

2021 – 22 Budget Estimates

Report No. 10, 57th Parliament
Transport and Resources Committee
August 2021

Transport and Resources Committee

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Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2021-22 financial year.

Consideration of the budget estimates allows for the public examination of the responsible Ministers and the chief executive officers of agencies within the committee's portfolio areas. This was undertaken through the questions on notice and public hearing process. Due to current health orders some Members and witnesses participated in the hearing via video conference. This was the first time this 'hybrid model' was used for estimates hearings in Queensland.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2021 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement, the Minister for Resources, and each their departmental officers for their co-operation in providing information to the committee throughout this process.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their hard work and valuable contribution to the estimates process, and other members whose participation in the hearing provided additional scrutiny of the estimates.

Finally, I thank the committee's secretariat and other Parliamentary Service staff for their assistance throughout the estimates process. The committee wishes to particularly those staff involved in enabling the estimates process to continue using the hybrid model.



Shane King MP
Chair

August 2021

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

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

The committee's primary areas of responsibility are:

- Transport and Main Roads
- Energy, Renewables, Hydrogen, Public Works and Procurement
- Resources.

On 18 June 2021, the Appropriation Bill 2021 and the estimates for the committee's area of responsibility were referred to the committee for investigation and report.²

1.2 Aim of this report

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

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

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

Prior to the public hearing, the committee provided the Minister for Transport and Main Roads; the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement; and the Minister for Resources with questions on notice in relation to the estimates. Responses to all the questions were received.

On 10 August 2021, the committee conducted a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from: the Minister for Transport and Main Roads; the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement; the Minister for Resources; and other witnesses.

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

Answers to the committee's pre-hearing questions on notice and documents tabled during the hearing; answers are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.

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

² Standing Order 177 provides for the automatic referral of the Annual Appropriation Bills to portfolio committees once the Bills have been read a second time.

1.3 Participation by other Members

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

- Mr David Crisafulli MP, Leader of the Opposition and Member for Broadwater
- Ms Fiona Simpson MP, Member for Maroochydore
- Mr Steve Minnikin MP, Member for Chatsworth
- Mr Pat Weir MP, Member for Condamine
- Mr Tim Mander MP, Member for Everton
- Mr Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar
- Dr Amy MacMahon MP, Member for South Brisbane
- Mr Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger.

2 Recommendation

Pursuant to Standing Order 187(1), the committee must state whether the proposed expenditures referred to it are agreed to.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2021 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

3 Minister for Transport and Main Roads

This section discusses issues raised during the committee’s examination of the Bill.

3.1 Department of Department of Transport and Main Roads

The Honourable Mark Bailey MP, Minister for Department of Transport and Main Roads, is the Minister responsible for the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR). The department has the following five service areas:

- Transport System Investment, Planning And Programming
- Transport Infrastructure Management And Delivery
- Transport Safety And Regulation
- Customer Experience
- Passenger Transport Services.³

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2021 compares the appropriations for the department for 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Appropriations	Budget 2020-2021 \$'000	Est. Actual 2020-2021 \$'000	Vote 2021-2022 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	5,673,004	5,632,724	5,947,975
equity adjustment	2,019,337	2,363,643	2,419,324
<i>Administered Items</i>	588,939	179,163	1,589,378
Vote	8,281,280	8,175,530	9,956,677

Source: Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2, p 14.

The following table outlines the agencies and statutory bodies that fall within the department and provides a comparison of the budgets for 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Agency	Budget 2020-2021 \$'000	Est. Actual 2020-2021 \$'000	Vote 2021-2022 \$'000
Department of Transport and Main Roads			
- controlled	6,717,806	6,736,600	7,159,384
- administered	2,880,080	2,899,316	3,094,407
RoadTek	574,320	725,263	688,466
Gold Coast Waterways Authority	24,121	24,121	24,331
Cross River Rail Delivery Authority	482,683	366,228	549,499

Source: Queensland Budget 2021-22, Service Delivery Statements, DTMR, pp 10, 13, 21, 26, 31.

³ Queensland Budget 2021-21, Service Delivery Statements, DTMR, p 1

3.1.1 Budget highlights – Department of Transport and Main Roads

Budget highlights for the department in 2021-2022 include:

- continuing to deliver a jointly funded program of upgrades on the M1 that will improve safety and increase capacity
- continuing to deliver the jointly funded 15–year (2013–14 to 2027–28) Bruce Highway Upgrade Program, supporting approximately 2,500 direct jobs over the life of the program
- commencing the \$500 million joint funding commitment towards upgrades of the Inland Freight Route (Charters Towers to Mungindi)
- continuing to deliver road stimulus packages as part of the Queensland Economic Recovery Strategy
- continuing to provide financial support to aviation, ferry and bus/coach passenger transport operators in regional and remote Queensland still impacted by COVID-19
- continuing to assist with affordability of airfares for Gulf, Cape York and Torres Strait communities through the Local Fare Scheme
- ordering an initial fleet of 20 new 6-car passenger trains to be manufactured in the Maryborough area as part of the government's Queensland Economic Recovery Plan – Making it for Queensland priority area which will be added to the train network in south east Queensland and will support the Cross River Rail project
- continuing to focus on road safety education and awareness programs and improve the safety of state-controlled roads where accidents occur more frequently
- backing Queensland Maritime jobs by supporting the establishment of a new coastal shipping service thereby providing economic stimulus to regional Queensland and investing in skills and training capacity to help grow Queensland's maritime workforce
- investing in The Future is Electric: Queensland Electric Vehicle Strategy (the EV Strategy) which details what the Queensland Government is doing to continue the transition to electric vehicles. A key deliverable of the EV Strategy is the Queensland Electric Super Highway (the QESH), the world's longest electric highway in a single state. With 31 fast charging locations across Queensland, the QESH connects electric vehicle motorists from Coolangatta to Port Douglas and from Brisbane to Toowoomba. Building on this success, the government is investing \$2.8 million to roll out QESH Phase 3, extending and providing more accessible charging infrastructure to Queenslanders and tourists
- continuing various Queensland and Australian government funded grants programs, such as the Urban Congestion Fund, Roads of Strategic Importance and Beams Roads (Carseldine) level crossing.⁴

3.2 RoadTek

RoadTek's purpose is to enable the Department of Transport and Main Roads to deliver community outcomes and provide end to end management of transport solutions through integrated business streams including civil construction and maintenance, structures, electrical, intelligent transport systems and line marking, supported by an internal construction fleet.⁵

⁴ Queensland Budget 2021-21, Service Delivery Statements, DTMR, p 2

⁵ Queensland Budget 2021-22, Service Delivery Statements, DTMR, p 19

3.2.1 Budget highlights – RoadTek

The key deliverables outlined in the 2020-21 budget include:

- deliver new statewide programs including linemarking, structures inspections and servicing light emitting diode and NextGen traffic controllers
- deliver selected priority works for local governments and other state agencies
- continue to partner with regional and Indigenous communities to enhance training, development, and employment as well as enabling local opportunities for businesses
- focus on the future of our products, services and capability to enable a responsive RoadTek.

3.3 Gold Coast Waterways Authority

The Gold Coast Waterways Authority's (the Authority) vision is to sustain, enhance and promote the waterways to showcase this wonderful asset to our community and visitors. The Authority's purpose is to provide the best possible management of the Gold Coast waterways at a reasonable cost to the community and government while keeping regulation to a minimum.⁶

3.3.1 Budget highlights – Gold Coast Waterways Authority

The key deliverables outlined in the 2020-21 budget include:

- maintain and improve boating infrastructure including Cabbage Tree Point boat ramp upgrade and Tipplers and Proud Park pontoon replacements
- deliver new projects as part of the Spit Works Program including improvements to Marine Stadium infrastructure (in conjunction with Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning)
- keep navigation channels accessible through dredging the Gold Coast Seaway and the North and South Channels.

3.4 Cross River Rail Delivery Authority

The Cross River Rail Delivery Authority's purpose is to deliver economic development and transport outcomes that maximise benefits for Queenslanders.⁷

3.4.1 Budget highlights – Cross River Rail Delivery Authority

The key deliverables outlined in the 2020-21 budget include:

- manage the compliance of the major contractors in their execution of contracts for Tunnel, Stations and Development; Rail, Integration and Systems; and the European Train Control System, particularly in relation to:
 - workplace health and safety, to ensure the highest safety levels are maintained across each of the project's worksites
 - maintaining the high percentage of local subcontractor and suppliers to benefit from Cross River Rail
 - achieving the project's commitment of 450 trainee and apprentice opportunities over the life of the project

⁶ Queensland Budget 2021-22, Service Delivery Statements, DTMR, p 24

⁷ Queensland Budget 2021-22, Service Delivery Statements, DTMR, p 29

- complete the twin underground tunnel excavations with the project's 2 tunnel boring machines, which will travel from Woolloongabba, under the Brisbane River and CBD, and finish at the northern portal site at Normanby in late 2021
- commence the rolling program of significant upgrade works at the 6 stations from Fairfield station to Salisbury station
- manage the Expressions of Interest and Requests for Proposal phases for the 3 Gold Coast stations at Merrimac, Helensvale North (Hope Island) and Pimpama, to be delivered as part of the Cross River Rail project.⁸

3.5 Key issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee in relation to the Department of Transport and Main Roads included:

- Cross River Rail
- Investment in roads and transport
- Investment in Queensland's rail manufacturing industry
- Coomera Connector project
- Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade
- Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3 project contract
- Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP)
- Road safety performance standards
- Personalised Transport Ombudsman
- TransLink tracking tool for regional airfares
- Digital driver's licences
- The roads and transport budget and the 2032 Olympic Games
- The civil construction sector and COVID-19
- Derelict marine vessels
- Local Councils, Road Maintenance Performance Contracts (RMPC) and use of third-party contractors
- Employment of former employee of Rex Airlines
- Planned high-frequency bus routes between Bardon and Toowong
- The Tennyson train line
- Active Transport Investment Program
- Gladstone Ports Corporation
- North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation
- Capital allocations to projects on the M1 and the second M1
- Integrated transport network and accessibility
- Expenditure allocations to fast rail and passenger rail to Toowoomba
- Bridges and culverts – identification of structural and other issues

⁸ Queensland Budget 2021-22, Service Delivery Statements, DTMR, p 29

- The Barron River Bridge
- Captain Cook Bridge rehabilitation and safety
- Moreton Bay region – capital allocations
- Sunshine Coast – road and rail investment
- Signals passed at danger (SPAD) statistics
- Skipped rail stations
- Rail level crossings
- Transport sector emissions
- Co-funding of proposed green bridges
- Proposed Gold CityGlider service
- Dust monitoring units at the Woolloongabba station site.

4 Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement

This section discusses issues raised during the committee’s examination of the Bill.

4.1 Department of Energy and Public Works

The Honourable Mick De Brenni MP, Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement, is the Minister responsible for the Department of Energy and Public Works (DEPW). The department has the following to service areas:

- Energy Services
- Building and Procurement Services.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2021 compares the appropriations for the department for 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Appropriations	Budget 2020-2021 \$'000	Est. Actual 2020-2021 \$'000	Vote 2021-2022 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	86,108	87,216	173,321
equity adjustment	44,284	6,811	43,260
<i>Administered Items</i>	264,517	267,996	546,194
Vote	394,909	362,023	762,775

Source: Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2, p. 10.

The following table outlines the agencies and statutory bodies that fall within the department and provides a comparison of the budgets for 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Agency	Budget 2020-2021 \$'000	Est. Actual 2020-2021 \$'000	Vote 2021-2022 \$'000
Department of Energy and Public Works			
- controlled	504,804	509,212	957,420
- administered	266,603	268,314	546,143
QBuild	1,091,318	1,142,603	1,045,106
QFleet	158,105	155,170	138,998

Source: Queensland Budget 2021-2022, Service Delivery Statements – DEPW, pp 7, 10, 18, 23.

4.1.1 Budget highlights – Department of Energy and Public Works

Budget highlights for the department in 2021-2022 include:

- \$29.4 million over 4 years, \$9.1 million in 2021–22 to support the Electricity Tariff Adjustment Scheme (ETAS). The ETAS assists regional business electricity connections that are impacted due to the phase out of obsolete electricity tariffs from 30 June 2021
- \$22 million over 2 years, \$14 million in 2021–22, to support the Queensland Hydro-electric Study Implementation proposal including undertaking design and costing studies for a pumped hydro-electric project at Borumba. This work will support the Queensland Government’s commitment to achieve the Queensland Renewable Energy Target (QRET) of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030 through an energy system that is secure and reliable

- \$2.6 million over 2 years funded by the department to support the establishment of the Hydrogen Taskforce. The Hydrogen Taskforce will focus on the delivery of the necessary policy and practices to ensure the sustainable development of a hydrogen industry in Queensland. The Taskforce will guide the implementation of actions to progress the Queensland Hydrogen Industry Strategy 2019–2024
- \$17.6 million increased funding over 4 years, \$4.3 million in 2021–22, to expand and enhance the Queensland Procurement Compliance Unit. The Buy Queensland procurement policy ensures that the spend by government on procurement creates safe, quality local jobs and delivers economic and social benefits to as many Queenslanders as possible. Expansion of the compliance unit will enable full delivery of the expanded work of the fully enhanced unit to undertake best practice principle audits, including apprentices and trainee obligations, food and beverage and local benefits audits, and communication and engagement activities
- \$13.8 million increased funding over 4 years, \$3.5 million in 2021–22 has been allocated to maintain the existing cyclone shelters across the state to provide safe refuge and protection for Queenslanders from impacts of severe tropical cyclones.⁹

4.2 QBuild

QBuild’s vision is to ensure customers benefit from better operating efficiencies, greater value for money and strong business partnerships. QBuild’s purpose is to deliver state-wide planning, building and maintenance services that support Queensland Government agencies to deliver their core services to Queenslanders.¹⁰

4.2.1 Budget highlights – QBuild

The key deliverables outlined in the 2021-22 budget include:

- continued focus on a high-quality apprenticeship program
- capability uplift of QBuild staff skills, knowledge and experience
- development of long-term partnership agreements with other Queensland Government agencies to maximise service value and deliver projects and program on time and on budget
- continued application of the Queensland Government Procurement Policy.¹¹

4.3 QFleet

QFleet’s vision is to provide whole-of-government mobility solutions and services that are fit-for-purpose, safe and environmentally responsible. QFleet’s purpose is to provide efficient value for money fleet transport solutions enabling the delivery of frontline services to the community and support agencies in achieving reduced vehicle emissions, through best practice vehicle deployment, operation, and the introduction of innovative technology such as low emission vehicles.¹²

⁹ Queensland Budget 2021-21, Service Delivery Statements, EPW, p 2

¹⁰ Queensland Budget 2021-21, Service Delivery Statements, EPW, p 16

¹¹ Queensland Budget 2021-21, Service Delivery Statements, EPW, p 16

¹² Queensland Budget 2021-21, Service Delivery Statements, EPW, p 21

4.3.1 Budget highlights – QFleet

The key deliverables outlined in the 2021-22 budget include:

- continue the implementation of the QFleet Environmental Strategy for the Queensland Government motor vehicle fleet and QFleet Electric Vehicle Transition Strategy for the Queensland Government motor vehicle fleet increasing the range and number of low and zero emission vehicles available to be leased by customer agencies
- increase the number of electric vehicles in the government fleet by achieving annual targets within the QFleet Electric Vehicle Transition Strategy
- complete implementation of the new QFleet fleet management system.¹³

4.4 Key issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee in relation to the Department of Energy and Public Works included:

- Electricity generated from renewables
- Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund
- Domestic hydrogen market for transport in Queensland
- Renewable Energy Zones
- Energy storage and renewables
- Funding for the Barcaldine Renewable Energy Zone
- Batteries and end-of-life plan for batteries
- Callide Power Station incident
- Queensland Government position on new coal-fired power stations
- Hydrogen and decarbonising industries
- Zero carbon emissions target
- Renewables and public ownership
- The hydrogen supply chain
- Power prices
- Embedded networks, access to electricity tariffs, and the Energy and Water Ombudsman
- Public ownership of the electricity generation sector
- Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC):
- Building and renovation of homes
- New fire protection and system frameworks
- Payment of sub-contractors
- Accessible housing
- QFleet and electric vehicles
- Cairns economy
- Combustible cladding

¹³ Queensland Budget 2021-21, Service Delivery Statements, EPW, p 21

- Government investment in state economy
- Financial viability of the construction industry
- Best practice principles
- Building codes and accessible housing standards.

5 Minister for Resources

This section discusses issues raised during the committee’s examination of the Bill.

5.1 Department of Resources

The Honourable Scott Stewart MP, Minister for Resources is the Minister responsible for the Department of Resources (DR). The department has the following two service areas:

- Minerals and Energy Resources Services
- Land Services.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2021 compares the appropriations for the department for 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Appropriations	Budget 2020-2021 \$'000	Est. Actual 2020-2021 \$'000	Vote 2021-2022 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	315,357	297,174	319,767
equity adjustment	92,025	69,467	(4,381)
<i>Administered Items</i>	204,379	200,573	4,486
Vote	611,761	567,214	319,872

Source: Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 2, p. 12.

5.1.1 Budget Highlights – Department of Resources

Budget highlights for the department in 2021-2022 include:

- \$16.8 million over 2 years to continue to address the management and mitigation of significant public safety, health and environmental risks at high-risk abandoned mine sites
- \$8.7 million over 5 years for the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program to continue protection of the Great Barrier Reef
- \$3.2 million in land rent relief as part of the government's extension of drought relief arrangements.¹⁴

5.2 Key issues raised at the public hearing – Department of Resources

Issues raised by the committee in relation to the Resources portfolio included:

- Coal seam gas companies
- Agricultural land subject to a ‘dial before you dig’ notice
- Arrow Energy
- GasFields Commission
- Management of coexistence of agriculture and gas in regional communities
- Queensland Coal Mining Board of Inquiry

¹⁴ Queensland Budget 2021-21, Service Delivery Statements, DR, p 2

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- Queensland commodities
 - The Bowen pipeline
 - Queensland Stock Route Network Management Strategy
 - Directional drilling
 - Strategic cropping land
 - Resources industry development plan
 - Mine approvals
 - Contribution of the Queensland mining industry
 - Explosives Inspectorate
 - Lower emissions mineral extraction
 - Management of leases on Queensland's islands
 - Consideration of International Energy Agency analysis and new leases for fossil fuel projects in Queensland
 - Authorities To Prospect (ATP) held by Blue Energy and Origin Energy in the Lake Eyre Basin
 - Statewide Landcover and Trees Study (SLATS)
 - Location of companies that provide satellite imagery and aerial mapping
 - Late payments by the department to small businesses
 - The approval process of Acland stage 3
 - Approval of thermal coal mines
 - The Geological Survey of Queensland's online accessible data initiative
 - Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan
 - Assistance to landholders who have had an increase in their rural land valuations
 - Queensland's domestic gas supply policy
 - Recruitment of the Mines Rehabilitation Commissioner
 - Control of prickly acacia
 - Management of the islands off the Queensland coast
 - Mining inspectors
 - Occupational dust lung diseases in Queensland
 - Government support for North and North-West Queensland
 - The abandoned mines program.

Transport and Resources Committee – Budget 2021/22 Statement of Reservation

The LNP agrees with passing the 2021/22 Budget.

However, honest Queenslanders expected more from the Labor Government's budget.

With the health system in crisis, they deserved solutions to fix ambulance ramping and the ever-growing surgery waiting lists.

With small and family businesses going to the wall under the pressure of COVID lockdowns, they expected the Labor Government to step up and provide COVID support payments.

With young criminals running rampant through Queensland, they expected action to keep their family and possessions safe.

With double income families struggling to buy or rent a home, they expected action be taken to release more land.

What they received was a budget which announced funds without funding and \$4 billion cuts to vital infrastructure spending.

Committee Operation

The beginning of the hearing revealed the Member for Mundingburra was still part of the committee and receiving extra pay. This is despite the Premier telling Queenslanders she was going to stand him down for his second incident this year in Townsville's Safe Night Precinct. Queenslanders expect honesty from the Premier. They deserve a Premier who is not just deeply disappointed but will do something when she says she will.

The LNP calls on the Member for Mundingburra to do the honourable thing and resign his position on the Committee. He also needs to repay his committee salary backdated to the day the Premier announced she would sack him.

TMR

Evidence provided to the Committee demonstrates the Labor Government is losing control of major transport projects and Queenslanders expect better.

There's no bigger failure than Cross River Rail. The true costs remain a mystery. We do know that it is higher than the \$5.4 billion number that is often quoted by Minister Bailey with the budget documents stating that the capital project cost is \$6.888 billion. Questions remain about other components of the project like Clapham Rail Stabling Yards that are separate line items in the budget. When adding these separate line items, the total cost could be closer to \$7.4 billion.

During the hearing, representatives of the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority advised that passengers would start using Cross River Rail in 2025. This is contrary to previous government statements such as a ministerial statement from April 2019 that says, "Cross River Rail would be ready to service the South-East by 2024."

While Cross River Rail is certainly shaping as the government's greatest failure, it is not the only one.

Despite previously stating that the Coomera Connector would start construction in mid-2021, a contractor is yet to be appointed for the first section of stage 1. The full completion of stage 1 by 2024/25 is looking very doubtful.

The Director-General has also refused to commit to the stated 2024 completion date for the Beerburrum to Nambour Rail duplication. That project currently has a \$10.5 million underspend and the planned 2021/22 expenditure has been almost halved.

The Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 3 project was meant to start construction by Christmas last year. The contract for the main works is yet to be signed.

However, it's not just major construction projects that this government is having difficulty delivering.

The Labor Government decided to not proceed with the establishment of a Personalised Transport Ombudsman but not before spending \$430,000 to set up the office.

The Labor Government also previously announced the development of a regional airfares tracking tool but has since decided that it's not needed. The department couldn't advise what resources were wasted on this initiative before it was cancelled.

South Australia has had digital drivers' licences since 2017. New South Wales has had them since 2019. When Queenslanders will get them remains unknown, despite a successful trial being completed in 2020.

Honesty and accountability remain an issue for the Labor Government.

The Minister has been unable to answer questions about a matter because it was before the CCC. This time, it related to the appointment of the CEO of Gladstone Ports Corporation. The board had made a unanimous recommendation for the appointment of an individual but the reasons why the Minister didn't agree with this decision remains a mystery.

The Department was also unable to provide any details on the appointment of Owen Doogan (who is the former head of the Rail Tram and Bus Union- a major Labor Party donor) to the board of North Queensland Bulk Ports.

The almost \$6 billion maintenance backlog continues to hinder economic development in Queensland. There's no better example than the Barron River Bridge. Bridge restrictions were to be in place until September while serious structural issues were addressed. The Director-General advised that these restrictions will now be in place until "at least October 2021".

Queensland Rail operations continue to be a concern. The number of Signals Passed at Danger (SPADs) continue to be higher than the same period in the previous year. The number of skipped stations also has increased, causing inconvenience for rail users.

However most concerning was the confirmation that Queensland Rail do not yet have a service plan for rail services once Cross River Rail opens. We therefore do not know how many new services will be delivered by the project, how many new trains are needed or the impacts on other parts of the rail network.

Resources

The LNP and the mining sector have been calling for certainty on the future of mining in Queensland. Since 2015 mining investment has more than halved in Queensland. This reflects a Labor Government that does not walk the talk in relation to this valuable sector.

In fact, mining investment to March 2021 collapsed 19 percent in comparison to the previous year whilst in the same time frame Western Australia surged by 10 percent.

The critically important mining sector in Queensland expects more from the Labor Government.

But they are not receiving more. During the estimates process it was revealed there is no target release date for the publication of the Resource Industry Development Plan (RIDP). Nor are there any KPI's as to what the RIDP will achieve. There will be approximately \$771,000 spent on third party consultants to develop this plan although no detail has been provided as to what outcome the government is hoping for. Yet again, this Labor Government is more committed to media releases than it is in generating certainty in job creating industries.

The Labor Government has abandoned the people of Oakey and the surrounding community. They will amend legislation at a moment's notice to benefit their union benefactors, however when given the opportunity to amend legislation to support the New Acland expansion, they have decided to place that in the too hard basket. The Labor Government prefers hundreds of people to lose their jobs over losing any more votes to the Greens.

Of great concern was the lack of understanding of the current issues facing landholders in the Nandi district in relation to directional drilling of gas wells in the area. The failure of the department to communicate the changes to the 'notice of entry requirements' as well as enforcing the Regional Planning Interests Act has no doubt contributed to the current issues.

The Department's response, by creating a hotline, as well as releasing a seven-page fact sheet can be best described as inadequate and nothing more than window dressing.

The Auditor-General provided recommendations in relation to the Regional Interests Planning Act in 2019 that have not yet been implemented. The fact the Department is working on yet another consultation paper with no set release date further highlights the government is yet to fully comprehend how the gas industry and prime agricultural land can co-exist. This situation is far from being resolved.

It was also noted that the inhabitants of Keswick Island will be left to fend for themselves in relation to the head lessee of the island with the government providing nothing of substance in any way of support.

The LNP members of the committee call on the Labor Government to provide more certainty and transparency to the mining sector to arrest the decline in mining investment Queensland.

Energy

The LNP, and Queensland business and environmental groups, have been calling for certainty on the future of the Queensland Energy market.

Queenslanders expect more than to learn five years after the Labor Government committed to a 50 percent renewable energy target, work has yet to commence on a road map on how this target will be achieved. There is not even a target date to release the plan.

Dr Kerry Schott from the Energy Security Board has described the current energy market as anarchy. Whilst other states have taken steps to provide certainty to stakeholders, it is clear that Queensland is the nation's laggard in that regard. The Labor Government continues to provide a haphazard, throw a dart at the wall approach to the state's energy future. This in turn is impacting the confidence of business to invest in Queensland.

Furthermore, the Labor Government has committed \$2 billion in taxpayer funds without having a set of KPI's or even a targeted return on investment for these funds. This once again highlights the Labor

Government is more focussed on media releases than they are on accountability and being honest with taxpayer dollars. The Minister was not able to commit to a proper and consistent process for ensuring these funds are working in the best interests of the taxpayers of Queensland.

The Labor Government's history of failure to plan was further highlighted by the lack of modelling on how many large-scale batteries Queensland will need to support the 50 percent target.

As COVID-19 has demonstrated, supply chains can be broken quickly and take a long time to be restored. It is therefore imperative the battery requirements are modelled as quickly as possible with plans released to the community as to how many are required and where they will be located. This will allow work to commence as soon as possible on the procurement process.

The LNP calls on the Minister to be honest with Queenslanders and commit to a date for this road map to provide certainty to Queenslanders. The LNP also calls for the Minister to be accountable with Queenslanders by being fully transparent on how their tax dollars will be spent.

Public Works

As has been the case over many years now, the LNP holds concerns over the operation of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) under the direction of Minister de Brenni. In recent months, a swathe of senior staff have left the QBCC, including the recent announcement of the Commissioner's resignation.

The ability of the Commission to deal with its core business as an independent construction watchdog has increasingly come into question in recent years. Disproportionate trade union influence over the organisation has left a cloud over the Commission's integrity and effectiveness. The potential appointment of a CFMEU member, and serial law breaker, to the position of Chair should be a concern for all Queenslanders who interact with the QBCC. Queenslanders expect more than the Labor Government appointing a serial law breaker to a position which upholds the laws of the building and construction industry.

An increased level of union interference at the QBCC has detrimentally impacted thousands of Queenslanders who run small and family fire protection businesses. This financial year, the QBCC made a snap decision to change the licensing arrangements for the fire protection industry. The snap changes mean that fire protection licensees who have practiced safely, and without incident for decades, will be forced to undertake an apprenticeship to continue their work. Many of these licensees are aged in their 40's and 50's. They are understandably worried their business will be forced to close under the new license arrangements. On face value, it appears that the changes to the fire protection licensing framework were made to benefit large unionised workforces. The LNP will continue to call for more sensible transition arrangements so that small and family businesses can continue to operate.

The Labor Government's application of 'best practice principles', headed by the Department of Public Works, is further evidence of undue trade union influence. When asked during the Budget Estimates Hearing, the Director-General was unable to provide what additional costs would be associated with the application of 'best practice principles'. Particularly in relation to building critical Olympic infrastructure ahead of the 2032 games. The LNP holds concerns that the application of 'best practice principles' will add significant cost to government built infrastructure, and therefore additional costs to the Queensland taxpayer.

In a similar vein, Queenslanders can soon expect to pay more to build a new home following the proposed changes to building standards announced by the Labor Government. Rather than a blanket

approach which mandates all homes are built in the same fashion, the Liberal Nationals believe that targeted initiatives could be considered to promote accessible standards in new home builds.

Finally, the rise in legal expenses from \$3.2 million to \$3.8 million over the last financial year, along with a 40 percent surge in the FTE since 2015 shows that the government is losing control of Queensland's Building watchdog.

Conclusion

The LNP believes this budget provides little reassurance to honest Queenslanders that ambulance waiting times and hospital waiting lists will drop.

It provides little reassurance crime rates will fall, or planning is being done to bring on a supply of housing stock for people to own or rent.

It provides little reassurance on the delivery of infrastructure needed to get people home to their families faster.

Queenslanders deserve more from this third term Labor Government.



Lachlan Millar

Member for Gregory



Colin Boyce

Member for Callide



Trevor Watts

Member for Toowoomba North