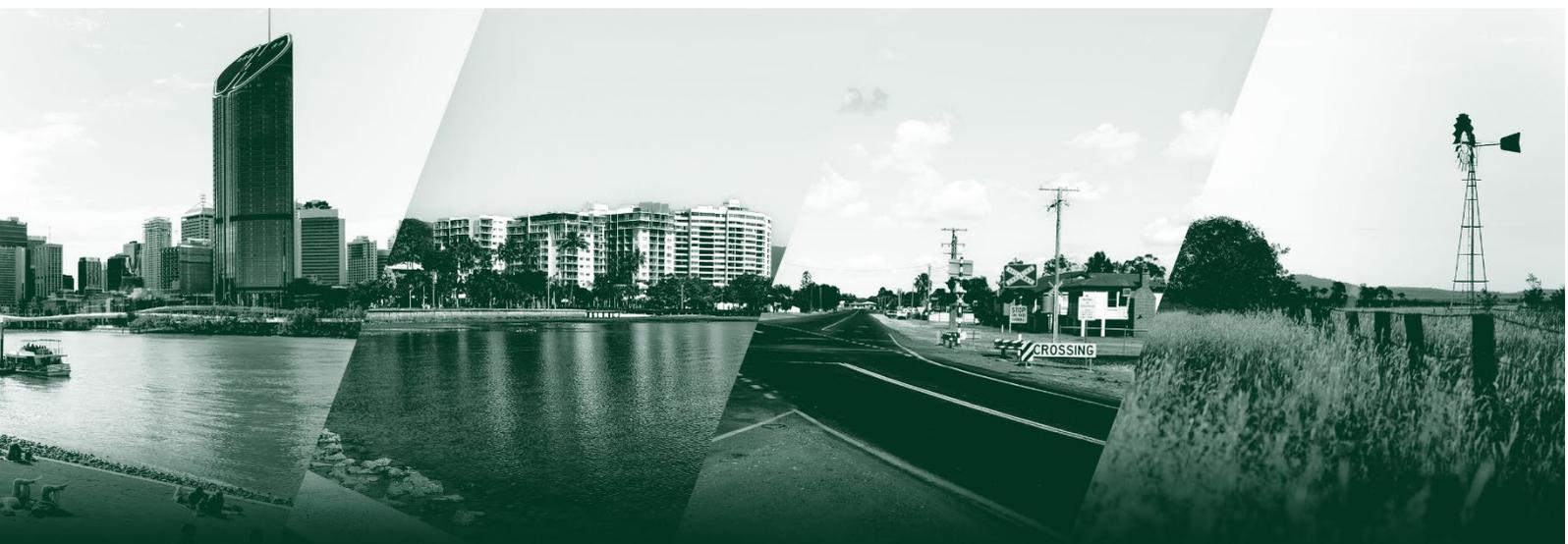


2023-24 Budget Estimates – Appropriation Bill 2023



Report No. 53, 57th Parliament
Legal Affairs and Safety Committee
August 2023

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee

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Acknowledgements

The committee thanks:

- Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
- Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided by the departmental officers who contributed to the work of the committee during the estimates process.

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Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2023–24 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 the public hearing process.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2023 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

Each year, the budget estimates hearings provide the opportunity for all Members to interrogate the annual appropriation bill. This process further provides Queenslanders with confidence in their government and the assurance, by government, that the needs of Queenslanders are met. The budget papers can be demanding by nature and it is our role, as a committee, to scrutinise the details of the current year's budget.

Queensland's recent strong economic performance over the past 12 months has provided our state with a strong fiscal foundation and sustainability into the future. This year the budget reflected a higher-than-expected revenue which presented an increase in funding for services and infrastructure needs. The government is using this dividend to create more, good, secure jobs in traditional and emerging industries, as well as affirming a strong and diverse economy for the future.

Our committee heard from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence about matters pertaining to her portfolio. I know the additional funding announced for domestic and family violence services, the provision of comprehensive and timely coronial investigations as well as the continuation of the Victim Liaison Service will all be welcomed. It is clear that supporting people in need is a core aim of the Attorney-General, her department and portfolio entities.

The Electoral Commission of Queensland will have a big year in 2024, delivering the 2024 local government quadrennial elections and planning and preparing for the 2024 State general election.

I acknowledge the tragic loss of Police Constables Rachel McCrow and Matthew Arnold, who were murdered at Wieambilla late last year, as well as firefighter Izabella "Izzy" Nash, who tragically lost her life in the line of duty earlier this year. These were very bleak times and a stark reminder of the dangers they encountered in their chosen professions. We thank them deeply for their service.

It was encouraging to hear, that despite these tragedies, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services advised there has been a 120 per cent increase in recruit applications since January this year. The police recruitment pipeline is stronger than ever.

The Queensland Police Service have been proactive with their response to the many challenges that have arisen post COVID-19. These challenges have been highlighted in fluctuations in statistical reporting. However QPS continue to respond to core issues and adopt modern policing procedures and methodology.

The Queensland Corrective Services are actively addressing the issues that are particular to their roles. The rollout of body cameras will increase the safety of officers while they do their job. Modern detection methods, including using passive alert drug detection dogs in visitor areas and drone intercepts are being used to block contraband that people are attempting to take into prisons. The introduction of body scanners is another tool the QCS will use to detect contraband. Body scanners will be a welcomed improvement, especially at the female correctional centres.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services have entered into a contract for new structural firefighting helmets for firefighters. A wide range of testing was done in operational circumstances and

at their training college. A firefighter's role can often involve danger, and every assistance they receive cannot be underestimated.

Over the course of our estimates hearing our committee welcomed 13 Members from the Opposition and crossbench who, while not members of the committee were, under Standing Order 181(e), accepted to participate in our estimates hearings. I thank these Members for their participation and their questions.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, and 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.

Finally, I thank the committee's secretariat and other Parliamentary Service staff for their assistance throughout the estimates process.



Peter Russo MP
Chair
August 2023

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

The Legal Affairs and Safety 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:

- Justice and Attorney-General
- Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence
- Police and Corrective Services
- Fire and Emergency Services.²

On 16 June 2023, the Appropriation Bill 2023 and the estimates for the committee's area of responsibility were referred to the committee for investigation and report.³

The estimates process is one of the key mechanisms to examine government expenditure, performance and effectiveness. By examining and reporting on the proposed expenditures contained in the Appropriation Bill 2023, the committee assists the Parliament in its scrutiny of the government's proposed expenditure.

The Appropriation for 2023-24 is \$78,411,379,000.⁴ The proposed expenditure across government by portfolio is shown in Figures 1 and 2 on page 2 of this report. The committee's examination of the Appropriation Bill 2023 is in relation to the:

- Department of Justice and Attorney-General
- Electoral Commission of Queensland
- Office of the Queensland Ombudsman
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Corrective Services
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services
- Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management.

On 9 August 2023, the committee conducted a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Honourable Yvette D'ath MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence and the Honourable Mark Ryan MP, Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, and other witnesses. A copy of the transcript of the committee's hearing is available on the committee's webpage.

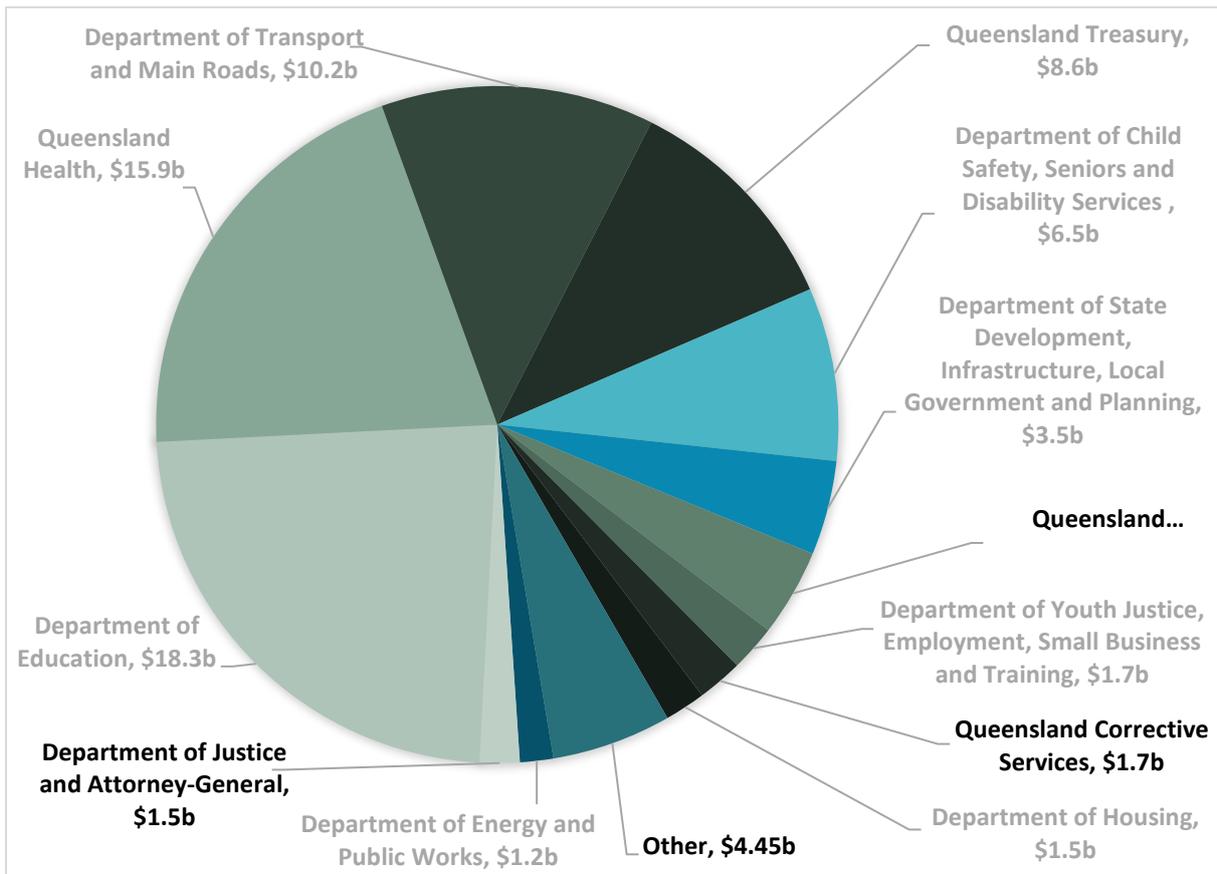
¹ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, section 88 and Standing Order 194.

² The committee also has oversight functions in relation to the Electoral Commissioner, Information Commissioner, Ombudsman and Queensland Family and Child Commissioner. See Schedule 6, Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

³ Queensland Parliament, Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023, p 2154. 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.

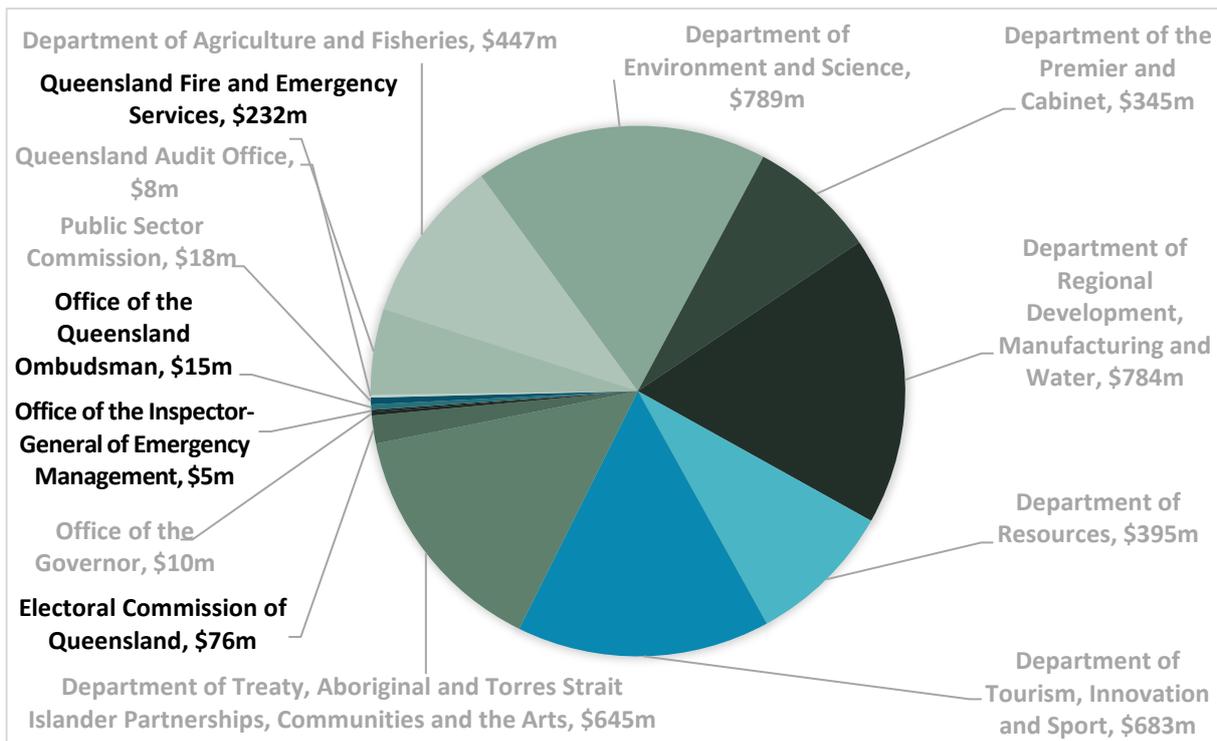
⁴ Appropriation Bill 2023, section 2(1).

Figure 1: Appropriation for 2023-24, \$78,411,379,000



Source: Appropriation Bill 2023.

Figure 2: Expansion of 'Other, \$4.45b'



Source: Appropriation Bill 2023.

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 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 Attorney-General and Minister with questions on notice in relation to the estimates.⁵ Responses to all the questions were received.

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

1.3 Participation by other Members

In accordance with Standing Order 181(e), a Member who is not on the portfolio committee may, with the committee's leave, participate in the hearing and ask questions. The committee gave leave for the following Members to participate in the hearing:

- Mr Stephen Andrew MP, Member for Mirani
- Mr Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar
- Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, Member for Kawana
- Ms Amanda Camm MP, Member for Whitsunday
- Mr David Crisafulli MP, Member for Broadwater
- Mr Dale Last MP, Member for Burdekin
- Ms Ann Leahy MP, Member for Warrego
- Dr Amy MacMahon MP, Member for South Brisbane
- Mr Brent Mickelberg MP, Member for Buderim
- Mr Tim Nicholls MP, Member for Clayfield
- Mr Andrew Powell MP, Member for Glass House
- Ms Fiona Simpson MP, Member for Maroochydore
- Mr Trevor Watts MP, Member for Toowoomba North.

⁵ In accordance with Standing Order 182, a portfolio committee may put a total of 20 questions on notice to each minister, with at least 10 questions per minister being allocated to non-government members.

2 Recommendation

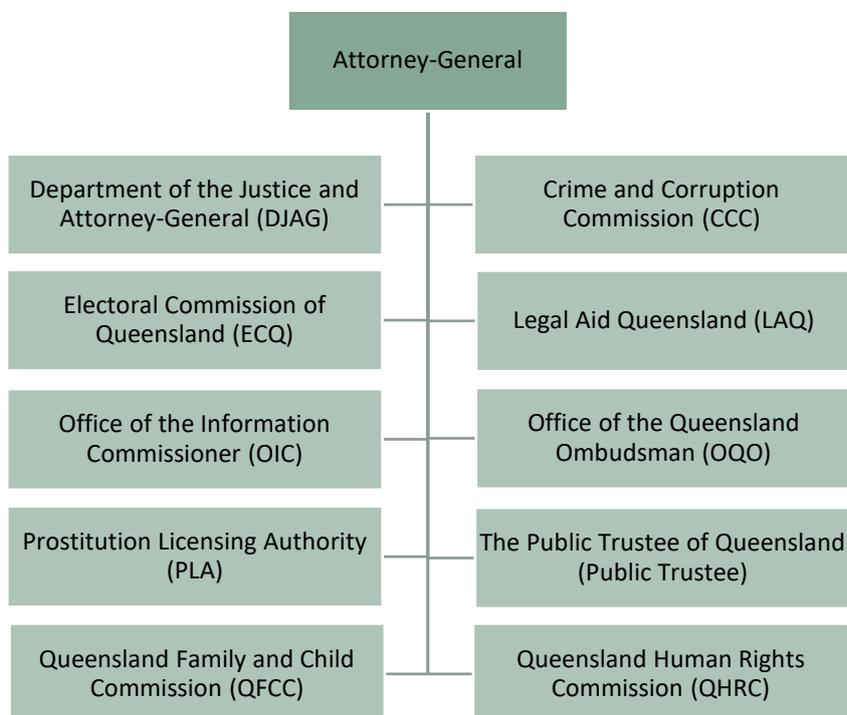
Pursuant to Standing Order 187(1), the committee must state whether the proposed expenditures referred to it are agreed to.

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2023 for the committee’s areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

3 Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

The Attorney-General has responsibility for the following entities:⁶



To assist the committee with its consideration of portfolio estimates, and in keeping with the requirements of Schedule 7 of the Parliament’s Standing Orders, the following persons were present at the hearing on 9 August 2023:⁷

- Chair of the CCC
- Electoral Commissioner
- Human Rights Commissioner

⁶ Queensland Budget 2023-24, Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney-General (SDS, DJAG), pp i-ii.

⁷ Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders sets out a list of statutory entities to which direct questioning of chief executives at estimates applies.

- Information Commissioner
- Chief Executive Officer of LAQ
- Acting Chair of the PLA
- Public Trustee
- Principal Commissioner of the QFCC
- Queensland Ombudsman and Inspector of Detention Services.

3.1 Department of Justice and Attorney-General

The DJAG has the following 4 service areas:

- Justice Services
- Legal and Prosecution Services
- Liquor, Gaming and Fair Trading
- Women's Safety and Violence Prevention.⁸

The objectives of these services areas are to:

- safeguard the rights of vulnerable people in society
- reduce over-representation of First Nations people in the criminal justice system
- end domestic, family and sexual violence
- minimise gambling harm.⁹

3.1.1 Budget overview

The proposed budget comprises of \$1.071 billion in departmental expenditure and \$961.7 million in funding to be administered by DJAG on behalf of the state.¹⁰

The proposed \$1.071 billion in departmental expenses represents an increase of \$128.3 million on estimated actual departmental spending in 2022-23.

The DJAG Service Delivery Statements (SDS) state the increase is primarily due to additional funding for new initiatives that include the:

- Queensland Government Response to the Queensland Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, *Hear her voice – Report two – Women's and girls' experiences across the criminal justice system (Hear her voice – Report 2)* and in response to the *Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Investment Review*
- supporting escalating workloads within the District Court of Queensland
- increased funding to achieve justice system efficiency through contemporary infrastructure and technology, enterprise bargaining salary increases, indexation for outsourced service delivery payments and funding realigned to meet the operational requirements of the department.¹¹

The estimated \$961.7 million in administered expenses, is a \$164.7 million increase on DJAG's estimated actual expenditure of \$797 million. The increase in user charges and fees is primarily due to

⁸ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 1.

⁹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 1.

¹⁰ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 10.

¹¹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 12.

recognition of the Queen's Wharf Casino licence fee. In addition, there is increased state funding for initiatives including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service funding uplift to support First Nations Queenslanders
- CCC's delivery of responses to the Commission of Inquiry recommendations
- extension of the protected witness scheme to domestic and family violence victims and survivors
- supporting escalating workloads within the District Court of Queensland.¹²

To fund this budgeted expenditure, the Appropriation Bill 2023 proposes that DJAG receive a departmental appropriation of \$941.6 million in 2023-24, with the remainder of the \$129.8 million in planned departmental spending to be financed through a combination of user charges and fees, grants and other contributions, interest and distributions from managed funds, and other revenue.¹³

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2023 illustrates the combined total of the cash appropriations for DJAG for 2023-24, compared with the budgeted and actual cash appropriations for DJAG in 2022-23.

Appropriations	Budget 2022-23 \$'000	Est. Actual 2022-23 \$'000	Vote 2023-24 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	829,221	802,683	942,824
equity adjustment	(51,355)	(61,089)	(41,958)
<i>Administered Items</i>	526,582	550,136	579,654
Vote	1,304,448	1,291,730	1,480,520

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2, p. 11.

3.1.2 Trends in Vote

For comparison, the table below shows the amount sought in the Budget 2023 for the Vote against spending over the previous three years.

	2020/21 Estimated Actual \$'000	2021/22 Estimated Actual \$'000	2022/23 Estimated Actual \$'000	2023/24 Estimates Sought \$'000
	1,229,097	1,134,908	1,291,730	1,480,520
% Change		-7.66	+13.82	+14.62

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 1, p. 7; Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 1, p. 5; Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 1, p. 5.

¹² Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 12.

¹³ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 13.

3.1.3 Budget highlights

The 2023-24 budget highlights for DJAG include:¹⁴

Address gaps in domestic, family and sexual violence service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$58.3 million over 4 years and \$20.7 million per annum ongoing.
Respond to the recommendations of the Queensland Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce report, <i>Hear her voice – Report 2</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$68.7 million over 4 years and \$6.3 million ongoing per annum (an additional \$10.6 million over 4 years and \$3 million per annum ongoing to be held centrally).
Meet community expectations of comprehensive and timely coronial investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$18.9 million over 4 years and \$5.8 million per annum ongoing.
Deliver an efficient and sustainable civil system for vulnerable Queenslanders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$13.4 million over 4 years and \$1.2 million per annum ongoing.
Continuation of the Victim Liaison Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.5 million over 3 years from 2024-25 and \$851,000 per annum ongoing.

3.1.4 Capital program

The 2023-24 capital purchases of \$43.5 million includes continued investment of \$17.3 million for the ongoing program of capital works in courthouses, \$9.8 million to expand and upgrade audio-visual technology capacity in the justice system and \$4.7 million to continue replacement of the Beaudesert Courthouse.

It also includes \$6.3 million to provide domestic and family violence courthouse improvements as part of the implementation of the Queensland Government response to the Queensland Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, *Hear her voice - Report one - Addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland (Hear her voice – Report 1)*.¹⁵

3.2 Queensland Human Rights Commission

The role of the QHRC is 'to protect and promote freedom, respect, equality and dignity'. In doing so, the QHRC's objectives are to:

- supporting justice and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- promoting access and inclusion
- working toward safer communities
- increasing institutional transparency.¹⁶

3.2.1 Budget overview

The QHRC's operating expenses for 2023-24 are estimated to be \$10.8 million, a decrease of \$0.3 million over the 2022-23 Estimated Actual Budget. The SDS states that the decrease 'primarily

¹⁴ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 3.

¹⁵ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 11.

¹⁶ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 19.

reflects continuation of funding from the 2022-23 Budget of 12.5 temporary FTE for less than 12 months'.¹⁷

Key deliverables include:

- intervene where appropriate in proceedings involving human rights issues to provide expert assistance to courts and tribunals
- finalise the review of QHRC services and design processes and practices to provide a more culturally appropriate Commission experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- publish reports on unresolved human rights complaints to encourage transparency and promote best practice decision making in government service delivery
- continue to work with key stakeholders within the child protection and youth justice systems to urge the embedding of human rights principles within existing frameworks and encourage increased understanding and compliance with human rights obligations
- maintain an effective complaints process to manage the assessment and resolution of complaints under both the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and *Human Rights Act 2019*, with a focus on reducing the current backlog of complaints and client wait-times
- work with the Queensland Government to implement recommendations following the government's response to *Building Belonging – Review of Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*.¹⁸

3.3 Crime and Corruption Commission

The CCC is an independent agency established under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* to combat major crime and reduce corruption for the benefit of the Queensland community. The CCC's objectives are to:

- deliver efficient and effective outcomes to reduce the incidence of major crime and corruption in Queensland
- develop the capability and manage the wellbeing of our people, and enable their performance by providing access to high-quality information and fit-for-purpose systems
- engage with stakeholders in a transparent way that promotes confidence in the functions and services we provide
- renew our ways of working in response to our dynamic and challenging operating environment.¹⁹

3.3.1 Budget overview

In 2023-24, total budgeted expenditure is \$75.6 million, an increase of \$12.7 million from the 2022-23 Estimated Actual Budget of \$62.9 million. This increase is primarily due to additional funding to implement the recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry into the CCC and for the full year impact from the whole of government wages policy for the CCC's 381 full time equivalent employees.²⁰

¹⁷ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 21.

¹⁸ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 19.

¹⁹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 25.

²⁰ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 29.

In 2023-24, the CCC will focus on:

- investigating and shaping effective responses to serious and organised crime through the use of our hearing powers; working with and sharing intelligence with the QPS and other law enforcement partners and confiscating criminal profits
- investigating complaints which involve conduct which is serious, systemic or of strategic risk to trust and confidence in public institutions in Queensland
- implementing the recommendations from the *Commission of Inquiry relating to the Crime and Corruption Commission Report*
- ensuring effective communication and timely dissemination of information to promote a culture of transparency, accountability and confidence
- developing critical organisational capabilities including digital, analytics, intelligence and workforce.²¹

3.4 Legal Aid Queensland

LAQ's purpose is to maintain the rule of law, protect legal rights, contribute to the fairness and efficiency of the justice system, and reduce the social impacts of legal problems. LAQ's objectives are:

- provide quality and cost-effective legal services to clients
- progress LAQ's vision through collaboration and policy leadership.²²

3.4.1 Budget overview

In 2023-24, LAQ will:

- continue to provide services in line with the requirements of the *National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-2025* and Bilateral Schedule
- deliver new and expanding initiatives with service delivery partners across the state in the most effective and economical way.²³

3.5 Office of the Information Commissioner

The OIC's purpose is to independently uphold and promote information access and privacy rights. The OIC's objectives are to:

- provide independent, timely and fair reviews of decisions made under the *Right to Information Act 2009* and *Information Privacy Act 2009*
- assist agencies to adopt privacy by design and achieve compliance with the privacy principles
- provide an independent, timely and fair privacy complaint mediation service
- promote greater awareness of right to information and information privacy in the community and within government
- improve agencies' practices in right to information and information privacy.²⁴

²¹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 25.

²² Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 33.

²³ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 33.

²⁴ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 39.

3.5.1 Budget overview

In 2023-24, consistent with recommendations of the *Let the sunshine in: Review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector* (Coaldrake Report) and the independent *Strategic Review of the Office of the Information Commissioner, 2022*, the OIC will:

- champion a contemporary legislative framework that:
 - promotes enduring cultural change for a transparent and accountable government
 - strengthens privacy protections including through the implementation of a proposed mandatory breach notification scheme for Queensland
- continue to address key drivers of external review workload, including:
 - insufficient administrative release
 - high numbers of agency decisions made outside statutory timeframes
 - delayed responses from agencies
 - challenging interactions
- undertake a workforce review for a future fit OIC
- implement new approaches to meet evolving community and agency expectations including reviewing OIC's annual training, communication and engagement strategy for communities and agencies throughout Queensland
- invest in information technology resources to streamline monitoring and reporting activities
- report to Parliament on audit and monitoring activity to improve practices, share good practice and ensure accountability for the performance of the right to information and privacy system.²⁵

3.6 Queensland Family and Child Commission

The QFCC's purpose is to influence change that improves the safety and wellbeing of Queensland's children and their families.²⁶

3.6.1 Budget overview

In 2023-24, the QFCC will:

- deliver on critical system reviews as outlined in the QFCC Oversight Framework 2023-27
- release the 2023 *Growing Up in Queensland* report, using data to illustrate how Queensland children are faring
- provide secretariat support to the Child Death Review Board and make recommendations for system improvements
- implement the child death prevention *Safer pathways through childhood 2023-24 action plan* on focus areas established under the *Safer pathways through childhood* framework
- deliver on the Child Death Review Board's research priority, producing a report on parental methamphetamine use
- deliver the inaugural *First Nations Children's Report*, an interactive online report summarising key systemic issues disproportionately impacting First Nations children and young people in Queensland

²⁵ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 39.

²⁶ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 45.

- expand opportunities for youth participation in government decision-making processes through creating ongoing opportunities to have their views heard and connecting them with appropriate decision-makers
- launch the *Child Rights Report*, measuring children’s rights in Queensland.²⁷

3.7 Prostitution Licensing Authority

The purpose of the PLA is to administer the prostitution licensing and advertising regime in compliance with the *Prostitution Act 1999* and *Prostitution Regulation 2014*.²⁸

3.7.1 Budget overview

In 2023-24, the PLA will:

- review and improve our operations and processes to assist and enable the licenced sector by simplifying processes and procedures and intervening to support better understanding of their obligations and manage their businesses safely, efficiently and effectively
- engage with stakeholders, including representatives of the licensed sector of the sex industry, to enhance the licensing framework for brothels and the scope of regulation of the sector, to underpin the viability of brothel operations, and to further the underlying principles of the *Prostitution Act 1999*
- support government consideration of the Queensland Law Reform Commission ‘*A decriminalised sex-work industry for Queensland*’ report.²⁹

3.8 Electoral Commission of Queensland

The Attorney-General has responsibility for the ECQ which has a separate appropriation. The ECQ’s purpose is to deliver accessible, fair and transparent electoral services for all Queenslanders.³⁰

3.8.1 Budget overview

In 2023-24, the ECQ will:

- deliver the 2024 local government quadrennial elections
- undertake planning and preparation for the 2024 State general election
- implement local government electoral expenditure caps
- continue to deliver actions under the local government engagement strategy to strengthen relationships with Queensland’s local government sector
- provide support to the Local Government Change Commission in its reviews of local government boundaries and electoral arrangements referred by the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure.³¹

²⁷ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 45.

²⁸ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 51.

²⁹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 52.

³⁰ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 58.

³¹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 58.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2023 compares the appropriations for the ECQ for 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Appropriations	Budget 2022-23 \$'000	Est. Actual 2022-23 \$'000	Vote 2023-24 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	44,653	42,926	73,859
equity adjustment	310	310	1,963
<i>Administered Items</i>	..	..	..
Vote	44,963	43,236	75,822

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2, p. 14.

3.9 Office of the Queensland Ombudsman

The Attorney-General has responsibility for the OQO which has a separate appropriation. The purpose of the OQO is to improve public administration by:

- investigating administrative decisions
- helping agencies improve their practices
- overseeing the system of Public Interest Disclosures (PIDs)
- improving detention services.³²

3.9.1 Budget overview

In 2023-24, the OQO will:

- continue to deliver services that help people to know how and when to make a complaint
- provide a free and independent investigation service that reviews administration actions of state government departments and agencies (including state schools and TAFE), local councils and public universities
- help agencies to improve their decision-making, administrative practices and PID management by making recommendations for improvement, delivering training programs and providing information and advisory services
- continue to establish and implement the Inspector of Detention Services function.³³

³² Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 71.

³³ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 71.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2023 compares the appropriations for the OQO for 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Appropriations	Budget 2022-23 \$'000	Est. Actual 2022-23 \$'000	Vote 2023-24 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	9,905	10,695	14,426
equity adjustment	..	20	460
<i>Administered Items</i>	..	..	..
Vote	9,905	10,715	14,886

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2, p. 15.

3.10 Public Trustee of Queensland

The Public Trustee's purpose is to provide financial decision-making advocacy, education and services and empower Queenslanders to plan and prepare for key life events.³⁴ The Public Trustee's objective is to support Queenslanders to safeguard and manage their financial wellbeing by providing trusted financial decision-making advocacy, education and services.³⁵

3.10.1 Budget overview

In 2023-24, the Public Trustee will:

- continue to advance customer experience initiatives under the Customers First Strategy, including initiatives and relationships with advocacy groups and support services to empower customers with their financial matters
- implement an integrity and governance framework facilitating transparency and regular review of Public Trustee's fees and charges to support sustainability while meeting the needs of customers
- collaborate and engage with stakeholders to advance advice of the Public Trustee Advisory and Monitoring Board
- commence the regulatory impact assessment of fees and charges recommendations following an independent review documented in the *Review of Fees and Charges* report
- develop and implement communication and stakeholder engagement strategies, initiatives and community education programs to raise awareness of Public Trustee services available for the benefit of customers, advocates and the Queensland community, including for the needs and interests expressed by First Nations community members
- promote positive and collaborative engagement between customer support networks and the Public Trustee
- build our services' accessibility and responsiveness to the needs of our customers, by embedding a customer service culture across the Public Trustee through customer service training to all staff, providing information options for culturally and linguistically diverse

³⁴ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 82.

³⁵ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 83.

customers, and investigating potential upgrades to physical office locations to improve accessibility including increased mobility access

- progress information technology and digital strategies to support modern, secure and human-centred business systems and solutions.³⁶

3.11 Matters considered during the committee's examination

The committee considered a range of matters in relation to the estimates for DJAG and associated statutory entities (CCC, ECQ, LAQ, OIC, OQO, PLA, the Public Trustee, QFCC and the QHRC). These are summarised below.

Matters considered by the committee in relation to the estimates for DJAG and associated statutory entities included:	Question on Notice (QoN), public hearing transcript page number:
Number of complaints received by the Office of Fair Trading, and redress obtained on behalf of Queensland consumers	QoN 1
Resolution of matters in the Coroner's Court including assistance for the coronial inquest review into the death of Jeffrey Lawrence Brooks	QoN 2, 27, p 29
Resourcing of the ECQ to deliver the 2024 Local and State Elections including engagement with First Nations communities	QoN 3, pp 12-13
Modernising Queensland courts including the specialist Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Courts in Brisbane and Cairns	QoN 4, p 26
Addressing demand for Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal matters in particular for children and young people	QoN 5, QoN 13, p 9
Investment in capital works for the justice system	QoN 6
Delivery of LAQ services	QoN 7, p 11
Resourcing of DFV High Risk Teams and services for victims of DFV	QoN 8, QoN 16
DFV prevention programs and programs for perpetrators	QoN 17
DFV Courthouse Improvement Program	QoN 18
Resourcing for the District Court of Queensland	QoN 9
Blue card services and applications including addressing backlog processing	QoN 10
Blue card services for Indigenous communities	QoN 20
Forensic DNA Commission of Inquiry findings	QoN 11
Advice on land tax	QoN 12

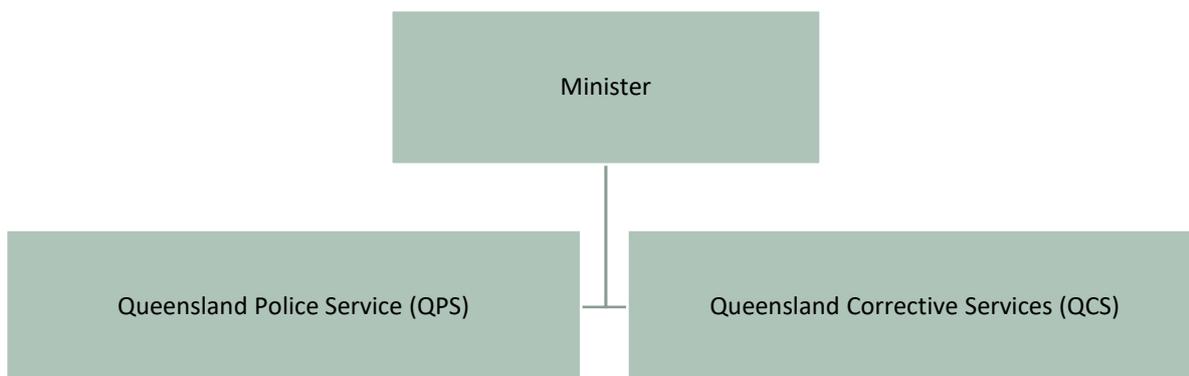
³⁶ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, DJAG, p 82.

Review of bail decisions from the Children’s Court	QoN 14
Investment review of DFV services	QoN 15
Funding for the Body Corporate Commissioner	QoN 19
Update on recommendations from the QFCC <i>Keeping Queensland’s children more than safe: Review of the blue card system</i> including timeframe for implementation	pp 3-4, 6-7
Update on the implementation of Child Safe Standards	pp 5-6
Blue card system including issue and suspension/revocation	pp 7-8
Penalties/sentencing for repeat offenders including mandatory sentencing	p 8
Public Trustee – Customers First Strategy	p 9
Funding for the CCC and operational benefits	p 10
Investigations into serious organised crime	p 11
Legal costs incurred by the CCC re Peter Carne and Jackie Trad matters	p 13-14
Potential implications of the decision of the High Court re Peter Carne matter	pp 13-14
Update on Forensic and Scientific Services investigation	pp 14, 19-20
Update on the establishment of the Police Integrity Unit	pp 14-16
Costs paid to consultants engaged by the CCC	p 15
Theft of copper and other scrap metal in Queensland	p 16
Update on the establishment of a Victims Commissioner	p 17
Indexation of Public Trustee’s fees	p 18
Update on the review of Public Trustee	p 18
Public Trustee Advisory and Monitoring Board	p 19
Update of Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation investigation of alleged organised crime links associated with key shareholders in the Queens’s Wharf casino development	pp 20-22
Release from hospital/powers to hold suspected DFV perpetrators	p 22
Assistance to victims of DFV	pp 23-24
Support to First Nations communities to reduce DFV	p 24
Update on recommendations/proposed reforms by the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce	pp 25, 29-30

Update on establishment of a DFV peak body	pp 27-28
Demand for services across the DFV sector	p 28
Funding agreements for organisations	p 29
Emergency accommodation/shelters	p 30
Funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service and community legal centres	p 31
Update on the First Nations Justice Officer	p 32
Update on Queensland’s safe night precincts	p 32
Grant funding provided by the Gambling Community Benefit Fund	pp 33, 36
Update on <i>Gambling Harm Minimisation Plan for Queensland 2021-2025</i>	p 33
Assistance provided by the Office of Fair Trading regarding consumer protection and education	p 34
Strangulation legislation	p 35
Support for sexual assault counselling	p 35
Replacement of the Beaudesert Courthouse	p 36
Recruitment for LAQ services	p 36
Update on support provided by the Births, Deaths and Marriages registry in First Nations communities	p 37

4 Minister for Police and Corrective Services

The Minister is responsible for the following agencies, services and statutory entities:³⁷



³⁷ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Queensland Police Service (QPS), p i; Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QPS, p ii.

To assist the committee with its consideration of portfolio estimates, and in keeping with the requirements of Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders, the QPS Commissioner and the QCS Commissioner were present at the public hearing on 9 August 2023.³⁸

4.1 Queensland Police Service

The objectives of the QPS are to:

- build a safer Queensland together with the community
- create a safer community and provide better services through connected and engaged relationships
- embrace new ideas and innovation to strengthen capability to prevent, disrupt, response to and investigate crime and deliver safe and secure communities.³⁹

4.1.1 Budget overview

The proposed budget comprises of \$3.281 billion in the QPS expenditure and \$14.1 million in funding to be administered by the QPS on behalf of the state.⁴⁰

The proposed budget expenses of \$3.281 billion in 2023-24 are an increase of \$304.5 million from the 2022-23 Estimated Actual. The increase is mainly due to the recruitment of additional police officers as part of the government's 2,025 police personnel commitment, enterprise bargaining arrangements, Youth Justice Initiatives and a contribution to Police-Citizens Youth Clubs (PCYC) Queensland for infrastructure development.⁴¹

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2023 illustrates the combined total of the cash appropriations for the QPS for 2023-24, compared with the budgeted and actual cash appropriations for the QPS in 2022-23.

Appropriations	Budget 2022-23 \$'000	Est. Actual 2022-23 \$'000	Vote 2023-24 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	2,659,113	2,725,099	3,118,097
equity adjustment	19,067	48,457	144,001
<i>Administered Items</i>			

Vote	2,648,180	2,773,556	3,262,098

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2, p. 11.

³⁸ Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders sets out a list of statutory entities to which direct questioning of chief executives at estimates applies.

³⁹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QPS, p 1.

⁴⁰ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QPS, p 7.

⁴¹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QPS, p 9.

4.1.2 Trends in Vote

For comparison, the table below shows the amount sought in the Budget 2023 for the Vote against spending over the previous three years.

	2020/21 Estimated Actual \$'000	2021/22 Estimated Actual \$'000	2022/23 Estimated Actual \$'000	2023/24 Estimates Sought \$'000
	2,250,807	2,560,099	2,773,556	3,262,098
% Change		+13.74	+8.34	+17.61

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 1, p. 8; Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 1, p. 6; Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 1, p. 7.

4.1.3 Budget highlights

The 2023-24 budget highlights for the QPS include:⁴²

Continuation and expansion of the Youth Justice Investment to boost police resources, tackle the complex causes of youth crime, and support community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$101.6 million over 5 years
Replacement of the North Queensland Police Academy in Townsville and for the relocation of the Oxley Police Academy and Dog Squad to the Wacol Police Precinct and the Specialist Response Group to an alternative site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held centrally
Drive new recruitment strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$87.5 million over 5 years (held centrally)
A program to facilitate Queensland PCYC and associated infrastructure development in priority locations; improving frontline social program delivery and intervention initiatives targeting youth offending and recidivism, and victimisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$50 million over 2 years
Progress the government’s commitment of Emergency Management Reforms from the <i>Independent Review of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services</i>, and to continue the commitment to establish an integrated volunteer marine rescue service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$43.5 million in 2023-24 and \$10 million (held centrally)
Implement a Queensland PCYC restructure to allow PCYC police officers to focus on social program delivery aimed at the prevention of youth crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$6 million
Procure eight armoured vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$6.2 million over 4 years
Continue support for the weapons licensing function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2.2 million over 2 years
Upgrade the current Weapons Licensing Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held centrally

⁴² Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QPS, p 3.

4.1.4 Capital program

The 2023-24 the QPS capital program of \$362.6 million supports quality frontline services throughout Queensland. The program will fund aircraft acquisitions, police facilities, motor vehicles, vessels, information and communications technology and other essential equipment. The increase in the 2023-24 budget is mainly due to the acquisition of new aviation assets.⁴³

4.1.5 Matters considered during the committee's examination

Matters considered by the committee in relation to the estimates for the Police portfolio included:	QoN, public hearing transcript page no:
Sworn police officer and staff numbers including attrition and recruitment rates	QoN 7, QoN 8, QoN 12, QoN 13, p 41
Recommendations from <i>A Call for Change – Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence; Hear Her Voice – Report 1</i> ; and <i>Hear her voice – Report 2</i>	QoN 9
Equipment	QoN 10
Communication Centres	QoN 11
QPS facilities	QoN 14
Queensland Road Safety Strategy including number of random breath tests and traffic infringement notices issued	QoN 15, p 50
Marine Rescue Queensland	QoN 20
Recruitment strategies including international and interstate campaigns	pp 42-43
Police rostering and response to incidents	pp 43-44
Update on the delivery of the 3-day DFV training and the 5-day vulnerable persons specialist training	p 44
QPS officers and staff conduct	pp 44-45, 47
Pursuit policy	p 46
Operation Sandstorm	p 46
Process for determining policing numbers required for regions	p 46
Aircraft acquisition program	p 47
Prevention and response to sexual violence	p 48
Funding of infrastructure development and programs at PCYCs	p 49
Update on the construction of the Caloundra Police Station	p 49

⁴³ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QPS, p 8.

Costs paid to consultants	p 51
Police districts operating under the Service Delivery Program model	p 51
Release from hospital/powers to hold suspected DFV perpetrators	p 51
Detention of children in watch houses	p 51
Update on the Reform Implementation Taskforce	p 52

4.2 Queensland Corrective Services

The purpose of the QCS is to provide safe, modern, and responsive correctional services, which rehabilitate prisoners and offenders, and prevent crime, making Queensland safer.⁴⁴

4.2.1 Budget overview

The QCS' total estimated expenses in 2023-24 are nearly \$1.408 billion, an increase of \$138.1 million from the 2022-23 Estimated Actual. This reflects increased funding to progress commissioning for the operationalisation of Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct – Stage 2, enhance Parole Board Queensland operations, safely manage the demands of a growing prisoner population, wage escalation associated with enterprise bargaining and adjustments to the superannuation policy.⁴⁵

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2023 illustrates the combined total of the cash appropriations for the QCS for 2023-24, compared with the budgeted and actual cash appropriations for 2022-23.

Appropriations	Budget 2022-23 \$'000	Est. Actual 2022-23 \$'000	Vote 2023-24 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	1,150,997	1,311,588	1,388,232
equity adjustment	373,151	166,901	299,387
<i>Administered Items</i>	..	..	..
Vote	1,524,148	1,478,489	1,687,619

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2, p. 17.

⁴⁴ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QCS, p 1.

⁴⁵ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QCS, p 7.

4.2.2 Trends in Vote

For comparison, the table below shows the amount sought in the Budget 2023 for the Vote against spending over the previous three years.

	2020/21 Estimated Actual \$'000	2021/22 Estimated Actual \$'000	2022/23 Estimated Actual \$'000	2023/24 Estimates Sought \$'000
	996,199	1,211,650	1,478,489	1,687,619
% Change	+21.63	+22.02	+14.14	

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 1, p. 8; Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 1, p. 6; Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 1, p. 7.

4.2.3 Budget highlights

The 2023-24 budget highlights for the QCS include:⁴⁶

Pre-commencement activities including design works, site investigations and other preliminary works for the expansion of the Townsville Correctional Precinct and establishment of a new Wacol Precinct Enhanced Primary Health Care facility at the Brisbane Correctional Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$30 million in 2023-24
Install information technology infrastructure in correctional centres to enhance the provision of health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$31.8 million over 4 years
Enhance psychological and disability support services in correctional centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$14.6 million over 4 years and \$3.7 million ongoing
Continue to support Parole Board Queensland operations and continue efficient consideration of parole matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$23.5 million over 2 years
Support the management of serious sex offenders subject to <i>Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003</i> orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2.2 million over 2 years

4.2.4 Capital program

The QCS has a capital program of \$439.6 million, comprising of:

- \$341 million of total \$861 million to continue the expansion of Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct – Stage 2. The new centre will be a modern, purpose-built facility with over 1,500 beds and will enable a focus on health and rehabilitation to reduce reoffending
- \$3.3 million of total \$31.8 million to install information technology infrastructure in correctional centres to enhance the provision of health care
- \$30 million for pre-commencement activities including design works, site investigations and other preliminary works for the future expansion of the Townsville Correctional Precinct and future establishment of a new Wacol Precinct Enhanced Primary Health Care facility located at the Brisbane Correctional Centre
- \$3 million of total \$5.4 million to acquire video conference suites and other property, plant and equipment for prison industries at Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct – Stage 2

⁴⁶ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QCS, p 2.

- \$41.6 million of total \$71.8 million to progress infrastructure works and support ongoing maintenance and replacement programs
- \$4.1 million of total \$13.6 million to upgrade the intercom system at the Woodford Correctional Centre
- \$1 million of total \$8 million to install additional bunk beds in high security correctional centres across Queensland to manage the increasing prison population
- \$1 million of total \$3 million to complete the refurbishment of the Princess Alexandra Hospital Secure Unit
- \$14.6 million to acquire other property, plant and equipment.

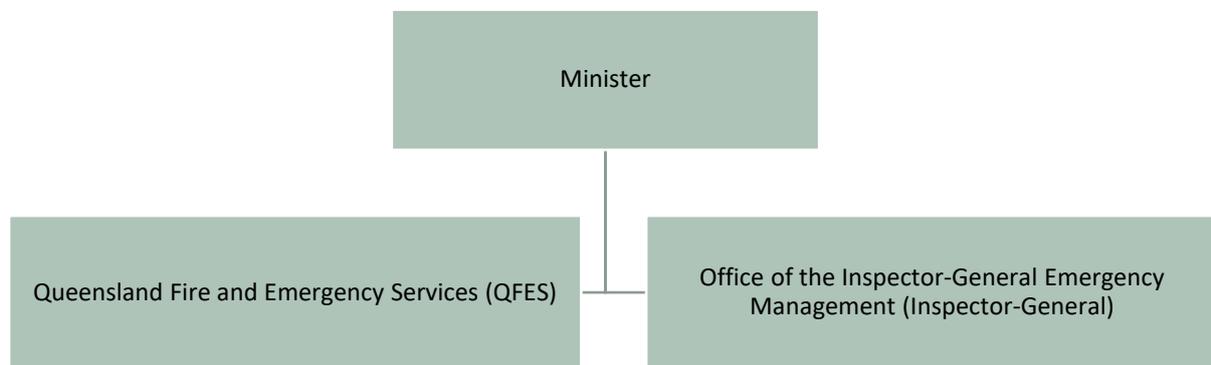
4.2.5 Matters considered during the committee's examination

Matters considered by the committee in relation to the estimates for the Corrective Services portfolio included:	QoN, public hearing transcript page no:
Investment in correctional services	QoN 4
QCS staffing numbers	QoN 5
New prison infrastructure including the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct - Stage 2	QoN 6
Upgrades to facilities including the Wacol Correctional Centre	QoN 16
Prohibited items in QCS facilities	QoN 18
Number of assault/serious assaults on Corrective Services Officers during 2022-23 financial year and actions to keep staff safe	pp 54, 56
Retrofitting of safety hatches to older style doors	p 55
Use and training of oleoresin capsicum spray (including MK-3, MK-4 and MK-9) for Corrective Services Officers	p 55
Update on additional training for staff including Maybo, operational skills and tactics training	p 55
Number of body-worn cameras supplied to Corrective Services Officers	p 56
Number of inmates charged with drug related offences	p 56
Electronic (GPS) monitoring and surveillance of offenders	p 57
Prisoners eligible for parole and accommodation requirements	p 58
Delivery of work skills programs	p 59
Recruitment of experienced officers and mentor program for new officers to regional centres	p 59

Enhancements to the Parole Board	p 60
Recycling scheme at the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre	p 61
Updates on emerging technology to assist delivery of corrective services	pp 61-62
Support provided by the QCS to victims of crime	p 62
Prisoner placement options across Queensland QCS facilities	p 63

5 Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

The Minister is responsible for the following agencies, services and statutory entities:⁴⁷



To assist the committee with its consideration of portfolio estimates, and in keeping with the requirements of Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders, the QFES Commissioner and Inspector-General of Emergency Management were present at the hearing on 9 August 2023.⁴⁸

5.1 Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

The purpose of QFES is to deliver contemporary and effective fire, emergency and disaster management services that meet Queensland communities' needs.⁴⁹ The objective of the QFES is to enhance community safety by minimising the impact of fire, emergency events and disasters on the people, property, environment and economy of Queensland.⁵⁰

5.1.1 Budget overview

The proposed budget comprises almost \$924 million in QFES expenditure.⁵¹

Total expenses are estimated to be \$923.8 million in 2023-24. This is a \$59.5 million increase from the 2022-23 Estimated Actual. The increase is mainly due to the resource and capability uplift for the State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service, and enterprise bargaining arrangements.⁵²

⁴⁷ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (QFES and IGEM) pp i, 10.

⁴⁸ Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders sets out a list of statutory entities to which direct questioning of chief executives at estimates applies.

⁴⁹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QFES and IGEM, p 1.

⁵⁰ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QFES and IGEM, p 3.

⁵¹ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QFES and IGEM, p 4.

⁵² Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QFES and IGEM, p 6.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2023 illustrates the combined total of the cash appropriations for QFES for 2023-24, compared with the budgeted and actual cash appropriations for QFES in 2022-23.

Appropriations	Budget 2022-23 \$'000	Est. Actual 2022-23 \$'000	Vote 2023-24 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	150,466	166,658	213,506
equity adjustment	3,296	6,043	18,662
<i>Administered Items</i>	..	..	..
Vote	153,762	172,701	232,168

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2, p. 16.

5.1.2 Trends in vote

For comparison, the table below shows the amount sought in the Budget 2023 for the Vote against spending over the previous three years.

	2020/21 Estimated Actual \$'000	2021/22 Estimated Actual \$'000	2022/23 Estimated Actual \$'000	2023/24 Estimates Sought \$'000
	208,734	361,603	172,701	232,168
% Change	+73.24	-52.24	+34.43	

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 1, p. 8; Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 1, p. 6; Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 1, p. 7.

5.1.3 Budget highlights

The 2023-24 budget highlights for QFES include:⁵³

Enhance delivery of QFES Road Attitudes and Action Planning programs across the state, including alternate setting and regional tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$605,000 out of \$2.6 million over 4 years from the Camera Detected Offences Program
Funding to uplift Queensland's aerial firefighting capability during the bushfire season	
Refresh bushfire safety and preparedness messaging with greater reach to Queensland communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$1.6 million out of an additional \$5 million over 3 years
Increasing employer superannuation contributions to support our fire services officers required to retire by 65 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$4.9 million out of \$19.9 million over 4 year.

⁵³ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QFES and IGEM, p 2.

Disaster and Emergency Management Reform program - to uplift the capability of the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service, with an additional 67 full-time equivalent staff for the Rural Fire Service; and an additional 75 full-time equivalent staff for the State Emergency Service

- \$41.3 million in 2023-24

5.1.4 Capital program

The 2023-24 QFES capital program has \$125 million in capital purchases and \$11.7 million in capital grants to support the provision of fire, emergency and disaster management services. The program will fund fire and emergency facilities, fire appliances, and essential operational equipment and information systems.⁵⁴

5.2 Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management

The IGEM provides independent, timely and valued assurance and advice to enhance Queensland's disaster management arrangements.⁵⁵

5.2.1 Budget overview

IGEM's total expenses are estimated to be \$5.2 million in 2023-24, a decrease of \$127,000 from the 2022-23 Estimated Actual. The decrease is mainly due to the cost of the transition of IGEM officers to a new Aurion payroll instance in 2022-23 and the reprofiling of various projects to 2022-23. The decrease is partly offset by wage increases associated with enterprise bargaining arrangements.⁵⁶

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2023 illustrates the combined total of the cash appropriations for IGEM for 2023-24, compared with the budgeted and actual cash appropriations for IGEM in 2022-23.

Appropriations	Budget 2022-23 \$'000	Est. Actual 2022-23 \$'000	Vote 2023-24 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
departmental services	4,491	4,497	4,620
equity adjustment	..	..	..
<i>Administered Items</i>	..	..	..
Vote	4,491	4,497	4,620

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 2, p. 15.

⁵⁴ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QFES and IGEM, p 5.

⁵⁵ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QFES and IGEM, p 11.

⁵⁶ Queensland Budget 2023-24, SDS, QFES and IGEM, p 14.

5.2.2 Trends in vote

For comparison, the table below shows the amount sought in the Budget 2023 for the Vote against spending over the previous three years.

	2020/21 Estimated Actual \$'000	2021/22 Estimated Actual \$'000	2022/23 Estimated Actual \$'000	2023/24 Estimates Sought \$'000
	4,126	4,371	4,497	4,620
% Change	+5.94	+2.88	+2.73	

Source: Appropriation Bill 2023, Schedule 1, p. 8; Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 1, p. 6; Appropriation Bill 2021, Schedule 1, p. 7.

5.2.3 Budget highlights

In 2023-24, the department will:

- provide expertise, through the Reform Implementation Taskforce, to guide implementation of Queensland's disaster management arrangements enhancements to improve community safety and frontline service delivery outcomes
- support the Queensland Government by undertaking emergent reviews to provide assurance that the disaster management arrangements continue to keep our Queensland communities safe
- partner with key stakeholders to deliver assurance activities that enhance disaster management capability across Queensland by promoting shared responsibility for all Queenslanders
- promote inclusive and First Nations engagement with environmental protection through all aspects of Queensland's disaster management arrangements providing future focussed, equitable and resilient disaster management arrangements
- broker Australian and international knowledge partnerships that build pathways for future research programs to connect research expertise with real world problems to improve Queensland's disaster risk reduction and resilience.

5.2.4 Capital program

The 2023-24 Budget has no capital component for IGEM.

5.3 Matters considered during the committee's examination

Matters considered by the committee in relation to the estimates for the Fire and Emergency Services portfolio areas included:	QoN, public hearing transcript page no:
Work undertaken to reduce risk, educate and inform the community for bushfire season	QoN 1
Investment in new fire appliances	QoN 2
Update on <i>Queensland's Disaster Management Arrangements 2023 Review</i>	QoN 3
New firefighting helmets including testing of in-helmet communication systems	QoN 17, p 66

Training for rural and volunteer fire fighters	QoN 19
Location of QFES facilities in relation to bordering flood zones, tsunami evacuation zones or storm tide evacuation zones	pp 64-66
Delivery of safety campaigns/programs including 'If it's Flooded Forget It' and 'Road Attitudes and Action Planning' in youth detention centres including the number of participants and cost of delivery	p 66
Replacement of the Rural Fire Services vehicles	p 67
Use of radiant heat shield curtains in Rural Fire Services vehicles	p 68
Staffing in Rural Fire Service area offices (including Barcaldine)	p 68
Suppression of fire in electric vehicles, particularly in regional areas	p 69
Suppression of fire in large-scale batteries in Central Queensland	p 69
Introduction of the Australia Warning System and status of recommendations from the 2020 IGEM Report	p 70
Enhancement of Queensland's aerial firefighting capability including access to large air tankers	pp 70-71
Funding for new, replacement and upgraded stations in growing communities	p 71
Fire and Rescue Service staffing levels and resources needed to protect the community	p 72
Emergency services capability in the Sunshine Coast region	p 72
Reducing bushfire risk and preparedness for upcoming bushfire season	p 73
Reforms to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services	p 73

6 Statements of Reservation

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

2023/24 BUDGET ESTIMATES

STATEMENT OF RESERVATION

OPPOSITION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

INTRODUCTION

Opposition members of the Committee agree with the passing of the 2023/24 Budget.

The Estimates process gives the Parliament the opportunity to question the government on its financial stewardship and its proposals for the forthcoming year.

As has become apparent throughout this process, the government is becoming increasingly sclerotic. It has grown rigid and unresponsive; its management of the state's finances has become haphazard and there is a growing gap between its promises and its record of delivery.

The state's economy faces significant challenges and Queenslanders are facing increasing cost of living pressures. This Budget was an opportunity for the government to meet these challenges and provide effective cost of living relief.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence of either of these objectives being met.

Long term economic trends are not encouraging, and the government has adopted a piecemeal approach to mitigate cost of living pressures without addressing the fundamental reasons behind spiralling increases.

Consequently, and despite claims of record expenditure, the government has been unable to reassure Queenslanders that genuine steps are being taken to address critical challenges – the health crisis, the housing crisis, the youth crime crisis and the cost-of-living crisis.

Immersed in chaos, the government has failed to demonstrate, through the Estimates process, that it has solutions to the problems facing Queenslanders.

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND JUSTICE, PREVENTION OF FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Attorney-General confirmed just 28 of the 81 recommendations of the critical *Keeping Queensland Children More Than Safe* Report had been completed, despite nearly six years passing since its release. While the Attorney-General pointed to the actions others should be taking, she took no responsibility for her Department's lack of action, both under her time when she was formerly Attorney-General and under Attorney Fentiman.

Most concerningly, when asked if Queensland had implemented Child Safe Standards as recommended in the 2018 Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Commissioner of the Queensland Family and Child Commission confirmed they had not.

Queenslanders have recently been rocked by arguably one of Australia's worst cases of alleged child abuse. While it is acknowledged the Government can never stop all child abuse and exploitation Queenslanders should have confidence they are doing everything in their power to prevent and eliminate abuse. This Government has clearly failed. It has been given a roadmap of changes needed yet has not prioritised this critical reform and is too caught up in its own chaos and crisis to put the safety of children first.

Despite the ongoing court disputes regarding the Carne and Trad matters and public reporting abilities of the CCC, there appears to be a lack of planning as to the road forward should the High Court find against the CCC. Given the CCC's own clarity on the importance of public reporting into systemic corruption issues it does not seem the Attorney-General has taken this role seriously enough to do any forward planning.

To hear one of the former Attorney-General's first actions following the landmark *A Call for Change* report was to explore other options to avoid the recommendation into establishing a police integrity unit is disturbing. Given the slow rollout of recommendations for the major reports we have had in the last 18 months it is clear this Government is more concerned about making the agenda about them and not taking the steps necessary to bring integrity and safety back to Queensland.

It is heartening to hear the Government is listening to the LNP and has finally given some indication it will make the victims commissioner a reality for those who have been impacted by crime in Queensland. The LNP has for months been raising the importance of this position and the need to better recognise and listen to the experience of victims in Queensland.

It is concerning the Office of Liquor and Gaming seem to rely so heavily on media reports for casino oversight in Queensland, and it is clear this is following the lack of priority this Government is putting on harm minimisation and casino regulation. Queensland was slow to announce its own inquiry into Star, despite months of reporting about their operations in other states. While other jurisdictions have brought in an independent regulator the Queensland Government has refused to do so. Queenslanders need confidence our casinos are free from any taint of criminality, and the Government must lead the way in this. The Gotterson Review was released in October last year with 12 recommendations, yet to date only one has been implemented.

The ongoing delays in the Coroners Court are causing angst for many families who have lost loved ones in Queensland. The Jeffrey Brooks matter was just one example, where his family waited years as his inquest was delayed multiple times. The Attorney-General did not give any assurance of when these delays would be brought under control.

When it comes to the prevention of domestic and family violence the fact the Government has sat on an Independent Implementation Supervisor report on the implementation of the two Women's Safety Justice Taskforce reports and *A Call for Change* is astonishing. This position is intended to be independent, and it is not the role of the Government to wait for its release until it is politically convenient for them. How will Queenslanders have confidence the Government is prioritising the safety of women rather than trying to protect their own reputation?

While the Attorney-General was more than happy to promote her Government's funding for DV services this is not translating on the ground, with services reporting they have had to make workers redundant and others are seeking other employment due to a lack of certainty around contracts. The Government must do more than announce, they must follow it up with action on the ground.

The ongoing stretch felt by sexual violence services continues to push many to the edge, with some services forced to close their books with six month waiting lists. The Government continues to underinvest in this area which is particularly frightening given affirmative consent legislation is due to be introduced this year. We must ensure we adequately fund these services to provide wrap around support for victims.

POLICE

In the middle of a youth crime crisis, the government has been forced to admit that police officer numbers are going backwards in Queensland, with 202 less police at the end of the 2022/23 financial year, with the trend continuing in 2023. This is in stark contrast to the government's 2020 election commitment of, in addition to attrition, an extra 1,450 sworn Police Officers by 2025. The government has not been honest with the people of Queensland. Furthermore, the Commissioner, when answering questions regarding the effect of less police on rosters, indicated that this would not affect service delivery. The LNP committee members find this answer was more about deflecting the issue rather than admitting there is a shortage of police.

Of concern was the level of detail known by the Police Minister regarding a conversation between the Queensland Police Service and an Opposition Member of Parliament regarding a domestic violence issue. The details of this issue by the Minister constitute an operational level of detail and there appears to have been assumptions made that this matter was linked to a previous matter. Given the responses provided by both the Minister and Commissioner, there are genuine concerns held by the LNP Committee members regarding separation of powers.

At a time when road fatalities are higher than previous years it was established the QPS has undertaken 893,695 fewer random breath tests. This indicates the extraordinary pressures facing the police service and further evidence of the lack of resources available to our hard-working police.

The government was forced to admit that the failed Service Delivery Program cost Queensland taxpayers \$8,708,000, with \$5,730,000 of that paid to external consultants and a further \$70,000 paid to an external information technology company. This is money that could have been spent on resourcing an already over stretched Police Service. Furthermore, the Commissioner admitted that two police districts are still running components of the failed model.

CORRECTIVE SERVICES

Again, it was confirmed that the rate of both assaults and serious assaults on staff by prisoners had increased. When questioned on what he was doing to address the issue, the Minister referred to expenditure rather than victims. This and the fact that the department does not track the outcome of complaints of assaults, or even if the offender is charged, illustrates that the Minister is more focussed on announcements than ensuring the safety of his staff.

Alarminglly the committee was advised that in the last financial year a total of 4,422 incidents of contraband were detected and that, of those 2,431 were drug related. Whilst there is some reassurance that these are being detected, it does indicate a massive issue for Queensland Correctional Centres and aligns with the anecdotal evidence regarding drug use in prisons.

Whilst the Commissioner was unable to advise if contraband offences had increased, these rates illustrate the need for body scanners. The need for this equipment was identified in 2021 during a hearing of this Committee and the witness at that hearing questioned why these were not available at that time. Almost two years later, and despite legislation authorising their use, the Minister advised that there was still no plan to install the equipment in existing Corrections Centres; only an intention.

QFES

The Commissioner accepted that the Northern Region Emergency Services Complex is in an area that may be inundated by up to two metres of floodwater and in a tsunami evacuation zone. At the hearing, the Commissioner was unable to produce a risk assessment to support the department's decision on where to locate the facility.

Of particular concern to the LNP Committee members was the admission by the QFES Commissioner that new helmets incorporating communications systems for firefighters had NOT been tested in situations where firefighter safety equipment was activated. Testing of communications equipment has previously been referred to this Committee and, despite this, there are still obvious concerns relating to the potential risk posed to frontline firefighters.

The provision of equipment to the Rural Fire Service has fallen by the wayside under this Minister and his government. The committee heard evidence that it will be another two years before the Government catches up with the backlog of rural fire appliances and that none of the Rural Fire Service vehicles delivered in 2022-23 were fitted with radiant heat shield curtains. These devices minimise the exposure to death or injury to firefighters in the event of a 'burn over' and have been fitted by other state governments. Despite this, the committee heard that there was no date for the fit-out to be completed and that the program has not even been 'put together', facts that the LNP Committee members find unacceptable.

Despite electric vehicles having been available in Queensland for many years, the Government is still to allocate the necessary equipment and resources to adequately combat electric vehicle fires. The quantity of water needed to address an electric vehicle fire is of particular concern to the LNP Committee members, especially in areas where hydrants and other equipment is not readily available, such as on long stretches of the Bruce Highway. The provision of 60,000 litres of water in a timely manner and the disposal of that water after being potentially exposed to lithium are areas where a significant amount of work is required.

It was evident to the LNP committee members that this government needs to do more to ensure the safety of Queenslanders and our brave firefighters. Given the government's significant funding toward a stand-alone firefighting department, it is essential that staff and volunteers are provided with the equipment and resources they need and that emerging threats are identified rather than waiting for lives to be put at risk or lost.

CONCLUSION

These hearings have failed to provide the reassurance that Queenslanders seek that the government has solutions to the myriad of problems facing the state.

The Estimates process, despite its well-known and long-standing shortcomings, provided no significant evidence that the government has a sustainable and considered plan to restore and improve key services.

With health services under increasing pressure, housing demand outpacing supply, crime reaching into all corners of the state and infrastructure costs seeing record blowouts, the government has wasted the opportunity presented by the 2023/24 Budget to meet the reasonable expectations of Queenslanders.

A government consumed by crisis and chaos has failed in its basic responsibilities resulting in Queenslanders having to pay an unsustainable price.



Laura Gerber MP

Member for Currumbin



Jon Krause MP

Member for Scenic Rim

Report No. 53, 57th Parliament — 2023-24 Budget Estimates

Statement of Reservation

Sandy Bolton MP Member for Noosa

This year's Legal Affairs and Safety Committee Estimates hearing was productive, with relevant questions and informative responses, and I thank our Chair and all in attendance for creating an environment that was open and responsive, with minimal lost time.

However, as I have raised previously, the need for a review of the Estimates process and the committee system remains.

The rationale and need for reform I have articulated in a variety of speeches, Statements of Reservation and correspondence, hence will not be replicated here except to note a few key examples from this year's Estimates process.

The first is that again due to Standing Orders 181 and 182, Members of Parliament are denied the right to submit Questions on Notice to any Committee other than the one they are a member of. The only other option of personally attending all seven days hearings is not an efficient utilisation of time, as the Opposition has limited time allocated for questioning, with cross bench members who represent 50% of Queensland's land mass relegated in a one-hour session to approximately 3 minutes shared by three parties and an Independent.

This is not conducive to accessing information for Queenslanders which should be the primary purpose of the Estimates process.

When the *Right to Information Act* was introduced there was a vision expressed at that time of how important providing information to the public is. At the time Premier Bligh said:

Public release of information about government policies and decisions enables informed debate, scrutiny and public participation. Without information, people cannot exercise their rights and responsibilities or make informed choices. Increased openness and transparency also means the government can be held to account for its actions ... The Right to Information Bill clearly emphasises the government's pro-disclosure stance.

Unfortunately, this vision has not been fully achieved as we do not have an approach that is pro-disclosure, the 'push' versus 'pull' model that releases information on decisions for public scrutiny – demonstrated by processes that restrict or constrain.

In efforts of greater transparency and efficiency in addition to those previously raised, is the issue of how to provide greater clarity regarding expenditure, income and the financial position of government.

The budget papers are multiple and extensive, however fail to explain to Queenslanders the public finances simply and clearly in layman's terms. This would align with the aim of the *Right to Information Act* to increase openness and transparency, encourage informed debate, scrutiny and participation, as well decrease the amount of misinformation and mistrust that continues to permeate every realm, and need not.

In closing I would like to acknowledge and highlight the incredible amount of work by all Ministers and Departmental staff who prepared for and attended this year's Committee Estimate hearings. In addition, thank the Committee Chairs, Members and Secretariats, and all participants including agencies in attendance for all that you do which is greatly appreciated.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sandy Bolton'.

Sandy Bolton MP
Member for Noosa