



QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT **COMMITTEES**

2025-2026 Budget Estimates - Appropriation Bill 2025

Health, Environment and Innovation Committee



Report No. 12

58th Parliament, August 2025

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Health, Environment and Innovation Committee

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All references and webpages are current at the time of publishing.

Acknowledgements

The committee acknowledges the assistance provided by:

- The Honourable Timothy (Tim) Nicholls MP, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services
- The Honourable Andrew Powell MP, Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation

The committee also acknowledge the assistance provided by 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 relating to the Health and Ambulance Services Portfolio and the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation Portfolio for the 2025-26 financial year.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2025 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

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 pre-hearing questions on notice to the respective ministers and a public hearing on 1 August 2025. The committee was assisted by the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation, the Directors-General of their departments, Chief Executives and other departmental officers. On behalf of the committee, I thank the ministers and other departmental officers for their assistance and cooperation throughout this process.

This year's budget shows record spending and capital investment in both the Health and Ambulances Portfolio and the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation Portfolio.

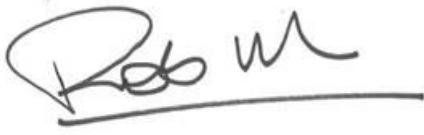
Queensland Health has a budgeted spend of over \$33 billion in 2025-26 to support operating expenses and capital investment. This record funding commitment will ensure the future viability of Queensland's public health system, and support Queenslanders' access to health services no matter where they live. Highlights include:

- \$664.1 million in 2025-26 as part of \$2.647 billion over 5 years to fund the Timely Investment of Infrastructure Maintenance Program to support maintenance, replacement and refurbishment of Queensland's Health's existing assets
- \$1.783 billion in 2025-26 for new hospital infrastructure in furtherance of the Hospital Rescue Plan
- \$342.3 million in 2025-26 for the Hospital Car Parking Program
- \$179.9 million in 2025-26 for the Building Rural and Remote Health Program
- \$124.7 million for the Better Care Together Plan to expand mental health facilities and treatment spaces and measures to support suicide prevention; and
- Funding to support an additional 4,704 FTE staff across Queensland Health.

The record appropriation of \$1.13 billion for the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation will support ongoing measures to drive science and innovation in Queensland, expand Queensland's protected estate, strengthen wildlife protection, and implement Queensland's Waste Strategy to reduce landfill and increase recycling. The budget also provides \$446 million to kickstart the 20-year tourism plan, Destination 2045.

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.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rob M', with a long horizontal line underneath.

Rob Molhoek
Chair

Executive Summary

The Appropriation Bill 2025 was introduced by the Honourable David Janetzki MP, Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership. Appropriations pertaining to health and ambulance services and environment, tourism, science and innovation were referred to the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee (the committee) by the Legislative Assembly on 27 June 2025. Appropriations for these portfolios are approximately 21.3% of the government's total appropriations for 2025-26, which are \$105.4 billion.

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 the committee assists the Parliament in its scrutiny of the Government's proposed expenditure.

This report provides an overview of the examination process undertaken by the committee. This included 8.5 hours of a public hearings on 1 August 2025, attended by the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation, Directors-General, and the chief executives of relevant schedule 7 entities.

The committee made 1 recommendation, found at page vi of this report, that the proposed expenditure referred to the committee be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 3

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2025 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

Glossary

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Committee | Health, Environment and Innovation Committee |
| DETSI | Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation |
| HHS | Hospital and Health Service |
| OHO | Office of the Health Ombudsman |
| QIMR | The Council of the Queensland Institution of Medical Research |
| QMHC | Queensland Mental Health Commission |
| QAS | Queensland Ambulance Service |
| SDS | Service Delivery Statement |
| TEQ | Tourism and Events Queensland |

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1. Overview of the Budget Estimates Process

The Appropriation Bill 2025 was introduced by the Honourable David Janetzki MP, Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership, and was referred to the Health, Environment and Innovation Committee (the committee) by the Legislative Assembly on 27 June 2025.

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 the committee assists the Parliament in its scrutiny of the Government's proposed expenditure. Total appropriation for 2025-26 is \$105,417,248,000.¹

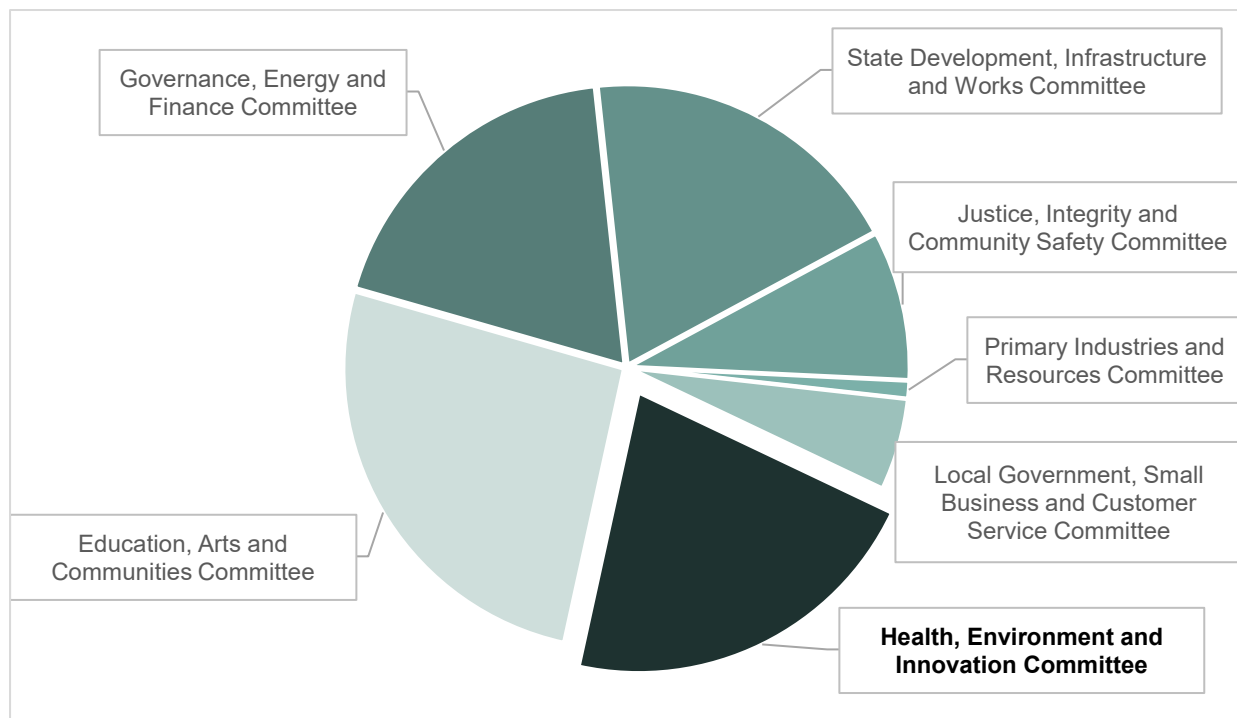
The table and figures below set out the appropriations examined by the committee.

Table 1: All appropriations examined by this committee, 2025-26

| Department or entity | Vote 2025-2026 (\$'000) |
|--|-------------------------|
| Queensland Health (including ambulance services) | 21,399,892 |
| Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation | 1,133,288 |
| Total appropriation overseen by this committee | 22,533,180 |

Source: Appropriation Bill 2025

Figure 1. Budget Appropriations by committee, 2025-26



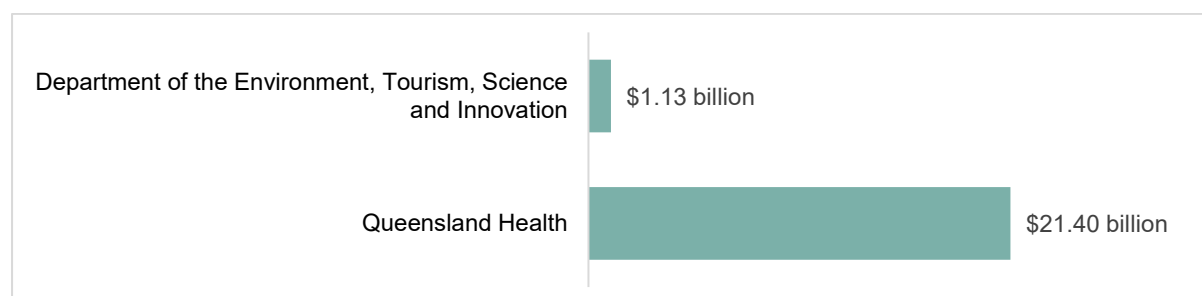
Source: Appropriation Bill 2025

¹ Appropriation Bill 2025, s 2(1).

The committee's examination of the Appropriation Bill 2025 is in relation to the:

- Health and Ambulance Services
- Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation.²

Figure 2: Departmental appropriations examined by this committee, 2025-26



1.1. Inquiry Process

On 1 August 2025, the committee conducted a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Honourable Tim Nicholls MP, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, the Honourable Andrew Powell MP, Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation, and other witnesses.³ This was in accordance with a motion of the Legislative Assembly on 27 June 2025 which determined the program for estimates. This provided for 8.5 hours of examination over the portfolios of both Ministers, between 9 a.m. and 7.15 p.m. as follows:

- Health for 3 hours
- Ambulance Services for 1 hour
- Environment for 1.5 hours
- Science and Innovation for 1 hour; and
- Tourism for 2 hours

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; and
- additional information given in relation to answers.

Prior to the public hearing, the committee provided the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and the Minister for the Environment and Minister for Science and Innovation

² Legislative Assembly of Queensland, *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly*, Schedule 6.

³ Queensland Parliament, Record of Proceedings, Estimates – Health, Environment and Innovation Committee – Brisbane, 1 August 2025.

with questions on notice in relation to the estimates. Responses to all the questions were received.⁴

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

In keeping with Schedule 7 of the Standing Orders,⁵ the chief executives of the following entities were present at the hearing on 1 August 2025 to assist the committee with its consideration of the portfolio estimates: the 16 Hospital and Health Services (HHS), Health and Wellbeing Queensland, Office of the Health Ombudsman (OHO), Queensland Mental Health Commission (QMHC) and Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ).

1.2. Participation by other Members of Parliament

The following non-committee Members participated in the public hearing sessions with leave of the committee:

- Hon Stephen Miles MP, Leader of the Opposition, Member for Murrumba
- Hon Mick De Brenni MP, Member for Springwood
- Hon Mark Bailey MP, Member for Miller
- Dr Christian Rowan MP, Member for Moggill
- Mr Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar
- Hon Leanne Linard MP, Member for Nudgee; and
- Mr Michael Healy MP, Member for Cairns.

1.3. Should the proposed expenditure be agreed to?

In accordance with Standing Order 187(1), the committee is required to determine and report on whether the proposed expenditure referred to it are agreed to.



Recommendation 1

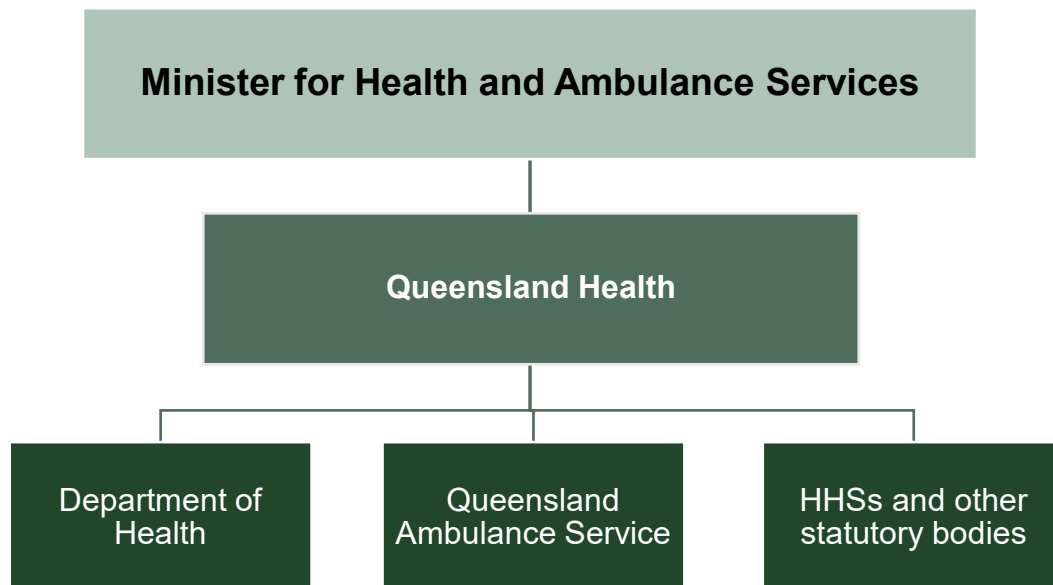
The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2025 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

⁴ See *Volume of additional information* tabled with this report. The response from the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, to pre-hearing Question on Notice No. 12, contained errors in the data presented and the committee resolved to redact question 12 in the +publication of responses pre-hearing questions on notice and direct the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services to provide an amended answer by the end of the examination of the health portfolio on 1 August 2025. At the end of his examination, the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services tabled a response to pre-hearing Question on Notice No. 12 (tabled paper 14). The Minister also tabled an amended response to pre-hearing Question on Notice No. 2 (tabled paper 13).

⁵ Schedule 7 of the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly* sets out a list of statutory entities to which direct questioning of chief executives at estimates applies.

2. Minister for Health and Ambulance Services

The Honourable Timothy (Tim) Nicholls MP, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, has responsibility for Queensland Health.



2.1. Queensland Health

Queensland Health is comprised of the Department of Health, the Queensland Ambulance Service, and 16 independent HHS situated across the state. The remainder of the Queensland Health portfolio includes the QMHC, OHO, QIMR and Health and Wellbeing Queensland.⁶ Queensland Health applies its resources to the following 7 service areas:⁷

- **Inpatient care** – services provided to patients under a formal admission process, either in hospital or the patient's home.
- **Outpatient care** – examinations, consultations, treatments or other services provided to patients who are not currently admitted to hospitals that require specialist care, including associated allied health care.
- **Emergency care** – the treatment of acute and urgent illness in an emergency care setting, provided in hospital emergency departments as well as other facilities (such as remote nurse run clinics, general practice, ambulance services, retrieval services).
- **Sub and non-acute care** – rehabilitation care, palliative care, geriatric evaluation and management care, psychogeriatric care and maintenance care.
- **Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Services** – Mental Health Services deliver assessment, treatment and rehabilitation services in community, inpatient and extended treatment settings to provide appropriate care for symptoms of mental illness and facilitate recover. Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Services

⁶ Queensland Budget 2025-26, Service Delivery Statement (SDS), Queensland Health, p 2.

⁷ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, see summary of services area expenses at p 12 and overview of each service area at pp 3-10 and 31.

provide prevention, treatment and harm reduction responses in community-based services.

- **Prevention, Primary and Community Care** – a range of services provided by healthcare professionals in socially appropriate and accessible ways and include health promotion, illness prevention, disease control, immunisation, screening, oral health services, environmental health, research, advocacy and community development, allied health, assessment and care planning and self-management support.
- **Ambulance Services** – the delivery of pre-hospital emergency medical care and ambulance transport services, including aeromedical retrieval and transport services and the Health Contact Centre (which uses phone and online delivery models to provide 24/7 health assessment and information services).

The objectives of these service areas are to:⁸

- deliver a world-class health system for all Queenslanders, no matter where they live
- foster an environment of empowerment across the portfolio so that frontline staff feel encouraged to advance local health solutions to local health problems
- de-centralise resources and decision making where it is clinically safe to do so to ensure frontline staff are able to implement local health solutions for their local community
- have a strong, well-functioning health system underpinned by a workforce that is expertly trained, valued and respected, and which grows across all disciplines to ensure the viability of the health system now and into the future

2.2. Budget Overview

Table 2, from the Appropriation Bill 2025, shows the total appropriation for Queensland Health for 2025-26, compared with 2024-25 budgeted and estimated actual appropriations.

Table 2: Queensland Health appropriation for 2025-26 (source: *Appropriate Bill 2025, sch 2, p17*)

| Appropriations | Budget 2024-25 \$'000 | Est. Actual 2024-25 \$'000 | Vote 2025-26 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | | |
| departmental services | 17,172,970 | 18,375,029 | 19,133,126 |
| equity adjustment | 871,841 | 1,680,469 | 2,203,771 |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | 88,887 | 92,712 | 62,995 |
| Vote | 18,133,698 | 20,148,210 | 21,399,892 |

⁸ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 1.

The health budget is a significant component of government spending constituting 20.3% of total appropriations. The health budget continues to face ongoing pressure with an increasing population and ageing population, which is increasing the demand for health services.⁹

For Queensland Health, appropriation revenue is supplemented by other revenue streams, predominantly payments from the Commonwealth Government under the National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA). In 2025-26, NHRA payments are budgeted to be \$7.531 billion, an increase of 6.5% on estimated actual receipts in 2024-25.¹⁰ Under the current NHRA, which is to be re-negotiated in the next year, the national growth cap for increases in commonwealth contributions is capped at 6.5%.¹¹

Following machinery of government changes, effective 1 November 2024, the Office for Women portfolio was transferred from the broader Queensland Health portfolio to the Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism.¹² In 2024-25, the estimated actual expenditure for Office for Women was \$3,227,000 (0.01% of Queensland's Health controlled operating expenses in 2024-25).¹³

2.2.1. Budget comparison

The 2025-26 appropriation of \$21.399 billion represents an increase on last year's budgeted appropriations of approximately 18%.

In 2025-26, budgeted total expenses for Queensland Health, including the Department of Health and the 16 HHSs, is \$29.441 billion.¹⁴ This is a 10.2% increase on adjusted budgeted expenses for 2024-25.¹⁵

Queensland Health is staffed by over 130,000 people¹⁶ across the state and has 114,734 full time equivalent (FTE) positions for 2024-25, with this forecast to increase to 119,438 in 2025-26; an increase of 4,704 FTE employees. These increases are to be spread across the Department of Health (which captures FTE positions listed for QIMR, QMHC, OHO and Health and Wellbeing Queensland), QAS and the 16 HHSs, as depicted in Table 3 below.¹⁷ Employee expenses constitute 66.9% of Queensland Health's operating expenses (a small increase from 65.9% of the adjusted budgeted expenses in 2024-25).

⁹ Queensland Budget 2025-26, Budget Strategy and Outlook (Budget Paper 2, BP2), p 10.

¹⁰ Queensland Budget 2025-26, Budget Strategy and Outlook (Budget Paper 2, BP2), p 91.

¹¹ Queensland Budget 2025-26, Budget Strategy and Outlook (Budget Paper 2, BP2), p 93.

¹² Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 12, see footnote 3.

¹³ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 12.

¹⁴ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, pp 15, 22.

¹⁵ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 22.

¹⁶ See the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services response to pre-hearing question on notice no. 16, with a total headcount of 133,932 people for Queensland Health

¹⁷ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, pp 29, 38, 45, 52, 60, 67, 74, 81, 88, 95, 102, 109, 116, 123, 130, 137, 144, 149, 155, 161, 167.

Table 3: Staff allocations (FTE) across Queensland Health for 2025-26

| Agency | 2024-25 Est Actual FTE | 2025-26 Budgeted FTE | Increase (FTE) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Department of Health | 9,970 | 10,282 | 312 |
| QIMR | 614 | 613 | -1 |
| QMHC | 46 | 46 | 0 |
| OHO | 160 | 160 | 0 |
| Health and Wellbeing Queensland | 69 | 69 | 0 |
| QAS | 5,951 | 6,178 | 227 |
| Cairns and Hinterland HHS | 6,075 | 6,100 | 25 |
| Central Queensland HHS | 3,726 | 3,736 | 10 |
| Central West HHS | 430 | 456 | 26 |
| Children's Health Queensland HHS | 4,722 | 4,756 | 34 |
| Darling Downs HHS | 5,787 | 5,797 | 10 |
| Gold Coast HHS | 10,411 | 10,733 | 322 |
| Mackay HHS | 2,910 | 2,995 | 85 |
| Metro North HHS | 20,906 | 21,681 | 775 |
| Metro South HHS | 17,664 | 17,779 | 115 |
| North West HHS | 908 | 926 | 18 |
| South West HHS | 880 | 885 | 5 |
| Sunshine Coast HHS | 7,737 | 7,892 | 155 |
| Torres and Cape HHS | 1,309 | 1,314 | 5 |
| Townsville HHS | 6,336 | 6,378 | 42 |
| West Moreton HHS | 5,107 | 5,170 | 63 |
| Wide Bay HHS | 3,905 | 4,022 | 117 |
| TOTAL HHS | 98,813 | 100,620 | 1,807 |
| TOTAL QUEENSLAND HEALTH | 114,734 | 117,080 | 2,344 |

The total projected FTEs across Queensland Health in Table 3, differ from budgeted 2025-26 total FTE of 119,438 (a planned increase of 4,704 FTE), noted earlier. This may be because workforce planning is ongoing with additional FTE positions to be allocated as this planning is completed.¹⁸

¹⁸ See the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services response to pre-hearing question on notice No. 16, where the Minister stated, 'I am advised that growth projections are being finalised and Queensland Health is working to complete a gap analysis and further planning for the pipeline of health workers'.

HHSs are established under the *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011* and are funded by Queensland Health under individual service agreements. HHSs are responsible for delivering public health services in their respective regions. In 2025-26, Queensland Health will provide approximately \$24.3 billion for HHS operations (up from \$22.1 billion budgeted in 2024-25, a 9.9% increase).¹⁹ In addition to funding HHSs to deliver public health services, Queensland Health also provides funding to Mater Health to provide public health services.²⁰

The Department of Health delivers health system governance, workforce strategy and planning, statewide clinical health support services, information and communication technologies, health promotion and disease prevention strategy, health infrastructure planning and corporate support services.²¹ Details of services delivered by other agencies, including OHO, QMHC, QIMR and other statutory agencies can be found in the SDS.

All staff are employed by Queensland Health and allocated across the Department of Health, Queensland Ambulance Service, HHSs and other statutory bodies. The funding provided to HHS includes employee expenses, which are recovered by Queensland Health from each of the respective HHSs.²²

2.2.2. Budget Highlights

The 2025-26 budget highlights for Queensland Health include:²³

Improving access to health services by investing in public hospital services to deliver emergency services, stabilise the elective surgery waitlist, improve access and flow and reduce ambulance ramping, including the following specific measures:

- stabilise elective surgery waitlists and enhance the Surgery Connect Program
- increased funding to Queensland Ambulance Service, including increasing the number of paramedics
- stabilise bed capacity to improve patient flow

Additional funding of \$1.607 billion in 2025-26 (as part of additional funding of \$6.539 billion over four years), with specific funding of various priorities (as part of that \$6.539 billion) including:

- \$1.752 billion over 4 years for stabilisation of the elective surgery waitlist
- \$812.9 million over 4 years for QAS workforce
- \$581.4 million over 2 years to stabilise bed and system capacity
- \$638.4 million over 4 years for the delivery of public health services at Mater Springfield

¹⁹ Queensland Budget 2025-26, Budget Strategy and Outlook (Budget Paper 2, BP2), p 1. Also see respective allocations to HHSs in the SDS.

²⁰ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 2.

²¹ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 2.

²² Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 16. This is reflected in the figures where total income and total expenses are recorded as \$43.495 billion, more than the headline figure of \$29.441 billion, inflated by 'user charges and fees' line item which incorporates the receipt of 'labour recoveries' from HHS as revenue, but which are also paid out as part of 'supplies and services' and 'employee expenses'.

²³ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 2, and Queensland Budget 2025-26, Budget Measures (Budget Paper 4), pp 76-82.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> operationalise 186 public hospital beds at the Springfield Mater Hospital support tailored solutions to improve patient flow improve patient and staff safety by uplifting the security officer and ambassador workforce across HHSs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$55 million over 2 years for the patient flow rapid response fund \$8.7 million over 3 years for the uplift of the security officer and Ambassador workforce |
| Implementation of the Easier Access to Health Services Plan to deliver health services to Queenslanders when they need them. Services to be delivered through this funding include 7-day discharging, transit lounges, more CT and MRI machines, additional support for regional and rural GPs, and reinstating maternity services at Biloela and Cooktown Hospitals | Additional funding of \$21.24 million in 2025-26 (as part of additional funding of \$218.6 million over 4 years) |
| Delivering the Healthy Kindy Kids program, which provides access for children to free vision, hearing and speech development checks in kindergartens and childcare centres | Additional funding of \$6.25 million in 2025-26 (as part of total additional funding of \$37.5 million over 5 years from 2024–25) |
| Additional funding for delivery of 8 Neuro Wellness Hubs across Queensland to provide neurological health services to support Queenslanders experiencing neurological conditions and increasing awareness for early detection | Additional funding of \$3.03 million in 2025-26 (as part of additional funding of \$10.5 million over 4 years) |

2.2.3. Capital program

In 2025-26, Queensland Health's budgeted total capital investment in built infrastructure and digital technologies is \$3.667 billion²⁴, including additional funding of \$1.3429 billion.²⁵ This represents a 69.2% increase in capital investment compared to the 2024-25 budgeted capital investment.²⁶ This capital investment is part of the broader Hospital Rescue Plan, which aims to deliver 2,600 additional beds across metro, rural and regional Queensland.²⁷

Capital Investment highlights for 2025-26 from this additional investment (which are all part of the \$18.526 billion investment over 5 years and outlined in the Hospital Rescue Plan) include:²⁸

- additional funding of \$49 million to deliver capital for the Easier Access to Health Services plan (as part of \$410.8 million over 4 years from 2024-25)

²⁴ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 14.

²⁵ Queensland Budget 2025-26, Budget Measures (Budget Paper 4), pp 119-122, being total additional investment as per the budgeted capital measures.

²⁶ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 14.

²⁷ Queensland Budget 2025-26, SDS, Queensland Health, p 13.

²⁸ Queensland Budget 2025-26, Budget Measures (Budget Paper 4), pp 119-122.

- additional funding of \$11.3 million (as part of \$38.5 million over 3 years) to deliver 2 youth mental health facilities as part of the Step-up Step-down Program
- additional funding of \$178 million (as part of \$355.2 million over 3 years) to deliver the Building Rural and Remote Health Program
- additional funding of \$24 million (as part of \$146 million over 3 years) to deliver the Accelerated Infrastructure Delivery Program
- additional funding of \$675 million (as part of \$2.647 billion in new funding across 5 years) for the Timely Investment Infrastructure Maintenance Program, to support maintenance, replacement and refurbishment of Queensland Health's existing assets
- additional funding of \$70 million (as part of \$250 million over 4 years) to sustainably grow QAS and commission QAS infrastructure, including:
 - \$45 million to commission 170 new and replacement ambulance vehicle
 - \$23.7 million to deliver new ambulance stations and relief accommodation in regional and remote locations
 - \$7.4 million to progress planning, design and construction for Beenleigh Central and Southport East ambulance stations and relocation of Springwood ambulance station
- additional funding of \$3.3 million to provide an additional 7 residential aged care beds as part of the Moura Multipurpose Health Service Aged Care expansion (as part of \$16.7 million over 3 years)
- additional funding of \$332.3 million for the Hospital Car Parking Program (as part of an additional \$1.338 billion over 4 years).

2.3. Matters raised during the Estimates Process

Matters raised during the committee's examination of Queensland Health are below:

| Matter Description | Pre-Hearing QoN | Transcript Page No |
|--|------------------|----------------------------|
| Rollout of real time health data, including the Open Hospitals website, and reported clinical incidents | 13 | 3-5, 32 |
| Elective surgery waitlist and specialist outpatient care (including funding to address wait times such as Surgery Connect) | 3 | 5-8, 11, 18, 46 |
| Emergency department efficiency and performance measures (including 'long stays', where length of stay exceeded 24 hours, stays over 12 hours, measures implemented to address 'long stays', Patient Off Stretcher Times, and wait times in emergency departments) | 4, 5, 11, 12, 17 | 9, 31-32 |
| Hospital Rescue plan (and former Capacity Expansion Plan), including new beds and | 6, 14 | 9-10, 15-16, 17-18, 22, 30 |

| | | |
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| specific plans for hospitals in Hervey Bay, Redcliffe, Sunshine Coast Region, Coomera and Bundaberg | | |
| Health budget challenges and commitments funded in 2025-26 budget | 1, 2 | 10 |
| Flu vaccination program (including funding for free vaccinations and funding for campaign to encourage Queenslanders to get vaccinated) and hospitalisations for flu in 2025 (including percentage of patients who were hospitalised who were not vaccinated) | - | 11-12, 34-35 |
| Skin cancer rates, skin cancer awareness and sun safety social marketing campaigns | - | 12-13, 46 |
| Independent Review of Queensland Government Capacity Expansion Program ('Sangster review') and appointment of Mr Sangster to a role within Queensland Health | - | 13-14 |
| Cancelled and postponed elective surgeries | - | 14-15, 23 |
| Perinatal and infant mental health services | - | 16-17 |
| New services for Noosa and surrounding areas and after-hours services | 19, 20 | 18 |
| Spinal injuries rehabilitation (funding and future demands) | - | 19-21, 46 |
| Asset maintenance (including former Sustaining Capital Program and new Timely Investment Infrastructure Maintenance Program, and Building Rural and Remote Health Program) | 7 | 22-23 |
| Ambulance ramping and patient flow | - | 23-24 |
| Health workforce (including additional health workers and managing attrition) | 10, 16 | 24-25 |
| Satellite Health Centres (and category 1 and 2 presentations at these centres) | - | 25-26 |
| Puberty Health Education Program (Ready, Set, Grow) | - | 26-27 |
| Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART), including IVF | - | 27-28 |

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|--|----|--------|
| Pelvic Pain Clinic Service | - | 27 |
| Termination of pregnancy care / services | - | 29, 31 |
| Measures to respond to illicit tobacco and vapes (including enforcement) | - | 30 |
| Gender affirming health care | - | 33, 36 |
| HHS Chief Executive Officer salary package | - | 33-34 |
| Patient Flow Rapid Response Fund | 15 | - |

Matters raised during the committee's examination of Queensland Ambulance Services are below:

| Matter Description | Pre-Hearing QoN | Transcript Page No |
|--|-----------------|--------------------|
| QAS strategic planning (including methods for modelling demand and expected growth) | - | 37-38, 45 |
| Workforce planning and additional paramedics | 9 | 38-39, 40 |
| QAS operating budget (including changes across years) and funding model | - | 39 |
| Capital program (including fleet purchases) | 8 | 40-41, 42-43, 45 |
| Regional planning for services | - | 41-42 |
| Key performance indicators (including service delivery, ambulance ramping and response time) | 18 | 43 |
| Ambulance response to calls from general practitioners and satellite health centres | - | 43 |
| Overtime hours by ambulance services / shift extensions | - | 44-46 |

3. Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation

The Honourable Andrew Powell MP, Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation, is the Minister responsible for the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI).

3.1. Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation

DETSI is led by the Director-General, under the direction of the Minister, and is responsible for the following service areas:²⁹

- Environmental Programs and Regulation Services
- Parks, Wildlife and Conservation Services
- Heritage Protection Services
- Tourism Industry Development
- Science Services
- Stimulating Queensland Innovation; and
- Business Corporate Partnerships.

DETSI's strategic objectives are to:³⁰

- **Steward:** protect, conserve, and showcase Queensland's environment for current and future generations
- **Partner:** partner and meaningfully engage with stakeholders to drive outcomes
- **Grow:** deliver sustainable growth for Queensland
- **Enable:** embrace new ideas and technologies to create lasting economic and environmental benefits.

DETSI funds Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ).³¹ TEQ is a statutory body established under the *Tourism and Events Queensland Act 2012* and is part of the broader Tourism portfolio. TEQ is subject to direction from the Minister.³² TEQ partners with industry and works across government to grow the visitor economy by promoting Queensland's destination, experiences and events.³³

3.2. Budget Overview

Table 4 shows the total appropriation for DETSI in 2025-26, compared with the budgeted and actual estimated cash appropriations for DETSI in 2024-25. DETSI oversees total appropriations of \$1.13 billion, being approximately 1.1% of total government appropriations.

²⁹ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, Service Delivery Statement (SDS), Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI), pp 3-12.

³⁰ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 1.

³¹ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 20.

³² Tourism and Events Queensland Act 2012, section 10.

³³ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 20.

Table 4: Queensland Health appropriation for 2025-26 (source: *Appropriate Bill 2025, sch 2, p10*)

| Appropriations | Budget 2024-25 \$'000 | Est. Actual 2024-25 \$'000 | Vote 2025-26 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | | |
| departmental services | 803,765 | 822,194 | 943,618 |
| equity adjustment | 81,281 | 111,436 | 61,811 |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | - | 92,429 | 127,859 |
| Vote | 885,046 | 1,026,059 | 1,133,288 |

3.2.1. Budget Comparison

Machinery-of-government changes, effective 1 and 21 November 2024, saw the following changes to the department:³⁴

- the tourism function was received from the former Department of Tourism and Sport; and
- the fish habitat area policy was transferred to the Department of Primary Industries.

As a result of these machinery-of-government (MOG) changes, the appropriation figures in the Appropriation Bill 2025 (and presented in the table above) are not directly comparable to appropriations in previous years. However, the Service Delivery Statement (SDS) presents 'adjusted budget' figures to reflect the MOG changes.³⁵ An analysis of these figures shows a 5.5% increase (being an additional \$49.5m million) in appropriation revenue for DETSI in 2025-26 compared with the 2024-25 adjusted budgeted amount.³⁶ The need for increased appropriation revenue appears to be driven by increased operating expenses in the following service areas in 2025-26 when compared with the 2024-25 adjusted budget:³⁷

- Environment programs and regulation (an increase of \$32.2 million)
- Tourism Industry Development (an increase of \$40.7 million)
- Innovation (an increase of \$43 million).

TEQ is funded primarily through grants from DETSI. TEQ's budgeted revenue from 'grants and other contributions' is set to decrease by \$12.7 million in 2025-26 (approximately 8.5%), compared to actual estimated expenditure in 2024-25. Reduced budgeted cash

³⁴ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 1.

³⁵ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 11, see note 2.

³⁶ From controlled appropriation revenue of \$894.1 million in 2024-25 to \$943.6 million budgeted for 2025-26. See Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 11.

³⁷ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 11.

appropriations are offset by a reduction in budgeted expenses, primarily for supplies and services and grants and subsidies.³⁸

3.2.2. Budget Highlights

The 2025-26 budget highlights for DETSI include:³⁹

| | |
|---|---|
| Additional funding to support the delivery of <i>Destination 2045: Delivering Queensland's Tourism Future</i>, including funding for aviation attraction, event attraction and new product development and further supplementation for TEQ. | Additional funding of \$50 million in 2025-26, as part of additional funding of \$446 million over 4 years. |
| Funding for Resource Recovery Boost Fund to build critical waste infrastructure, divert waste from landfill and increase recycling. | \$130 million over 3 years (no additional funding; to be met internally by DETSI) |
| Delivering new and expanded facilities for the Wildlife Hospital Network which provide specialist care to sick and injured native wildlife. | Additional funding of \$21.15 million in 2025-26, as part of \$39.6 million over 3 years (from 2024-25) |
| Enhanced management of national parks and protected areas through increased funding of 'More Rangers, Better Neighbours' initiative, including funding for additional rangers | Additional funding of \$10.006 million in 2025-26, as part of \$84.6 million over 5 years |
| 'Zero Litter to the Bay by 2030' initiative, as fulfilment of an election commitment, including additional funding to partner with local governments to upgrade stormwater network infrastructure and prevent litter escaping into Moreton Bay by 2030 | Additional funding of \$160,000 in 2025-26, as part of \$27.7 over 4 years |

3.2.3. Capital program

In 2025-26, DETSI's budgeted capital program, consisting of capital purchases and capital grants, is \$279.4 million. This is a 42.8% increase on the 2024-25 adjusted budgeted total capital outlays.⁴⁰ The significant increase is driven largely by an additional \$66 million for capital grants which increased due to SEQ City Deal programs.⁴¹

DETSI's capital program includes \$39.6 million for acquisition of land to expand the protected area estate, \$18.3 million for development of the Wangetti Trail, walking and mountain bike trails, and eco-accommodation facilities, and over \$28 million for recreation and visitor facility upgrades.⁴²

³⁸ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 23.

³⁹ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 2, and Budget Measures (BP4), pp 51-53.

⁴⁰ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 12.

⁴¹ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 12, and particularly note 2.

⁴² Queensland Budget, 2025-26, SDS, DETSI, p 12.

Capital investment highlights in 2025-26, totalling \$8.466 million, include:⁴³

- \$6.246 million for the Wangetti Trail Project
- \$1.76 million for the Games On! Grassroots Infrastructure Program
- \$460,000 for local infrastructure improvement, including installing public mooring infrastructure at Mudjimba Island.

3.3. Matters raised during the Estimates Process

Matters raised during the committee's examination of the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation are below:

| Matter Description | Pre-Hearing QoN | Transcript Page No |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Protected areas including national parks and nature refuges | 8, 11, 12, 13, 19 | 51-52, 54, 65-66 |
| UNESCO World Heritage Site protection and nominations, including the Great Barrier Reef and Cape York Peninsula | - | 52-54, 59-63 |
| Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Land Management, including <i>More Rangers, Better Neighbours</i> | 7 | 54-55, 88 |
| Wildlife protection and rehabilitation, including funding for wildlife hospitals (including Seaworld Marine Hospital), conservation of threatened or vulnerable species (including dingos and koalas), and support for local conservation groups | - | 55-57, 64, 66, 75, 76 |
| Waste management (including Queensland Waste Strategy and <i>Zero Litter to the Bay</i>) and resource recovery boost | 5, 6 | 56, 58, 65 |
| QCoast 2100 programs and grants (including investments to address beach erosion) | - | 63-65 |
| Gold Coast Sky rail project: environmental impact | - | 66-67 |
| Chief Entrepreneur | - | 68 |
| Vegetation management including clearing and monitoring | - | 69, 78 |
| Innovation portfolio (including innovation policy and Advance Queensland) and workforce management | 15 | 69, 76 |

⁴³ Queensland Budget, 2025-26, Budget Measures (BP4), pp 110-11.

| | | |
|--|----------|-----------------------------|
| Management of science policy | 14 | 70-71 |
| Science and innovation sector support / funding / grants (including research infrastructure co-investment fund, defence industry, education, vaccine development, Female Founders, and First Nations innovators, and innovation precincts) | 10, 17 | 70-73, 77-79 |
| General policy and response regarding perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) | - | 74-75 |
| Support for First Nations tourism (including cultural centres and consultation process) | - | 80-82, 98 |
| Destination 2045 Tourism Plan (including ecotourism, regional tourism, adventure tourism and tourism levies, consultation undertaken, marketing and advertising costs and capitalising on the Olympics) | 1, 2, 20 | 82-83, 85, 87, 90-94-97, 99 |
| Investment in Tourism (DETSI and TEQ) | 3 | 84 |
| Wangetti Trail | - | 84-85 |
| Connecting Queensland Fund and the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund, including notified air quality exceedances and Flight Paths | 16 | 76, 86-87, 88, 92, 98 |
| Reducing red tape for tourism businesses | 4 | 89-90 |
| Funding for event attraction and tourist operators | 18 | 95 |
| Great Barrier Reef and Outback Queensland education experience programs | - | 96 |
| Queensland Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner | 9 | - |
| Grants administered by DETSI | 17 | - |

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Statement of Reservation Member for Noosa

**Health Environment and Innovation Committee Report No. 12,
58th Parliament — 2025-26 Budget Estimates**

Statement of Reservation — Sandy Bolton MP Member for Noosa

Whilst supporting this year's Health Environment and Innovation Committee (HEIC) report, I again draw attention to the unresolved issues across the broader estimates and committee system and processes, and ongoing need to for an independent review to ensure greater efficiencies and scrutiny of governments.

This is not a reflection on the hearings I attended or this committee, nor the Speaker and Deputy Speaker who chaired from my experience with respect and fairness, and who in addition allowed some extra time for my follow-on questions which was appreciated.

However, relying on the generosity of chairs or opposition members in attendance does not make a good process, and is why since 2019 opposition members including the crossbench have sought a review.

This led to some positive changes in 2024 to the estimates process, with more Questions on Notice and extended question time. This was a good start.

As reported in the Courier-Mail on 28 July 2024 during last year's estimates hearings "the LNP has pledged to overhaul the estimates process if elected in October, including changing committee structures to ensure all were headed by an independent chair.¹" This was a pinnacle and much awaited moment.

Instead, what has occurred has been minor, including that the Speaker and Deputy Speaker chair each committee hearing rather than the committee chairs themselves. This was not the independence sought and did not result in fewer Points of Order and 'Points of Order on Points of Order' which led to even less time for questioning.

In addition, the improvements made in 2024 of allowing crossbench members to submit one Question on Notice to each Minister, and an increase in time allocation for the opposition questioning via a decrease in government questions, were reversed.

The use of 'Dorothy Dixers' to repeat information already in the budget documents, government press releases or ministerial statements is not an effective use of resources.

¹ Courier-Mail, 28 July 2025, "[Major allegations against former Parole Board president](#)".

What should be a process of scrutinisation and illumination, basically remains unchanged from previous years of government promotion and obscuration. Ultimately every member including the speakers and ministers, parliamentary service staff members, director-generals and ministerial staffers are paid for by the taxes of Queenslanders. We should all be working together in and for a process that is efficient, effective and pushes information out in a format that is clear and understandable.

Professor Peter Coaldrake said in his important 2022 report *Let the Sunshine in – A Review of Culture and Accountability in the Queensland Public Sector*: “in every case, whether the trivialising of parliamentary committees, lack of independence needed by integrity bodies or lack of clarity about decision making, this can be reversed by a commitment to openness, supported by accountability².”

To rebuild trust and transparency of our systems, governments and representatives, we must strive for this openness and accountability.

At a minimum, the key improvements of the 2024 estimates hearings must be reinstated.

Further, for government to commission that independent review as requested over the years, drawing on both public input and examples from other parliaments around Australia and the world, to maximise their value to the people of Queensland.

Such a review should also consider the presentation of the budget in an accessible and comprehensible manner drawing on the examples of the Scottish Fiscal Commission, the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer in Canada, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Budget Office and others, so all can be easily interpreted by the people we represent.

In closing I would like to acknowledge and highlight the incredible amount of work by all ministers, departmental staff and agencies who prepared for and attended the hearings, thank the Speaker and Deputy Speaker for undertaking what would have been an exhausting two weeks, members and committee secretariats, Hansard and all who partook in this year’s Budget Estimates. In addition, to all who answered our questions openly and with good clarity.



Sandy Bolton MP
Member for Noosa

² Coaldrake Report, <https://www.coaldrakereview.qld.gov.au/>, p 2.

Statement of Reservation
Member for Greenslopes and the Member for South Brisbane



Statement of Reservation

Health, Environment and
Innovation Committee

Appropriation Bill 2025





Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands, seas, skies and waterways from across Queensland.

We pay our respect to the Elders, past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This artwork by The Hon LEEANNE ENOCH MP is called "The Power of Many" from her "Connections" series. It represents the paths we take to reach our goals and the many important and often powerful connections we make with each other along the way.

Queensland Labor Opposition

The Queensland Labor Opposition thanks public sector employees right across Queensland for the work that they do each and every day on behalf of all Queenslanders. Without over 270,000 full-time equivalent public sector roles in Queensland undertaking that work, Queenslanders would not have access to the services and support that they need and deserve.

In particular, the Queensland Labor Opposition thanks all public servants involved in the preparation of Budget Estimates. Preparing for a Budget Estimates process is a monumental task that can involve hundreds of staff to not only attend the public hearings but also prepare briefing materials and gather information.

HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES

The Crisafulli LNP Government's first budget was a budget of broken promises for Queensland Health and the Queensland Ambulance Service.

The Crisafulli LNP Government promised greater transparency and accountability of government. Yet, the 2025 Budget Estimates highlighted more of the same – that when the Crisafulli LNP Government say something, it means nothing.

This budget obfuscates details, allowing the Crisafulli LNP Government to wiggle out of their promise to deliver health infrastructure projects on time and on budget.

It breaks a great number of other promises, including the promise to listen to the experts and deliver health services to Queenslanders when they need it most.

HEALTH CAPITAL

The Queensland Labor Opposition holds grave concerns regarding the delivery of the Queensland Health Capital Program.

While the Crisafulli LNP Government has committed to greater transparency and accountability of government, the 2025-26 investment in Health Capital Programs stands in direct contrast to this commitment. Budget Paper 3 does not clearly outline funding to discrete hospital builds, including new hospital builds under the former Capacity Expansion Program.

This matter was pursued during the Estimates hearing. Yet when questioned, it was revealed the Chief Executives of Hospital and Health Service could not provide any detail. When asked if a completion date for the new Coomera Hospital had been discussed with him, the Chief Executive of the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service Mr Ron Calvert said:

MR CALVERT: *As I said, I think it would be best to refer that to Mr Sangster.*

MR BAILEY: *You are unable to give us a completion date on the Coomera Hospital construction?*

MR CALVERT: *I am here for my expertise on the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service. I would not want to mislead the committee with my assumptions.*

MR BAILEY: *I appreciate your answer, but obviously you would plan for the future. There is no completion date that you are aware of for the Coomera Hospital construction?*

MR CALVERT: *I do not want to offer a date in case I get it wrong.*¹

Likewise, when asked about the new Bundaberg Hospital, the Chief Executive of the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service said:

¹ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 22

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MS CARROLL: *The new Bundaberg Hospital is certainly under the auspice of Sam Sangster, who is the director of the program. We are certainly looking at the options of being on a single site. You are best to ask him the question on dates et cetera.*

MR BAILEY: *To this point there is no completion date being discussed in terms of when the Bundaberg Hospital may open?*

MS CARROLL: *We are doing further planning for the single-site option and, once again, I would refer to Sam Sangster, who is managing the project, for further details.²*

It is concerning to say the least that the people put in charge to plan for hospital and health service delivery in some of our highest growth regions did not have an answer on when new hospitals would come online. How are they expected to plan for the workforces of the future?

For this reason, the Queensland Labor Opposition holds significant concerns regarding the funding pipeline, including how much funding has been deferred to across the forwards and beyond. There continues to be significant pressure on Queensland Health, which requires increased investment in both workforce and hospital beds. Unfortunately, this budget provides no certainty on which projects will be delivered, nor if they will be delivered in line with the publicly committed scope.

In answering questions on modelling for increasing capacity for a Queensland spinal injuries unit, the Director General said:

DR ROSENGREN: ... *"I am aware that there is a need for substantial investment in ensuring that we have adequate spinal services for the community,"³*

And further to this point stated, *"yes, there is a deficiency of beds in our spinal services."⁴*

Despite this admission from the Director-General, the Crisafulli LNP Government has failed to fund new beds or upgraded infrastructure to support Queensland's Spinal Injuries Rehabilitation Service.

This government promised to deliver health services when Queenslanders need it most, yet in the Estimates hearing it was exposed there is an immediate 30 bed shortage for Queensland's Spinal Injury Rehabilitation Service.

The Spinal Unit joins a list of projects that there is a demonstrated need for, as voiced by stakeholders, the broader community and made apparent by hospital performance data.

Due to time constraints, the Queensland Labor Opposition was unable to interrogate further investment or funding shortfalls to deliver health capital projects to meet demand. We hold genuine concerns that the government is failing to listen to the experts, and to current modelling on delivering good public health services for Queenslanders – as was promised.

HEALTH PROMOTION

It was also made clear through the estimates hearing where the government's priorities sit when it comes to Queenslanders' Health – that is, self-promotion over health promotion.

The Crisafulli LNP Government has demonstrated their obsession with self-promotion, and the cost this presents to taxpayers. When asked, the Director-General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet said:

² https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 22

³ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 21

⁴ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 22

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Mr MILES: Can you outline what government advertising campaigns there have been to promote flu vaccination and how that compares to the funding provided to the advertising for the Hospital Rescue Plan campaign?

Mr Walker: I do not have that material to hand. I can certainly talk about the broader campaigns.

Mr MILES: It is just those two I am interested in.

Mr Walker: Remind me again. It was the—

Mr MILES: Flu vaccination and the Hospital Rescue Plan.

Mr Walker: I might need to grab some additional information on the flu vaccinations. Perhaps I will speak first to the Hospital Rescue Plan... The plan was released to the marketplace more broadly on 23 April 2025 and supported by paid social media and a search campaign directing people to visit the campaign website. A wider paid media campaign launched on 6 May 2025 and ran until 28 June 2025.

Mr MILES: Is there a dollar amount for that campaign?

Mr Walker: The campaign cost \$1.67 million excluding GST.⁵

In comparison, during the health estimates hearing the Director-General revealed:

Dr Rosengren: “I can confirm that \$675,000 has been spent on the 2025 campaign for influenza in Queensland.”⁶

In what experts warned to be one of the worst influenza seasons Queensland has ever experienced, the Crisafulli LNP Government decided to spend almost three times on self-promotion, as for health promotion of free flu vaccines for Queenslanders.

The Crisafulli LNP Government further refused to answer questions on the funding allocated in this budget to sun safety social marketing campaigns, which whistle-blowers told the Queensland Labor Opposition have been cut. In 2022, \$8.4 million was invested in skin cancer prevention and early detection over four years, until June 2026.⁷

When asked about how much funding remained committed over the next 12 months, the Crisafulli LNP Government could not provide a specific answer to the question, responding at the end of the hearing in general terms about a range of social media campaigns. That is despite the evidence presented at the hearing demonstrating that Queenslanders continue to be diagnosed with skin cancer at alarming rates.

The Queensland Labor Opposition is concerned that the lack of funding to health promotion campaigns will result in worse health outcomes for Queenslanders. The Crisafulli LNP Government’s obsession with self-promotion over health promotion are already impacting the State’s health system and Queenslanders’ health.

It has been widely reported in the media of rescheduled elective surgeries and hospitals at Tier 3 capacity or on bypass due to the surge in influenza cases in Queensland.

Of the increased number of influenza hospitalisations this year, it was revealed in the hearing 86% of people are unvaccinated. The Crisafulli LNP Government has a responsibility to appropriately plan for and manage Queensland’s influenza season to ensure that Queenslanders’ healthcare is not impacted by the increased demand on the health system during winter months.

⁵ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_07_29_EstimatesGEC.pdf pages 25 and 26

⁶ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 12

⁷ https://www.choreport.health.qld.gov.au/our-lifestyle/spotlight#section_sun-safety

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This Crisafulli LNP Government promised health services when Queenslanders need them, yet they failed to appropriately plan for the Queensland flu season and prevent surgery rescheduling and hospital bypass. This was best summarised by the Leader of the Opposition, The Honourable Steven Miles MP who asked:

***Mr MILES:** Again, noting your very extensive experience, Director-General, of the tier 3 escalations experienced at Queensland's hospitals this year, how many were you advised by the executives of those HHSs were caused by a lack of public awareness of the Queensland Health capital program?⁸*

WOMEN AND GIRLS HEALTH

Repeatedly the Crisafulli LNP Government promised that all commitments in the Women's and Girls Health Strategy would be honoured. Yet during the estimates hearing it was exposed that publicly funded IVF for women with cancer and other complex medical conditions had not commenced as planned by 1 July 2025.

The Director-General stated:

***Dr Rosengren:** The answer is that we do not have a publicly funded IVF service in Queensland at this point in time.⁹*

The Deputy Director-General of Clinical Excellence Queensland highlighted just how important continuing with the initiatives of the Women's and Girls Health Strategy is. They said:

***Dr Brown:** To start, I would like to thank the over 12,000 women and girls across the state who were part of developing this strategy and whom we were able to hear from and our clinicians and numerous stakeholders across the state who inputted into this strategy.¹⁰*

Despite saying one thing, it is understood that the Crisafulli LNP Government have broken their promise to deliver the Women's and Girls Health Strategy in its entirety, as previously planned.

The Queensland Labor Opposition also revealed that there were 5,820 patients waiting longer for their elective surgery than clinically recommended. That was an increase of 2,521 compared to 12 months prior.

It was also revealed that there were 315,409 patients waiting for specialist outpatient care – 123,724 of those patients were waiting longer than clinically recommended. That represents an increase of 28,807 patients than 12 months prior, with 12,943 more waiting longer than clinically recommended. It is noted after the Director-General then provided a higher number of 29,736 more patients on the specialist outpatient waiting list compared to the same time last year.

So not only has the waitlist for elective surgery increased, but the waitlist for the waitlist has skyrocketed as more patients struggle to see their specialist. The Crisafulli LNP Government have broken their promise to listen to the experts and they have broken their promise to deliver health services when Queenslanders need them. Due to the short time available, the Queensland Labor Opposition was unable to probe further into the blowout in the Specialist Outpatient Waiting list under the Crisafulli LNP Government, regarding which the Queensland Labor Opposition holds deep reservations.

Other issues that were canvassed during the estimates hearing include the health directive indefinitely banning stage 1 and stage 2 hormone therapies for young people, which was revealed to be a decision of Cabinet rather than based on the advice of health experts.

Further issues that were not able to be canvassed include the government's cutting of harm prevention programs, including pill testing, the failure to support frontline doctors and nurses through the scrapping of

⁸ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 14

⁹ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 27

¹⁰ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 27

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the Workforce Attraction Incentive Scheme, and the government, to date, failing to deliver on their promise of nation leading pay and conditions for Queensland nurses.

QUEENSLAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Queensland Labor Opposition holds reservations that the 2025-26 Budget does not meet the increasing demand on the Queensland Ambulance Service.

In the estimates hearing, the Queensland Ambulance Service Commissioner, Commissioner Emery, said with respect to growth in demand on Queensland Ambulance Service, *“This year that figure is about six per cent.”*¹¹

The Queensland Ambulance Service Commissioner outlined that less additional Queensland Ambulance staff and frontline paramedics had been funded in this budget than previous years. Given the continuing demands that are placed on the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Queensland Labor Opposition would have considered it appropriate the Crisafulli LNP Government would commit to hiring the same if not, more additional Queensland Ambulance Service staff than previous years.

HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES – CONCLUSION

The Queensland Labor Opposition holds reservations in relation to the budgeted expenditure for the Health and Queensland Ambulance Portfolio Areas. Most notably, its lack of accountability and transparency in respect of Health Capital projects. Without the 2,200 hospital beds that were planned to be delivered by 2028, Queensland’s hospitals will fail to keep pace with growth – that means vulnerable and sick Queenslanders in need of emergent care will miss out.

Once again, the Crisafulli LNP Government has demonstrated the 2025-26 Budget is a budget of broken promises. This budget breaks the Premier’s promise to deliver health capital projects on time and on budget, to respect taxpayers’ money with self-promotion over health promotion, to deliver health services when Queenslanders need them, to be open and transparent, and on their promise to our hardworking frontline health workforce.

All Queenslanders, patients, families and health workers, deserve better.

ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

The role of the Minister for Environment in Queensland at its very core is to protect the environment and promote conservation.

To ensure the sustainable use of resources and the protection of biodiversity.

To be nature’s voice in Cabinet, when industry has many.

To seek that difficult balance.

None of these qualities were present in the consideration of the 2025-2026 Budget Estimates for Environment, Science and Innovation.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The single biggest risk to the Great Barrier Reef, our natural environment and the flora and fauna that call it home is climate change.

While the Administrative Orders identified Climate Science as being within the Minister’s portfolio and the Minister’s Charter Letter includes a commitment to ‘work collaboratively with the Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Home Ownership to progress Queensland toward net zero and reduce our emissions in a

¹¹ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 38

sustainable and practical manner’, the Minister’s LNP Government colleagues on the Committee ran continuous interference in the form of frivolous points of order to avoid talking about the importance of emissions reduction to protecting our environment throughout the Estimates hearing.

The Shadow Environment Minister, asked the following line of questioning:

Ms LINARD: Minister, given climate change is the greatest single risk to the health of the Great Barrier Reef, do you remain committed to achieving net zero by 2050?

Dr ROWAN: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: it relates to a policy within a portfolio area and that relates to questions which need to be put to the energy minister, who earlier in the week was here at the estimates. That would have been an appropriate time to ask that question.

Ms LINARD: Mr Deputy Speaker, if I may be heard?

Mr POWELL: Just to clarify, the climate change component of the department has transferred to the Treasurer’s portfolio, to back up what the member for Moggill said.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are saying that it is not in your portfolio?

Mr POWELL: Neither the office of climate change nor the decisions around energy mix and deliverables. They sit within the Treasurer’s portfolio.

Ms LINARD: The administrative arrangements indicate climate science remains with the minister and his charter letter says—

Work collaboratively with the Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Home Ownership to progress Queensland toward net zero and reduce our emissions in a sustainable and practical manner.

I would think the environment minister can answer questions in respect of emissions reduction.

Dr ROWAN: I raise a further point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. If the member for Nudgee wishes to rephrase the question or move to an alternative question, that would be appropriate. However, the question as asked relates to the portfolio of the Minister for Energy, the Treasurer’s portfolio.¹²

The Member for Greenslopes asked the following line of questioning:

Mr J KELLY: Minister, last week the media reported that there would be a motion put to the LNP convention next month calling for the federal coalition to reject net zero. I ask: does your government remain committed to achieving net zero by 2050?

Mr MOLHOEK: Point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker: relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for that point of order. I think, member for Greenslopes, the question that you have asked relates to the party. The minister has already answered the question of the member for Nudgee in relation to net zero and his charter letter. I would ask you to move on to another question, please. The LNP convention is not within the minister’s portfolio responsibilities.

13

And again:

Mr J KELLY: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Director-General, prior to the election the LNP supported Queensland’s emissions reduction targets. Now in government the LNP are reviewing the Clean Economy Jobs Act, have extended the life of publicly owned coal-fired power stations, are expanding gas exploration and have cancelled renewable energy projects. What advice—

¹² https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 61

¹³ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 61

Mr LEE: *Mr Deputy Speaker, I raise a point of order.*

Mr MOLHOEK: *Mr Deputy Speaker, I raise a point of order.*

Mr J KELLY: *I have not even asked my question, so I am not quite sure how you take points of order.*

Mr MOLHOEK: *You are doing a lot of preamble.*

Mr LEE: *It is a long preamble.*

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: *Order, members to my right. I will hear the question and if there are points of order that arise from it we can hear them then.*

Committee members interjected.

Mr LEE: *Waffle.*

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: *Order, members!*

Mr J KELLY: *I take personal offence at that statement and I would ask that it be withdrawn.*

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: *Which one?*

Mr J KELLY: *I will not restate it.*

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: *Sorry, from which member?*

Mr J KELLY: *I believe it was the member for Hervey Bay.*

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: *Member for Hervey Bay, would you withdraw that statement, please?*

Mr LEE: *I withdraw.*

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: *Thank you, member for Hervey Bay. Member for Greenslopes, you can ask your question.*

Mr J KELLY: *Director-General, what advice have you provided to the minister with respect to the risk that the reef may be listed as 'in danger' due to the government's mixed messages and uncertainty regarding emissions reduction?*

Dr ROWAN: *Mr Deputy Speaker, point of order: there are imputations and inferences contained within that question. It is disorderly and I would ask you to rule it out of order.*

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: *Member for Greenslopes, there are a number of points here. I am advised that your question contains arguments and also the preamble relates to acts and measures that are not within the minister's portfolio responsibilities.¹⁴*

Queenslanders have a right to feel misled.

The Crisafulli LNP government said one thing to Queenslanders in respect of their commitment to emissions reduction before the election and are doing the complete opposite now they are in government.

PROTECTED AREAS

Queensland is the most biodiverse state in Australia, and one of the most biodiverse regions in the world. It must be protected as a legacy for every Queenslanders.

The Crisafulli LNP Government claimed they would expand protected areas by almost 2 million hectares by 2028. That equates to roughly 480,000 hectares per year. Yet they allocated no new or additional funds in the 2025-26 budget and in the year to date have added almost no new acquisitions, instead claiming 18 new nature refuges and land transfers initiated under former Labor governments as their own.

¹⁴ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 61 and 62

Queensland Labor Opposition

When in government, Labor established an historic \$262.5 million protected area expansion fund. The land acquisitions achieved under this fund has left a legacy for our environment and the Queensland community in perpetuity.

The \$39.6 million committed in the 2025-26 budget for high-priority land acquisitions is the final uncommitted portion of this historic fund, with the Crisafulli LNP Government allocating no new or additional funds. The real test for the Crisafulli LNP Government now is to put their money where their mouth is and replace hubris with real action.

The Shadow Minister for the Environment, the Member for Nudgee asked the Director-General:

***Ms LINARD:** Director-General, am I correct to take from your answer that there was actually no new or additional funding by the Crisafulli government in this budget? That was a carryover from the former Labor government's budget for expansion of public protected area?*

***Ms O'Callaghan:** This government signed off on the budget of \$39.6 million.*

***Ms LINARD:** So yes or no? There was no new and additional funding?*

***Ms O'Callaghan:** The budget was drawn down from the \$250 million.¹⁵*

GREATER GLIDER FOREST PARK

It was also deeply concerning to discover that the Crisafulli LNP Government will not honour a commitment to establish a 54,000-hectare Greater Glider Forest Park to expand and link existing but fragmented protected areas, ranging from near Conondale National Park near Maleny northward to Cordalba National Park near Childers, to conserve core greater glider habitat. Glider habitat continues to be logged and cleared.

This new park would have provided vital habitat to save this precious Queensland animal from extinction.

The Minister had no answer as to why conservation groups have been denied a voice in this decision, claiming it's a matter for the Minister for Primary Industries. It is highly doubtful that Greater Gliders will be a high priority for the Crisafulli LNP Government.

The Shadow Minister for the Environment, the Member for Nudgee asked:

***Ms LINARD:** Am I to take it, Director-General, that this area [Greater Glider Forest Park] will continue to be logged and is now not going to be protected for greater gliders?*

***Ms O'Callaghan:** Currently we are working through a process, and the Queensland Future Timber Plan will consider the appropriate tenure for these forests.¹⁶*

CAPE YORK PENINSULAR WORLD HERITAGE LISTING

The estimates process also exposed the hypocrisy of the Crisafulli LNP Government on protecting the Cape York Peninsula. Cape York is globally recognised as an area of immense environmental significance due to its exceptional biodiversity, intact ecosystems and rich cultural heritage. The Crisafulli LNP Government's decision to review the tentative World Heritage listing of the cultural landscapes of Cape York is clearly ideologically driven.

Ten traditional owner groups gave consent to have their Cultural Landscapes included in the Cape York Peninsula World Heritage Tentative Listing. Their voices and their wishes for their lands should be respected.

¹⁵ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 52

¹⁶ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 52

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\$2.4 million was quarantined by the former Miles Labor government for Heritage Assessment Grants and funding to Traditional Owner groups to support research and governance activities on the Cape York World Heritage listing documents. Broader consultation on the next step of the Cape York World Heritage nomination was due to commence in late 2024.

Yet at estimates we heard from the Director-General that the process is under review and to “ensure independence in this consultation, the department has appointed a senior leader from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to conduct a review”.¹⁷ Is the Crisafulli LNP Government inferring that the former consultation, also conducted by senior leaders within the department, wasn’t independent? This is an extraordinary claim to hear a Director-General make about officers in their own department.

In 2012 when the LNP was last in government and withdrew support for a World Heritage listed Cape York, the Minister stated that the Cape was “over consulted” and that more consultation would be a “waste of money”.

Now in 2025 the Crisafulli LNP Government is reviewing the tentative World Heritage listing on the basis that the consultation was not broad enough, and alleging concerns that Traditional Owners may not have understood what they were agreeing to.

Minister Andrew Powell said:

***Mr POWELL:** ...a number of groups have given consent. What I would question is whether that was freely given or whether it was due to a rushed process. ...*¹⁸

This is a risible claim to anyone who has actually engaged with the highly informed Traditional Owner groups in Cape York.

Surely a Minister would travel to the Cape to meet with the Traditional Owners who supported the tentative listing before announcing a review of the process? At the very least it would be reasonable for the Minister to make the effort to meet with or contact any of the ten traditional owner groups, but it was made clear at the estimates hearing that even this courtesy was not extended by the Minister and the LNP Crisafulli government.

Queenslanders can be rightfully proud that our state is home to not one but two of the world’s oldest continuing cultures and the iconic landscapes that hold their stories. Sadly, it is not evident that the LNP Crisafulli Government will listen to our First Peoples or protect their country into the future.

SCIENCE AND INNOVATION

With investment in both foundational and applied science, science has the potential to solve our generation’s greatest challenges. It has the potential to launch the state on to a new trajectory to become a global science powerhouse, as the former Beattie Labor government did when investing in the Smart State Strategy.

That’s why in 2024 the former Miles Labor Government launched the *Future Queensland Science Strategy 2024-2029*, the first-ever whole-of-government science strategy to ensure Queensland capitalises on dynamic fields such as renewable energy, climate change mitigation and quantum and advanced technologies. Science Advisory Council Queensland was also established to guide science priorities and advise on national and international opportunities for research.

In contrast, the LNP did not release a science policy or platform prior to the 2024 election and has announced no new or additional funding for this vital service area within the Department in the 2025-26 budget.

¹⁷ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 52

¹⁸ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 54

Queensland Labor Opposition

This is unfortunately also true of the innovation portfolio. The LNP did not release an innovation policy or platform prior to the election and has announced no new or additional funding for innovation in the 2025-26 financial year.

In this absence of ideas, the Queensland Labor Opposition is glad that the Crisafulli LNP Government continues to implement the former Labor government's vision for science and innovation in our great state.

ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION – CONCLUSION

At the hearing, the Crisafulli LNP Government made big claims about paving a brighter future for our state and, predictably, sought to criticise the Queensland Labor Opposition's record.

Yet it appears every dollar allocated in the 2025-26 budget for protected area expansion was a carry-over from the Miles Labor government's previous budget.

It appears every dollar allocated in the 2025-26 Science budget was a carry-over from the Miles Labor government's previous budget.

It appears every dollar allocated in the 2025-26 Innovation budget was a carry-over from the Miles Labor government's previous budget.

And that every dollar of the \$130 million Resource Recovery Boost Fund in the 2025-26 budget was repurposed funds from the Miles Labor government's previous budget.

The Crisafulli LNP Government committed no new or additional funds to these areas. Just endless hubris in answers to Questions on Notice and at the Estimates hearing, where they took credit for Labor's homework, while continuing to depend on our commitments when in government.

Queenslanders deserve better and our environment deserves better.

TOURISM

FIRST NATIONS TOURISM

The Crisafulli LNP Government's decision to cancel two First Nations Cultural Centres in Brisbane and Cairns builds deep uncertainty in the strength of our tourism sector, in particular cultural tourism, and brings into question the government's commitment to building these experiences.

First Nations Cultural Centres would be a vital connection between the learning and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

It would be a deeply unique experience for not just the many international visitors seeking to learn about the oldest continuing living culture in the world, but for many Australians seeking to better understand their neighbours, friends, and the land on which they live.

As the Chair of the First Nations Tourism Council told the Australian newspaper prior to the government announcing they were scrapping the centres:

"I think it would be a wonderful gesture from the government that's based on good economic outcomes for, not only First Nations people but the tourism sector in general."

In that same article, Professor of Practice at the Griffith Institute for Tourism Daniel Gschwind said:

"I think there is a genuine interest from visitors to learn more about our history and our cultural background as a nation."

Queensland Labor Opposition

As was revealed during the estimates hearing, the Department of Education and Arts Queensland, and the relevant Minister, failed to consult with the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation. The Minister also failed to reveal whether he was consulted by the relevant Minister before Cabinet ultimately made the decision to cancel the First Nations Cultural Centres.

During the estimates hearing, the Minister said:

***Mr POWELL:** One of the things I have learned and heard loud and clear is that our tourists these days are very different. They are looking for experiences and they want to get in touch with First Nations history, culture and immersive experiences.¹⁹*

Given the Crisafulli LNP Government's decision to cancel the Cultural Centres, it is clear that this government is not listening to what Queenslanders want.

It is regrettable that the Minister has failed to meet with representatives of Queensland's Indigenous tourism industry. Indigenous tourism is one of our state's most distinctive and high-value offerings, yet its voices have been sidelined from critical conversations about funding and strategy. Without that, opportunities for collaboration, growth, and cultural respect are being missed.

This decision falls into line with a long list of actions that are odds with the LNP government's commitments to treating Queenslanders with respect, and points to a pattern of dismissive behaviour towards First Nations people and their contribution to our state.

This bad decision represents a backwards step in our partnership with First Nations Queenslanders, but it also fails to take into account the economic benefits, including for the jobs that would have been generated as a result.

AVIATION FUNDING

The revelation that \$55 million of the \$130 million Connecting Queensland Fund is carried over from the previous Attraction Aviation Investment Fund, with less than \$10 million actually available and \$45 million already contractually committed, is deeply disappointing.

More than a third of the fund is already unavailable, falling short of industry expectations for genuine new support. The sector needs transparency and certainty, not recycled figures presented as fresh investment.

TOURISM LEVY

The Crisafulli LNP Government has created confusion regarding their position on the implementation of a tourism levy, or "bed tax." As was canvassed during the estimates hearing, the Director-General, in a previous capacity was a proponent for the introduction of a bed tax during her previous roles in the industry.

While the Queensland Labor Opposition acknowledges that the Crisafulli LNP Government confirmed they are not currently doing any work on the implementation, the Minister earlier this year in a statement to the Gold Coast Bulletin said:

¹⁹ https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/events/han/2025/2025_08_01_EstimatesHEC.pdf page 96

Queensland Labor Opposition

“As part of our community consultation, a number of councils have sought the ability to apply their own levy. These requests are being considered through the finalisation of the Crisafulli Government’s 20 Year Tourism Plan.”²⁰

In this statement, the Minister clearly acknowledges that they consulted with local councils on local-level implementation.

DESTINATION 2045

Destination 2045 is the Crisafulli LNP Government’s signature tourism policy, with extensive consultation for its’ formulation. However, the document fails to outline or deliver any real or tangible outcomes for regional tourism operators.

This 20-year plan is 64 pages long – if you remove the glossy pictures, it is half that size – but it needs more focus on directly supplementing and supporting regional tourism operators.

Some stakeholders have also raised concerns with the Queensland Labor Opposition regarding the Crisafulli LNP Government’s decision to announce a dedicated \$100 million fund for event attraction. It is argued by some that this may indicate to international event managers, promoters and organisers that Queensland has the ability to pay more for their events and may lead to an attempt at price gouging for said events.

The Crisafulli LNP Government must ensure all precautionary measures are taken to ensure the Queensland taxpayers are not taken for a ride by money-hungry international companies seeking to take advantage. During the estimates hearing, the Director-General was also unable to outline how exactly this fund would be used, or how it would work to attract additional events.

In addition to this, while the Queensland Labor Opposition welcomes a focus on ecotourism, it is of vital importance these projects stack up and do not have a negative impact on the natural amenities that make them so unique to our state. The Queensland Labor Opposition also notes the Crisafulli LNP Government’s tourism plans outlines specific projects that are key to its’ success, that are yet to even receive federal environmental approval, including the Whitsunday Skyway.

The Queensland Labor Opposition reserves it right to articulate further reservations during the debate.

ESTIMATES PROCESS

The Budget Estimates process is a cornerstone of our democracy in Queensland. For years it has been an opportunity for elected Members of Parliament, in particular non-government Members of Parliament to ask questions of Ministers and senior public servants to hold the elected government to account.

During the 2024 estimates process, the former Labor Government under the direction of then Labor Premier Steven Miles insisted that additional transparency measures were put in place to ensure that non-government Members of Parliament had ample opportunity to hold the elected government to account. These included:

- Providing crossbench Members of Parliament the ability to ask a pre-hearing Question on Notice for any Minister, regardless of if they were a member of the portfolio committee.

²⁰ <https://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/news/queensland/mayor-tom-tate-plans-to-introduce-bed-tax-for-gold-coast-tourists/news-story/2bd4c5e8dc34766d60069bf5dca08b1b>

Queensland Labor Opposition

- Strictly allocating government and non-government Members of Parliament time in respect of questions. That being that government Members of Parliament questions should not exceed 30% of the total allocated time and the remaining time, 70% for non-government Members of Parliament.
- Of the time allocated for non-government Members of Parliament it should be proportioned between Opposition and crossbench Members of Parliament, based on the proportion of the makeup at the time.
- Only one opening statement per Minister for their entire portfolio of no longer than five minutes, with the Premier allocated no longer than 10 minutes.

These transparency enhancements to the Budget Estimates process, introduced by the former Labor Government, were discarded by Premier David Crisafulli and the LNP Government.

This is despite in 2020 the Courier Mail revealing the then LNP Leader of the Opposition's views on the Estimates process, reporting:

- He [David Crisafulli] said that if the government did not accept *"the need to make changes"*, he would introduce them as Premier from the first hearings of the next term in 2024 – if the LNP wins power at the 2024 election.

The changes that were being referred to included:

- increasing the time available to examine the expenditure to ensure adequate questioning can occur;
- an Opposition or cross bench member to chair the committees to help ensure a fairer go;
- limiting the opportunity for 'Dorothy Dixers' questions from Government members which exist simply to allow ministers to wind down the clock.

While on paper there was more time overall for the hearings, the way in which Government Members conducted themselves with points of order to chew up time, and the removal of the 70% vs 30% time split, resulted in less time for the Opposition and Crossbench to ask questions to hold the government to account.

These actions were the very things that then LNP Leader of the Opposition David Crisafulli criticised. In the article referenced, he said:

"We've also seen ministers answer questions directed to independent public servants and Government members interrupting with tedious points of order to use up Opposition members' time."

It is the Queensland Labor Opposition's view that it is clear that the promises made by the then LNP in Opposition have been broken.

This Budget Estimates there was nothing revolutionary about the way the hearings were conducted - 'dorothy dixers' still occurred and frivolous points of order were constantly taken.

Further information and analysis about the 2025 Budget Estimates can be found in the Statement of Reservation attached to the report on the *Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2025*.

Queensland Labor Opposition

CONCLUSION

The 2025 Budget Estimates process was an opportunity for the Crisafulli LNP Government to deliver on its promises – promises to reform, to do better, for a fresh start. Instead, the bar was set so low it was on the floor.

Instead of delivering for Queensland, the Crisafulli LNP Government is delivering for itself. When it comes to accountability, this process laid bare the truth of a government that has failed to live up to its own words. What resounds is that the Crisafulli LNP Government continues to choose secrecy over transparency and political games over genuine accountability.

The Crisafulli LNP Government's obsession with self-interest over public interest was glaring. The people of modern Queensland expect a government that acts for them, not for themselves.

They want a government that embraces the values of openness, fairness and integrity – after all, that's what they were sold at the 2024 Election.

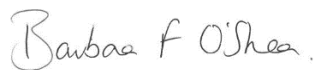
Instead of being an opportunity for genuine interrogation of the 2025 Budget, the Estimates process was muddled to avoid scrutiny. By placing political convenience above the democratic process that is Budget Estimates, the Crisafulli LNP Government outed itself as out of step with the priorities of Queenslanders.

This is not the “fresh start” that was promised, it is a step back.

Queenslanders deserve better.



JOE KELLY MP
MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES
DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE
SHADOW ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR HEALTH



DR BARBARA O'SHEA
MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE QUEENSLAND LABOR OPPOSITION

Queensland Labor Opposition

APPENDIX – MEDIA ARTICLES

\$1.67m spruiking rescue plan while ill

patients swamp state's wards

LNP'S HOSPITAL PROMO DWARFS FLU VAX SPEND



Queensland Health Director-General David Rossengren on Friday. Picture: Richard Walker

Hayden Johnson

Three times as much taxpayer cash was spent advertising the LNP government's politically charged Hospital Rescue Plan than was spent encouraging people to get the flu vaccination.

The state government has spent \$1.67m spruiking its Hospital Rescue Plan – which has been repeatedly used to attack the former Labor government – but just \$675,000 advertising the free flu vaccination program.

It is despite 97 influenza-related deaths as of July 27 – 13 more than at the same period last year – and 86 per cent of the 3362 patients hospitalised with the flu being unvaccinated.

The government's Hospital Rescue Plan has been splashed on billboard and media advertising across the state and was credited by Health Minister Tim Nicholls as "saving hospital projects Labor left without a pulse".

In comparison, advertising the government's \$25m free flu vaccination program has been scarce.

"Public health campaigns – especially those promoting vaccinations – are critical to reduce pressure on our hospitals and overworked doctors," Australian Medical Association Queensland President Dr Nick Yim said.

"There is no doubt we are experiencing an extremely busy flu season, with higher numbers of people being admitted to hospital."

This year 43,975 people have contracted the flu compared to the annual mean of 28,963 between 2020 and 2024.

"Our members are report-

ing worrying trends of Queenslanders either feeling fatigued by vaccination messaging or outright rejecting the efficacy of vaccines," Dr Yim said.

"This is deeply concerning. Vaccinations are safe, effective and thanks to the state government, free."

Mr Nicholls' office declined to comment on the disparity between advertising the Hospital Rescue Plan and flu jab program.

Instead it referred questions to Premier David Crisafulli's office.

A spokeswoman for Mr Crisafulli refused to say whether the Premier had done enough to encourage people to get vaccinated or if spending three times the amount advertising hospital buildings that the flu season was the right use of taxpayer cash.

Unlike Anastacia Pal-

aszczuk and Steven Miles, Mr Crisafulli has not posted an image of himself getting the flu vaccination.

Opposition Leader Steven Miles used estimates to needle Queensland Health Director-General David Rossengren about the government's spending on politically charged hospital building advertising.

Mr Miles asked Dr Rossengren if, in his lengthy experience as a clinician, he had ever seen an emergency department "overloaded because patients had insufficient knowledge of Queensland Health's capital program?"

Weekly influenza, RSV and Covid-19 statistics were delayed on Thursday and released on Friday afternoon just five minutes before Mr Nicholls ended his appearance at parliamentary estimates.

Mr Nicholls did not directly answer, but said a sun safety

ongoing strain on the state's health services, with an average of 127 public hospital beds across Queensland being occupied each day by patients with flu.

Queensland's vaccination rate is among the worst in the nation, with just 17.5 per cent of people aged 15 to 50 vaccinated – compared to 19 per cent in NSW and 23 per cent in Victoria.

In the most vulnerable age bracket, people over 65, 99.8 per cent of people have received the jab – just below the 60 per cent national average.

In estimates Mr Miles also questioned Queensland Health about how much funding it had allocated to its sun safety social marketing campaign this financial year.

"We understand that that funding has been cut," he said. Mr Nicholls did not directly answer, but said a sun safety

social media campaign was ongoing under a \$435m communications budget provided to Queensland Health.

Some \$400,000 has been allocated to deliver skin check clinics and GP training in regional Queensland, he said.

It prompted Mr Miles to claim the funding had been "quietly scrapped" by the LNP.

"Queensland is the skin cancer capital of the world and instead of driving change, David Crisafulli has thrown in the towel," he said.

It was also revealed at estimates Queensland is not offering a publicly funded IVF service despite a \$42m investment and the program due to start July 1.

Labor in March 2024 announced, as part of the Women and Girls Strategy, IVF would be funded for people with complex medical conditions from July 1.

Mr Nicholls said the state was undergoing a "fairly substantial review of the rules".

"That service was not in place, had not been put in place, and had not been adequately provided for as at the time of the change of government and that the regulations in place in relation to it were inadequate," he said.

Labor health spokesman Mark Bailey asked Dr Rossengren why Queensland Health had not put out communication announcing the service would not start as planned.

Mr Nicholls said: "I've explained that the commencement of the Assisted Reproductive Technology Act has been deferred by six months to the 1st of March 2026 based on advice from the chief health officer to allow proper consultation with relevant stakeholders," he said.

Editorial P67



Health and Ambulance Minister Tim Nicholls in estimates on Friday and (inset) the government's Hospital Rescue Plan. Picture: Richard Walker

Queensland Health bosses handed talking points ahead of Estimates grilling

Queensland Health executives are under the pump at Estimates this morning, with a blowout in elective surgery figures revealed straight up.

Hayden Johnson and Taylah Fellows

less than 2 min read August 1, 2025 - 1:53PM

Quarterly Mail

12 Comments

AA



Minister for Health and Ambulance Services Tim Nicholls during a media conference at Redcliffe Hospital.
Picture: Liam Kidston

Queensland Health executives have been handed talking points before their appearance at Parliamentary Estimates on Friday.

It comes one year after executives were offered media training under the former Labor government in preparation of a pre-election grilling about the state's struggling hospital and health system.

FOLLOW OUR LIVE BLOG BELOW

It is understood the briefing note dispersed this year was written by Queensland Health's communications team and included previous public statements the department had made.

A Queensland Health spokesman said there was nothing unusual about the talking points and tipped executives in other departments received the same support.

Queensland Labor Opposition



Queensland Health Director-General Dr David Rosengren. Picture: NewsWire / Sarah Marshall

“Each year Queensland Health prepares briefing materials to support Hospital and Health Service chief executives and departmental executives at Estimates,” he said.

“Executives may refer to the materials at their discretion but it is not mandatory.”

The document, labelled Statewide Messaging, provides suggested responses to executives if they are asked questions about potentially sensitive topics.

It is understood executives were given taking points about the new government’s real-time hospital data and encouraged to promote benefits to patients.

It is despite a briefing note to Health Minister Tim Nicholls earlier this year warning it could cause patients to make poorly-informed decisions about which emergency department to visit.

Queensland Labor Opposition

Huge number of mental health calls to QAS



Hayden Johnson

Queensland Ambulance Service Commissioner Craig Emery is being asked about workforce planning and its calls.

He revealed QAS took 81,000 triple-o calls for mental health or acute behavioral disturbance last year.

“Concerningly, the the age group that’s most prevalent is those between 15 and 29 years old and it’s an emerging and growing part of our business,” he said.

Mr Emery said QAS had an eight-year workforce pipeline to plan for state population growth.

“We find that within about plus or minus 1 per cent we get the growth right but it is said it’s the complexity of the changing nature of the patient that is a little bit harder to predict,” he said.

12:08 PM Aug 01, 2025

No guarantee major gender service review will be made public



Taylah Fellows

Health Minister Tim Nicholls has refused to confirm that the results of the review into Queensland’s gender care service and the use of puberty blockers for children aged under 18.

“Professor (Ruth) Vine and her committee and her fellow reviewers have a very wide remit, including recommendations as to how her advice is treated,” he said.

“I’ve clearly said that the cabinet and the government will consider the advice by by Professor Vine and I will be guided and will not preempt the decisions of cabinet.”

Queensland Labor Opposition

11:39 AM Aug 01, 2025

HIGHLIGHT

Labor probes axing of publicly funded IVF service



Hayden Johnson

Queensland is not offering a publicly-funded IVF service despite a \$42m investment and the program due to start July 1.

Labor in March 2024 announced, as part of the Women and Girls Strategy, IVF would be funded for people with complex medical conditions from July 1.

[au/news/queensland/qld-politics/queensland-health-bosses-handed-talking-points-ahead-of-estimates-grilling/live-c](#)

Qld Health executives' talking points for crucial estimates hearing exposed | The Courier Mail

Queensland Health Director-General David Rosengren at estimates revealed "we do not have a public funded IVF service in Queensland at this point in time".

Health Minister Tim Nicholls said the state was undergoing a "fairly substantial review of the rules" in relation to assisted reproductive technologies.

"That service was not in place, had not been put in place, and had not been adequately provided for as at the time of the change of government and that the regulations in place in relation to it were inadequate," he said.

Labor health spokesman Mark Bailey asked Dr Rosengren why Queensland Health had not put out communication announcing the service would not start as planned.

Mr Nicholls said: "I've explained that the commencement of the Assisted Reproductive Technology Act has been deferred by six months to the 1st of March 2026 based on advice from the chief health officer to allow proper consultation with relevant stakeholders," he said.

Queensland Labor Opposition

11:09 AM Aug 01, 2025

HIGHLIGHT

Someone please advise health boss on spinal service capacity



Taylah Fellows

The boss of Queensland Health does not know how many extra spinal injury beds are needed to service Queensland's growing population.

Labor Health spokesman Mark Bailey has turned his questioning towards the -now scrapped- new Spinal Injury Unit that was planned for the Princess Alexandra Hospital.

It took several attempts for the question to be green lit, as Mr Bailey attempted to quiz health heads about when they became aware the unit would not go ahead.

He then asked Director-General David Rosengren what modelling had been done to assess the increasing capacity needs for spinal injuries in Queensland.

[au/news/queensland/qld-politics/queensland-health-bosses-handed-talking-points-ahead-of-estimates-gri](#)

Qld Health executives' talking points for crucial estimates hearing exposed | The Courier M

"It's obviously a really significant challenge for Queenslanders who require the services of a complex spinal injuries service, and so I think it is very important that we have a model of care that delivers the world class care ...close to home," Mr Rosengren said.

"We have done an extensive analysis or assessment of spinal cord injury service need. And in December last year, we finalised the release of a spinal cord injury service delivery model. This was a piece of work that went over an extended period of time, had extensive consultation."

But asked how many beds were required to service that need, Mr Rosengren said he didn't have that number in front of him.

"I'll need to get someone to give me that specific detail," he said.

Queensland Labor Opposition

11:07 AM Aug 01, 2025

HIGHLIGHT

Health bosses unable to say when hospitals will be built



Hayden Johnson

Multiple health bosses have been unable to say when major new hospital builds may be finished.

Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service chief executive Ron Calvert was asked by Labor health spokesman Mark Bailey when the new Coomera Hospital would be completed.

"The capital program is not in my area of expertise. I would suggest you ask Mr (Sam) Sangster," Mr Calvert responded.

Mr Bailey noted, as chief of the region, he would have some conversations about the capital program and future capital needs.

Mr Calvert said he "wouldn't want to mislead the committee with my assumptions".

Mr Bailey then asked Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service chief executive Debbie Carroll about when the the new Bundaberg Hospital would be finished.

"The new Bundaberg Hospital is certainly under the auspice of Sam Sangster, who is the director of the program," she said.

[au/news/queensland/qld-politics/queensland-health-bosses-handed-talking-points-ahead-of-estimates-grilling/](#)

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"You're best to ask him the question on dates."

Queensland Labor Opposition

10:31 AM Aug 01, 2025

HIGHLIGHT

Doctors not waving around government's \$1.6m hospital brochure



Taylah Fellows

Opposition Leader Steven Miles is enjoying himself today.

The former health Minister is winding up Queensland Health Director-General David Rosengren over the government's \$1.6m advertising campaign for its "Hospital Rescue Plan" – the rewrite of the health infrastructure list.

"It's been highlighted several times to this committee that you are a highly experienced emergency physician with over 30 years experience, and I note that you were indeed the emergency physician Queensland Health allocated to show me how an emergency department worked," Mr Miles said.

"And so my question is, with all of that 30 years experience, on how many occasions have you seen an emergency department overloaded because patients had insufficient knowledge of Queensland Health's capital program?"

Mr Rosengren was "not quite sure" he understood the question.

"When I take history from a patient, that would not normally be part of an interaction I would have with a patient, and I don't believe that we would capture that information," he said.

Queensland Labor Opposition

10:22 AM Aug 01, 2025

HIGHLIGHT

Little cash spent advertising flu campaign



Hayden Johnson

Queensland's flu vaccination rates are the nation's lowest, Parliamentary Estimates have heard.

[.au/news/queensland/qld-politics/queensland-health-bosses-handed-talking-points-ahead-of-estimates-grilling/live-c.](#)

Qld Health executives' talking points for crucial estimates hearing exposed | The Courier Mail

Director-General David Rosengren revealed of the 3362 patients hospitalised with the flu, 86 per cent were not vaccinated.

Dr Rosengren revealed \$675,000 had been spent advertising the free flu vaccination program.

Queensland Labor Opposition

9:54 AM Aug 01, 2025

HIGHLIGHT

Thousands waiting too long for elective surgery



Taylah Fellows

Welcome to health estimates with Minister Tim Nicholls and Labor's Mark Bailey.

Shock elective surgery figures have been unveiled in the early minutes of the hearing.

Queensland Health Director-General David Rosengren has confirmed that as of June, there were 5820 ready patients waiting longer than

[l.au/news/queensland/qld-politics/queensland-health-bosses-handed-talking-points-ahead-of-estimates-grilling/live-...](#)

Qld Health executives' talking points for crucial estimates hearing exposed | The Courier Mail
clinically recommended for elective surgery.

This is for 2521 more patients waiting compared to the same time last year.

Patients on the waitlist for Specialist Outpatient Care total now total 315,409 – including 303,211 ready for care.

Queensland Labor Opposition



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REVEALED

Qld girl who won Dr Chris' heart

Australia's most eligible bachelor is finally off the market P7



'I'M NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH FOR A PLUS-ONE'

Kate Miller-Hicklin will be leaving her husband at home for the Legies P12-13

INVESTIGATION INTO SHOCKING MISTREATMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS INSIDE CHILDREN'S WARD

HOSPITAL ABUSE PROBE

But Health Minister had no idea

EXCLUSIVE
Jackie Sinnerton

An investigation has been launched into shocking claims vulnerable mental health pa-

tients were mistreated by a nurse at Queensland Children's Hospital including an allegation patients were threatened with needles.

The Health Ombudsman is

investigating the allegations dating as far back as August 2021. Health Minister Tim Nichols became aware of the probe after being contacted by The Courier-Mail. **Report P5**



Cost of political ads trumps flu vax spend

Haydon Johnson

The state government spent three times more money spruikling its politically charged

hospital infrastructure plan than on encouraging people to get the flu vaccination.

This is despite a spike in influenza-related deaths, hospital

admissions and one of the worst vaccination rates in the country.

A whopping \$1.67m has been spent advertising the govern-

ment's so-called Hospital Rescue Plan while just \$600,000 was spent encouraging Queenslanders to take up the free flu jab. **Report P4-5**



Kids rush to outsmart ban

Clare Armstrong
Rose Innes

Children as young as 11 are trying to outsmart Australia's world-leading social media ban by pleading for their parents to let them set up accounts now.

But Communications Minister Anika Wells, in an exclusive interview, said children under the age of 16 will wake up on De-

cember 30 to find their Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube accounts deactivated.

"We're backing parents over the platforms," she said. "This is on the platforms to do this. It's not for you to have a fight with your 13-year-old."

Experts say tech-savvy teens are rushing to create new accounts and using avatars and adult photo filters to try and get around the looming social media ban. **Reports P24-25**



51-8279-00000

LNP in hospital ads cash skew

Hayden Johnson

Three times as much taxpayer cash was spent advertising the LNP government's politically charged Hospital Rescue Plan than was spent encouraging people to get flu vaccinations.

The state government has spent \$1.67m spruiking its Hospital Rescue Plan – which has been repeatedly used to attack the former Labor government – but just \$675,000 advertising its free flu vaccinations.

It is despite 97 influenza-related deaths as of July 27 – 13 more than the same period last year – and 86 per cent of the 3362 patients hospitalised with the flu being unvaccinated.

The Hospital Rescue Plan has been splashed on billboard and media advertising across the state and was credited by Health Minister Tim Nicholls as "saving hospital projects Labor left without a pulse".

Advertising for the government's \$25m flu vaccination program has been scarce.

"Public health campaigns – especially those promoting vaccinations – are critical to reduce pressure on our hospitals and overworked doctors," Australian Medical Association Queensland President Nick Yim said. "There is no doubt we are experiencing an extremely busy flu season, with higher numbers of people being admitted to hospital."

This year 43,975 people have contracted the flu compared to the annual mean of 28,963 between 2020 and 2024.

"Our members are reporting worrying trends of Queenslanders either feeling fatigued by vaccination messaging or outright rejecting the efficacy of vaccines," Dr Yim said.

"This is deeply concerning.

"Vaccinations are safe, effective and thanks to the state government, free."

Mr Nicholls' office declined to comment on the disparity between advertising the Hospital Rescue Plan and flu jab program. Instead he referred questions to Premier David Crisafulli's office.

EDITORIAL

Health must come before advertising

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, vaccination rates have been in steady decline.

Vaccination fatigue and community scare campaigns around the efficacy of the jabs are all to blame.

But so too is the state government.

It is simply not doing enough to promote its \$25 million free flu vaccination program – spending just \$675,000 spruiking the potentially lifesaving jabs.

By comparison, the LNP government spent three times that amount on an advertising blitz to tell Queenslanders about its Hospital Rescue Plan.

That's \$1.67m on billboards, brochures and online advertising championing the LNP's plan to fix the hospital system while attacking Labor for its health failures.

The Hospital Rescue Plan – which includes new hospitals, expanded hospitals and a plan to hire more frontline health staff – has no timeframe.

It is basically political propaganda on the taxpayer dime and is happening despite Premier David Crisafulli, during last year's election, promising Queenslanders his government, if elected, would see a "serious reduction in marketing and promotional costs".

Health Minister Tim Nicholls' office declined to comment on the disparity between advertising the Hospital Rescue Plan and flu jab program, instead referring questions to the Premier's office.

But staff also refused to say whether the Premier had done enough to encourage people to get vaccinated or if spending three times the amount advertising hospital buildings over and above flu season was the right use of taxpayer cash.

Perhaps a review of this season's horrific flu numbers will prompt a response from Mr Nicholls.

There have been 97 influenza-

related deaths as of July 27 – 13 more than at the same period last year.

This year 43,975 people have contracted the flu compared to the annual mean of 28,963 between 2020 and 2024.

Is it any wonder our hospital emergency departments are under stress.

So far this flu season, more than 3360 patients have been hospitalised suffering with the flu with an average of 127 public hospital beds in Queensland being occupied each and every day by patients with influenza.

Shockingly, 86 per cent of those patients hospitalised were not vaccinated.

Australian Medical Association Queensland president Nick Yim says the flu statistics combined with the low vaccination rates are "deeply concerning".

"Our members are reporting worrying trends of Queenslanders either feeling fatigued by vaccination messaging or outright rejecting the efficacy of vaccines," Dr Yim said.

"There is no doubt we are experiencing an extremely busy flu season, with higher numbers of people being admitted to hospital.

"Public health campaigns – especially those promoting vaccinations – are critical to reduce pressure on our hospitals and overworked doctors."

No one is under any illusion that the state health budget is under enormous strain.

Demands for money funding for more resources, to reduce waiting lists and pay rises for frontline staff are endless.

But with Queensland's vaccination rates among the worst in the country and an already devastating flu season that isn't over, pouring money into making Queenslanders aware free flu jabs are available to help protect them seems like money well spent.