas regarding the budget estimates for their agencies.

The committee tabled its report on the bill, alongside a Volume of Additional Information, on 12 February 2021, recommending that the bill be passed.

The bill was passed on 24 February 2021.

3.2.2 Report No. 3 – Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020

On 3 December 2020, the Child Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 was referred to the committee for examination and report.

The committee received a written briefing on the bill by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs (DCYJMA) on 17 December 2020, and received and accepted 15 submissions.

The committee tabled its report on the bill on 12 February 2021, recommending that the bill be passed. The committee tabled an Erratum to Report No. 3 on 22 February 2021, to correct details of submitter comments. The bill was passed, without amendment, on 23 March 2021.

³ <https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/CSSC>

3.2.3 Report No. 6 – Queensland Veterans’ Council Bill 2021

On 22 April 2021, the Queensland Veterans’ Council Bill 2021 was referred to the committee for examination and report.

The committee held a public departmental briefing with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) on 30 April 2021, and received a written briefing on the bill by DPC on 4 May 2021. The committee received and accepted 12 submissions. The committee held a public hearing on 24 May 2021 to hear from stakeholders. The committee also resolved to elect a sub-committee to undertake a site visit to Anzac Square on 28 May 2021.

The committee tabled its report on the bill on 11 June 2021, recommending that the bill be passed.

3.2.4 Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (Tenants' Rights) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021

On 26 May 2021, the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (Tenants' Rights) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 was referred to the committee for examination and report.

The committee held a public briefing with the Member for South Brisbane, the Private Member who introduced the Bill, on 14 June 2021, and received a written briefing on the legislative framework established by the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* by the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy on 30 June 2021.

As at 30 June 2021, the committee’s inquiry was ongoing.

3.2.5 Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021

On 18 June 2021, the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021 was referred to the committee for examination and report. As at 30 June 2021, the committee’s inquiry was ongoing.

3.3 Examination of subordinate legislation

During the reporting period, the committee examined ten pieces of subordinate legislation in accordance with its responsibility under section 93(1) of the PoQA, tabling the following reports:

- Report No. 1, 57th Parliament - Subordinate legislation tabled between 11 August 2020 and 7 September 2020 (tabled on 7 December 2020)
- Report No. 4, 57th Parliament - Subordinate legislation tabled between 8 September 2020 and 2 December 2020 (tabled on 22 February 2021)
- Report No. 5, 57th Parliament - Subordinate legislation tabled between 3 December 2020 and 23 February 2021 (tabled on 20 April 2021).

3.3.1 Compliance with the *Legislative Standards Act 1992*

For each of the examined items of subordinate legislation, the committee was satisfied that the explanatory notes complied with the requirements of part 4 of the LSA.

Reports No. 4 and 5 highlighted potential breaches of fundamental legislative principle that the committee considered, on balance, were justified and appropriate in the circumstances.

3.3.2 Compliance with the *Human Rights Act 2019*

From 1 January 2020, all subordinate legislation was required to be accompanied by a human rights certificate prepared and tabled with the subordinate legislation by the responsible Minister.⁴

During the year, the committee examined the human rights certificates for all items of subordinate legislation notified and tabled, including considering the explanations provided by responsible

⁴ PoQA, s 41.

Ministers regarding any identified limitations on human rights, and the compatibility of the subordinate legislation with the HRA.

Reports No. 4 and 5 highlighted human rights issues potentially raised by items of subordinate legislation discussed within the reports, all of which were acknowledged by the responsible Minister in the relevant human rights certificate. In each instance, the committee was satisfied with the explanation provided by the Minister in the relevant human rights certificate, and agreed that any limitation on human rights was reasonable and demonstrably justifiable in the circumstances.

The committee also considered that the human rights certificates tabled with these items of subordinate legislation provided a sufficient level of information to facilitate understanding of the subordinate legislation in relation to its compatibility with human rights

3.4 Referred inquiries

Section 92 of the PoQA provides that, in addition to performing a legislative scrutiny and general oversight role in relation to its primary areas of responsibility, a portfolio committee is responsible for dealing with any issue referred to it by the Legislative Assembly or under another Act.⁵

During 2020-21, one such issue-based inquiries were referred to the committee by the Legislative Assembly. The committee's inquiry activities are set out below.

3.4.1 Inquiry into social isolation and loneliness in Queensland

On 27 May 2021, the Legislative Assembly agreed to a motion that the committee inquire into and report on social isolation and loneliness in Queensland. The terms of reference for the inquiry are that the committee inquire into and report on:

- the nature and extent of the impact of social isolation and loneliness in Queensland, including but not limited to:
 - identification of and consultation with vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals or groups at significant risk across the life course
 - the interplay of COVID-19 with this issue
- the causes and drivers of social isolation and loneliness, including those unique to Queensland
- the protective factors known to mitigate social isolation and loneliness
- the benefits of addressing social isolation and loneliness, examples of successful initiatives undertaken nationally and internationally and how to measure social isolation and loneliness in Queensland to determine if implemented strategies are effective
- how current investment by the Queensland Government, other levels of government, the non-government, corporate and other sectors may be leveraged to prevent, mitigate and address the drivers and impacts of social isolation and loneliness across Queensland, including:
 - services and programs such as health and mental health, transport, housing, education, employment and training, sport and recreation, community services and facilities, digital inclusion, volunteering, the arts and culture, community development, and planning for accessible, inclusive and connected communities
 - targeted support to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and those most at risk

⁵ PoQA, s 92(2).

- the role, scope and priorities of a state-wide strategy to address social isolation and loneliness, considering interactions with existing Queensland and national strategies.

As at 30 June 2021, the committee's inquiry was ongoing.

4 Consideration of Auditor-General reports

During the reporting period, the committee was referred one Auditor-General report, in accordance with Standing Order 194B. The committee also considered one Auditor-General report referred to a previous committee of the 56th Parliament, resolving to undertake an inquiry into the report.

4.1 Auditor-General Report 1: 2020-21—*Family support and child protection system*

The Auditor-General Report No. 1: 2020-21—*Family support and child protection system* (Report No. 1: 2020-21) was tabled on 4 August 2020, and referred to the former Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee of the 56th Parliament for consideration. The 56th Parliament dissolved before the former committee considered Report No. 1: 2020-21. On 22 February 2021, the committee resolved to undertake an inquiry into the report.

On 8 March 2021, the committee received a public briefing on the report from the Auditor-General and Queensland Audit Office staff.

On 24 March 2021, the committee wrote to relevant departments seeking an update on their responses to Report No. 1: 2020-21. The following responses were received:

- Queensland Health, received 13 April 2021
- Department of Education, received 14 April 2021
- DCYJMA, received 15 April 2021
- DPC, received 15 April 2021
- Office of the Public Guardian Queensland, received 30 April 2021
- Queensland Police Service, received 13 May 2021
- Queensland Family and Child Commission, received 27 May 2021.

As at 30 June 2021, the committee's consideration of Report No. 1: 2020-21 was ongoing.

4.2 Auditor-General Report 7: 2020-21—*Delivering successful technology projects*

The Auditor-General's Report No. 7: 2020-21—*Delivering successful technology projects* (Report No. 7: 2020-21) was tabled on 30 September 2020 and referred to the committee for consideration on 3 December 2020.

The committee considered Report No. 7: 2020-21, and determined to take no further review action in relation to the report.

5 Monitoring and oversight

5.1 Oversight of the Family Responsibilities Commission

The committee has responsibility under Standing Order 194A for oversight of the Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC). The committee's role is to:

- to monitor and review the performance by the FRC of the FRC's functions
- to report to the Legislative Assembly on any matter concerning the FRC, the FRC's functions or the performance of the FRC's functions that the committee considers should be drawn to the Legislative Assembly's attention

- to examine the annual report of the FRC tabled in the Legislative Assembly and, if appropriate, to comment on any aspect of the report
- to report to the Legislative Assembly any changes to the functions, structures and procedures of the FRC that the committee considers desirable for the more effective operation of the FRC or the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008*.⁶

5.1.1 Oversight activities during 2020-21

To assist the committee with its oversight of the functions of the FRC, the committee held a public briefing with the Family Responsibilities Commissioner, Ms Tammy Williams, and other FRC staff, on 8 March 2021.

During the financial year, the committee also considered the FRC's 2019-20 annual report, which was tabled on 3 February 2021. Following its consideration of the report, on 22 March 2021 the committee wrote to the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships to seek clarification on the status of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Australian and Queensland Governments for the funding of the FRC, which was set to expire on 30 June 2021. The committee received a response from the Minister on 8 April 2021.

The committee also wrote to the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships on 22 April 2021, seeking further information on school attendance notices and information sharing with the Department of Education. The committee received a response from the Minister on 27 May 2021, advising that this matter had been referred to the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing for consideration and direct reply. As at 30 June 2021, the committee had received no reply.

6 Consideration of public works

As previously noted, within its portfolio areas, the committee has a responsibility to assess the public accounts of each department with regard to their economy, efficiency and effectiveness of financial management by:

- examining government financial documents
- considering the annual and other reports of the Auditor-General.

In discharging these responsibilities, the committee may also consider public works undertaken by an entity that is a constructing authority⁷ for the works, or consider any major works,⁸ should the committee decide to do so.⁹

⁶ Standing Order 194A.

⁷ PoQA, s 94 states that an entity which undertakes public works is a *constructing authority* for works:

- if the entity is the State or a department;
- if the entity is established under an Act, or under State or local government authorisation, for a public, State or local government purpose, and the works are State-funded;
- if the entity is a Government Owned Corporation (GOC) or Authority and the works are undertaken specifically or substantially for a community service obligation of the GOC or Authority, or the works are major works which have been referred to a portfolio committee by the Assembly; or
- if the entity is a commercial entity and under an agreement for the works, the State or another entity representing the state, has, will, or may have a financial liability or interest (including a contribution of resources of any kind or a grant of land or other right, privilege, monopoly, concession, franchise or interest), or the works have become, or will or may become, the absolute property of the State or another entity representing the State.

⁸ Major works mean works (other than public works) undertaken as part of a major infrastructure investment for a GOC or Authority, as respectively outlined in the GOC's statement of corporate intent, or the Authority's operational plan. See: PoQA, s 79.

⁹ PoQA, s 94.

7 Committee expenditure

The committee had no revenue during 2020-21. The committee is funded from the appropriation made to the Legislative Assembly. The expenditure of the committee from 26 November 2020 – 30 June 2021 is shown in the table below.

Item	\$
Staff salaries and related expenses ¹⁰	205,786
Business travel	1,224
Printing and supplies	1,567
Advertising	4,509
Technology	3,340
Meeting expenses and miscellaneous expenses	7,134
Expenditure Total¹¹	223,561

8 Meeting attendance record

Committee member's attendance at committee meetings and other activities during the reporting period are listed below.

Standing Order 202(1) provides that in the case of a committee members' illness or inability to attend, another member may be appointed to attend that meeting or stand in for a particular inquiry.

Legend:

PM	private meeting
PH	public hearing
PB	public briefing
SV	site visit

Meeting Date	Activity	Corrine McMillan MP, Chair	Stephen Bennett MP, Deputy Chair	Michael Berkman MP	Jon Krause MP	Cynthia Lui MP	Robert Skelton MP
30-Nov-20	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
07-Dec-20	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

¹⁰ These figures reflect a three person secretariat supporting the committee. The committee's staffing might have been supplemented with additional resources from general Committee Office staff throughout the year.

¹¹ As figures have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between the sum of the component items and total.

Meeting Date	Activity	Corrine McMillan MP, Chair	Stephen Bennett MP, Deputy Chair	Michael Berkman MP	Jon Krause MP	Cynthia Lui MP	Robert Skelton MP
15-Dec-20	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	PH ¹²	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	PM	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
08-Jan-21	PM	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
09-Feb-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22-Feb-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
08-Mar-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22-Mar-21	PM	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
19-Apr-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27-Apr-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
30-Apr-21	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10-May-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19-May-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗ ¹³	✓
24-May-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	PH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
28-May-21	SV ¹⁴	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓
08-Jun-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14-Jun-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23-Jun-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25-Jun-21	PM	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓

¹² Members in Attendance: Dr Amy MacMahon MP, Mr Tim Mander MP, Dr Christian Rowan MP, Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, Ms Amanda Camm MP, Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP.

¹³ Member for Capalaba, Don Brown MP, substituted for Cynthia Lui MP.

¹⁴ Sub-committee was elected, consisting of: Ms Corrine McMillan MP (Chair), Mr Stephen Bennett MP (Deputy Chair), Ms Cynthia Lui MP, Mr Robert Skelton MP.

