

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner

ANNUAL REPORT

2024–2025



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Glossary

DPC	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
MOG	Machinery of Government
OCBC	Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner
The Act	<i>Cross-Border Commissioner Act 2024</i>

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About the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner

Communities located near the Queensland border face unique challenges that impact the daily life of people living, working and operating in these regions. These communities contend with the complexities of different state laws, rules and service delivery which can lead to difficulties in their day-to-day lives, impacting everything from transportation and commerce to education and healthcare. Businesses face numerous complications caused by different regulations, procedures, outcomes, restrictions and accreditations. In some instances, residential and or commercial property span across State borders and are located in two different jurisdictions.

Addressing these issues is inherently complex and requires a multifaceted, and sometimes unique approach. Accordingly, in August 2024, the Queensland Government appointed Ian Leavers APM as the inaugural Cross-Border Commissioner, establishing the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner (OCBC) in the process.

The purpose of the Cross-Border Commissioner is to

- enhance stakeholder engagement and facilitate collaboration between the State and relevant jurisdictions in areas of mutual interest relating to cross-border communities; and
- facilitate the identification, and advocate for the resolution, of issues related to residing in cross-border communities that impede regional economic development, community resilience and service delivery.

Establishment of the OCBC

As the OCBC was established in August 2024, one of the initial tasks of the Cross-Border Commissioner was to activate the functions of the OCBC. This included recruiting staff, sourcing office locations, developing communication and branding platforms, and developing a consultation plan to commence community consultation. With initial support from the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water and subsequent

support from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC), the Cross-Border Commissioner was able to appoint two full time staff members prior to the end of 2024. These support roles have provided significant policy, research and administrative support to the Cross-Border Commissioner to fulfil the objectives and functions of the OCBC. Additionally, these positions have also been integral in developing the branding and communication tools available to the Cross-Border Commissioner, which have become essential in increasing awareness of the Cross-Border Commissioner's role.

In addition to establishing the OCBC, the Cross-Border Commissioner commenced a comprehensive listening and consultation tour of border communities. Since his appointment, the Cross-Border Commissioner has travelled on 28 separate weeks to border communities over the past 12 months in Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory, listening to community groups, stakeholders, businesses and residents. These community visits have been essential for the Cross-Border Commissioner to gain a greater appreciation of the on-ground concerns relevant to border communities, spanning topics ranging from health and education to transport logistics and infrastructure, through to social services, crime and the economy.

When addressing concerns or issues, the OCBC liaises directly with Queensland Government Departments that are subject matter experts to the concern or issue at hand. In particular, and in conjunction with the Queensland Government's Regional Leadership Network program, the OCBC has been proactively working with key regionally based Queensland Government agencies to provide local solutions to local problems, and to increase the levels of cooperation with corresponding Government agencies in New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory, along with Commonwealth representatives and agencies.

Governance

The functions of the Cross-Border Commissioner are established through the *Cross-Border Commissioner Act 2024* (the Act). The Act outlines the purpose and powers of the Cross-Border Commissioner, and defines the functions, objectives and operational oversight of the OCBC. This legislative framework provides clear distinctions between the functions of the Cross-Border Commissioner, the Queensland Government and DPC, granting the Commissioner a degree of independence to carry out his role. However, the Act provides that the Cross-Border Commissioner remains accountable to the Premier of Queensland.

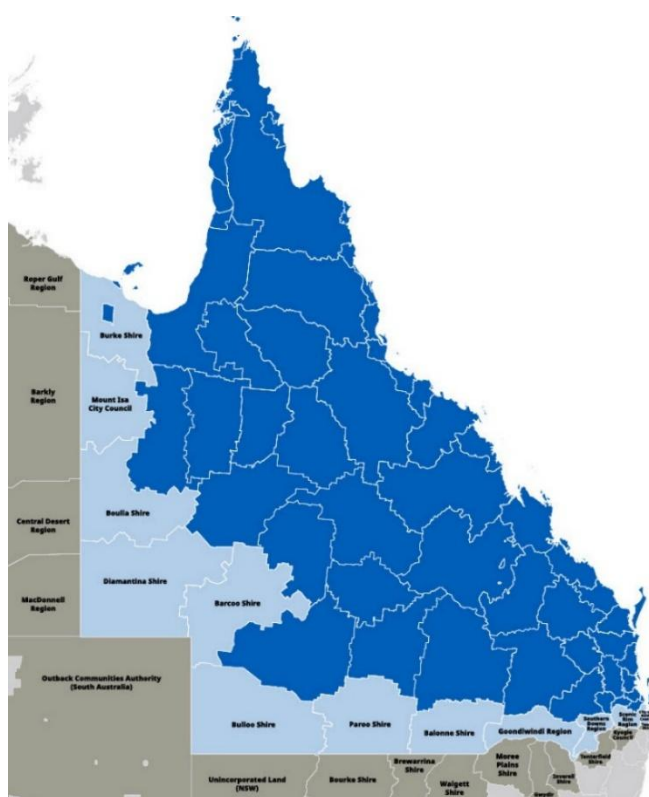


Figure 1. Border communities along the Queensland border.

The Act defines border communities to include any local government area that is adjacent to the Queensland border. This captures twelve local governments along the Queensland border, stretching from the City of Gold Coast in South East Queensland, to Diamantina Shire Council in the South West, through to Burke Shire Council in the North West of the State. As border communities transcend the border itself, the local government authority on the opposite side of the Queensland border is also within the Cross-Border Commissioner's scope. This

often requires the Cross-Border Commissioner to tour and consult with communities in New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

The Act specifies that the Cross-Border Commissioner must prepare and give to the Minister, within 3 months after the end of each financial year, a report on the functions performed by the Cross-Border Commissioner during the financial year. This Annual Report satisfies this requirement and will be made publicly available on the Cross-Border Commissioner's website.

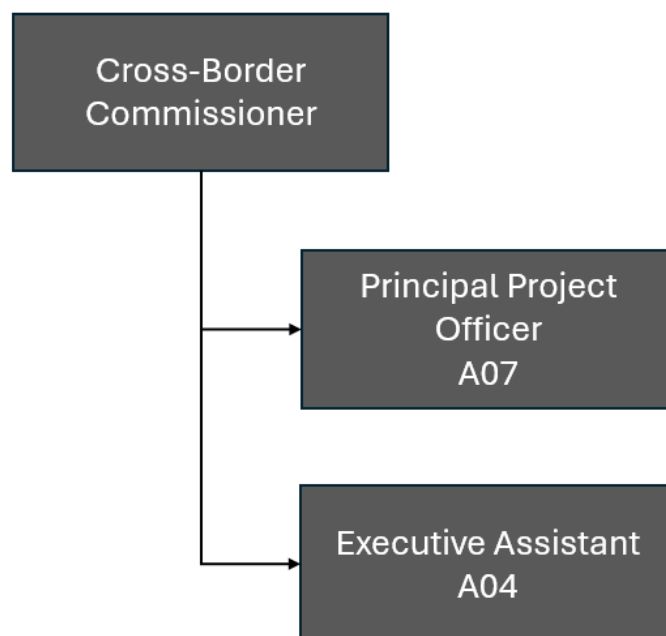
Machinery of Government changes

Upon the inauguration of the Crisafulli Government, machinery of government (MOG) changes were implemented that realigned Ministerial responsibilities for the OCBC. Initially sitting in the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water, the functions of the OCBC were transitioned to DPC in November 2024. Because of this change, the Cross-Border Commissioner reports to the Premier of Queensland, as the Minister responsible for the Act, with DPC providing additional administrative support to the OCBC.

Organisational structure

The Act provides that the Governor-In-Council, on the recommendation of the Minister, appoints the Cross-Border Commissioner, for a term for not more than 3 years. On the 26th of August 2024, Ian Leavers APM was appointed as the Cross-Border Commissioner.

The OCBC has three full time equivalent positions including the Cross-Border Commissioner. Two positions that sit within the OCBC report directly to the Cross-Border Commissioner.



Compliance with objectives

Compliance with *Cross-Border Act 2024* requirements

Section 2 of the Act sets out the objectives for the Cross-Border Commissioner. These requirements have provided the basis for how the OCBC assessed its performance during the 2024-2025 financial year¹.

Objective One: *enhance stakeholder engagement and facilitate collaboration between the State and relevant jurisdictions in areas of mutual interest relating to cross-border communities*

>>> **Instigation of consultation program with stakeholders and community representatives in border communities**

The Cross-Border Commissioner has undertaken detailed community and stakeholder consultation in border communities. The Cross-Border Commissioner frequently and consistently visits border communities, on average, more than every second week since his appointment in August 2024.

>>> **Develop relationships with key Queensland Government agencies and Local Government authorities**

The Cross-Border Commissioner undertook a variety of key consultation initiatives focusing on key State and Local Government authorities. These have included

- meeting with the Premier and the Director General of the DPC to discuss key cross-border initiatives
- establishing a recurring roundtable with senior members of Queensland Government agencies
- developing a working relationship with the Queensland Government's *Regional Collaboration Governance Model* through the Regional Leadership Network
- establishing strong working relationships with Local Government authorities on both sides of the Queensland border.

¹ During its inaugural year, both the performance of the Cross-Border Commissioner and the OCBC were impacted by the time and resources required to initially establish the functions of both the Commissioner and the Office.

>>> Develop relationships with key inter-jurisdictional stakeholders

The Cross-Border Commissioner works closely with the New South Wales and South Australian Cross-Border Commissioners to identify constituent concerns and address emerging issues. Stemming from this national advocacy, the Cross-Border Commissioner

- participates in the *National Cross-Border Commissioner Forum*
- frequently attends Border Regional Organisation of Council meetings, as an observer
- in conjunction with the South Australian Cross-Border Commissioner, has commenced discussions with the Northern Territory Government to identify key points of contact regarding border issues.

***Objective Two:** facilitate the identification, and advocate for the resolution, of issues related to residing in cross-border communities that impede regional economic development, community resilience and service delivery*

>>> Identification and prioritisation of issues through community consultation

The Cross-Border Commissioner has worked meticulously with relevant government agencies to address specific constituent issues. This collaborative effort has yielded some early successes including;

- funding provided by the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support to establish a dedicated community support officer for the Goondiwindi area
- working with the former Department of Energy and Climate for the provision of Cost-of-Living electricity rebates for people living in border communities
- working with the New South Wales Cross-Border Commissioner to provide access to sporting and cultural programs for children on both sides of the Queensland and New South Wales border
- negotiating with the Department of Transport and Main Roads for cross-border infrastructure funding

- operational assistance provided to Local Disaster Management Groups during the Cyclone Alfred weather event
- successfully advocating for inter-jurisdictional representatives to be present on both the Queensland and New South Wales sides of the border during the Cyclone Alfred weather event
- working with border communities in addressing crime and justice issues in line with the Queensland Government's *Making Queensland Safer* reforms
- frequently addressing constituent requests through the Commissioner's Inbox.

>>> Identification of strategic cross-border issues

The Cross-Border Commissioner has identified and commenced work on several key strategic initiatives including;

- identification of key national and inter-jurisdictional priorities through the *National Cross-Border Commissioners Forum*
- in conjunction with Goondiwindi Regional Council, the development of a service mapping exercise to review and map social services in the Goondiwindi region
- in conjunction with the New South Wales Cross-Border Commissioner, the Cross-Border Commissioner undertook a *Tourism and Transport Forum* focussing on improving collaboration in the Tweed Heads and Gold Coast regions
- implementation of the Queensland and New South Wales Government's *Memorandum of Understanding for Cross-Border Collaboration*.

Compliance with the Queensland Government's objectives for the community

As required under section 10 of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Queensland Government has developed a set of broad objectives for the community. Given its forward facing and advocacy role, the OCBC has focussed heavily on delivering outcomes that meet these community objectives, with a focus on constituents residing and/or working in border communities.

>>> Community Objective: Safety where you live

The Cross-Border Commissioner has been working with relevant government agencies and regional stakeholders to address specific solutions to justice and social issues in border communities. Further, the Cross-Border Commissioner has identified specific opportunities to work closely with community stakeholders in both Goondiwindi and Mount Isa to address core concerns relating to youth justice and alcohol consumption in these regions.

>>> Community Objective: Health services when you need them

The Cross-Border Commissioner has identified three specific issues related to medical and allied health services in border communities. To address these concerns, the Cross-Border Commissioner and the OCBC have liaised directly with Queensland Health to coordinate assistance and to advocate directly to the Department to alleviate risks. The Cross-Border Commissioner will continue to work with relevant stakeholders and Queensland Health to address health issues in border communities.

>>> Community Objective: A better lifestyle through a stronger economy

Regional economic development, community resilience and service delivery are mandated as part of the core functions of the Cross-Border Commissioner. As such, significant resources and effort has been provided by the OCBC on delivering outcomes related to the delivery of a stronger regional economy, including advocating for specific outcomes (such as access to Cost-Of-Living Rebates, Sporting Vouchers for Children), key economic drivers (such as organising the *Tourism and Transport Forum*) and

delivering key strategic priorities (such as service mapping in the Goondiwindi region).

**>>> Community Objective:
A plan for Queensland's
future**

The Cross-Border Commissioner is working with the Queensland and New South Wales Government's to identify key *Priority Focus Areas* to implement the *Memorandum of Understanding for Cross-Border Collaboration*.

Compliance with ethics requirements

The OCBC recognises the importance of the ethics principles contained in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* and builds and maintains a strong and accountable workforce through provision of mandated training to all staff via DPC's online learning management system.

Code of conduct and good decision training forms an integral component of the OCBC new starter onboarding programs and must be completed by all employees.

Compliance with *Human Rights Act*

The OCBC meets all mandatory obligations of the *Human Rights Act 2019*. The OCBC will continue to monitor outcomes and policy initiatives to ensure compliance with the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

The OCBC has not received a complaint in relation to activities undertaken by the OCBC in the 2024-2025 financial year.

Information systems and recordkeeping

The *Public Records Act 2002* mandates that the OCBC captures, creates, manages, and disposes of public records in accordance with Queensland State Archives-approved disposal authorisations. Due to outcomes of the MOG changes, from March 2025, the OCBC has transitioned and adopted information systems, recordkeeping policies and requirements in line with DPC.

Financial statement

Department of the Premier and Cabinet²³⁴			
Statement of Comprehensive Income Office of the Cross Border Commissioner for the year ended 30 June 2025			
	Total	Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers	Department of the Premier and Cabinet
	2025	2025	2025
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Income			
Appropriation revenue	822	171	651
User charges and fees	-	-	-
Grants and other contributions	-	-	-
Other revenue	-	-	-
Total Revenue	822	171	651
Expenses			
Employee expenses	541	121	420
Supplies and services	251	50	201
Grants and subsidies	30	-	30
Depreciation and amortisation	-	-	-
Other expenses	-	-	-
Total Expenses	822	171	651
Total Comprehensive Income	-	-	-

² This reporting period for the financial statement is 1 September 2024 to 30 June 2025. No comparative data exists for the OCBC as it is in its first year of operation.

³ This financial statement for the OCBC and associated notes has not been audited. Full audited statements will be available in the DPC 2024-25 Annual Report, with OCBC financials included as part of the Government Decision Support Output, along with other areas of DPC.

⁴ As part of MoG changes post new incoming government, OCBC transferred from the now Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (DLGWV) to DPC from 1 November 2024. Actuals of \$171,000 (rounded) are reported in DLGWV between 1 September 2024 to 31 October 2024 with the balance of \$651,000 actuals reported in DPC 1 November 2024 to 30 June 2025. For the purposes of this financial statement, an accumulative actual spend across both Departments have been reported for completeness.

Looking ahead

The financial year ahead presents an opportunity for the OCBC to consolidate and build upon the foundations established in its inaugural year. In addition to continuing to engage with border communities, the Cross-Border Commissioner will be focusing attention on delivering several key strategic priorities in the forthcoming year, including:

- Implementing the Queensland and New South Wales Governments' *Memorandum of Understanding for Cross-Border Collaboration* by developing a set of agreed *Priority Focus Areas*. These *Priority Focus Areas* will enable the Queensland and New South Wales Cross-Border Commissioners to collaborate with relevant government agencies and community stakeholders on both sides of the border in developing strategic cross-border initiatives.
- Working with the Office of Liquor and Gaming, the Mount Isa Liquor Accord and community stakeholders, to address social concerns relating to the overconsumption of alcohol and recognition of inter-jurisdictional alcohol banning notices.
- Funding the Goondiwindi Regional Council to undertake a social mapping exercise to identify the extent of government (Federal, State and Local Government) and not-for-profit community services available within the Goondiwindi local government area, with a particular focus on social services for youth and vulnerable children.
- Advocating for improved recognition of skills and cross-border access to educational resources, with a particular focus on allowing students to access their closest TAFE institution regardless of what jurisdiction they reside in.
- Continuing to collaborate with relevant state and local government authorities to enhance cross-border coordination during emergencies and natural disasters.
- Continuing to work with relevant Queensland Government agencies and the Queensland Police Service to improve cross-border justice outcomes in line with the Queensland Government's *Making Queensland Safer* reforms.
- Implementing the outcomes of the *Gold Coast Tourism and Transport Forum*, including advocating for improved transport solutions on the Gold Coast, Tweed Heads and

Northern New South Wales border areas, along with the establishment of the Cross-Border Advisory Committee.

- Working with relevant authorities, government agencies and local governments to identify opportunities to improve telecommunication outcomes in border communities.

Attachment A: Letter of compliance

Our ref: DOC/25/176280



Office of the
**Queensland Cross-Border
Commissioner**

The Honourable David Crisafulli
Premier and Minister for Veterans
PO Box 15185
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Premier

I am pleased to submit for presentation to the Parliament, the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner Annual Report 2024-2025.

I certify that this Annual Report complies with requirements outlined in the *Cross-Border Commissioner Act 2024*. Further, and in compliance with section 24 of the *Cross-Border Commissioner Act 2024*, I remind you as the Minister responsible for the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner, you must table a copy of this report in the Legislative Assembly within 14 sitting days.

I thank you for the opportunity to present the Annual Report and the assistance that you have provided to my Office during the 2024-2025 financial year. I look forward to working closely with your government in addressing issues occurring in border communities over the forthcoming financial year.

Yours sincerely

Ian Leavers APM
Queensland Cross-Border Commissioner

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Attachment B: Compliance checklist

Summary of Requirement		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Letter of compliance	A letter of compliance from the accountable officer or statutory body to the relevant Minister/s	ARRs – section 7	Attachment B
Accessibility	Table of contents	ARRs – section 9.1	Page 3
	Glossary		Page 4
	Public availability	ARRs – section 9.2	The Annual Report will be made available on the Cross-Border Commissioner website.
	Interpreter service statement	<i>Queensland Government Language Services Policy</i> ARRs – section 9.3	Page 2
	Copyright notice	<i>Copyright Act 1968</i> ARRs – section 9.4	Page 2
	Information Licensing	<i>QGEA – Information Licensing</i> ARRs – section 9.5	Page 2
General information	Introductory Information	ARRs – section 10	Page 5 - 7
Non-financial performance	Government's objectives for the community and whole-of-government plans/specific initiatives	ARRs – section 11.1	Page 11
	Agency objectives and performance indicators	ARRs – section 11.2	Page 9
	Agency service areas and service standards	ARRs – section 11.3	Not Applicable - Incorporated within the DPC Annual Report.
Financial performance	Summary of financial performance	ARRs – section 12.1	Page 13

ARRs - Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies

Summary of Requirement (cont.)		Basis for requirement	Annual report reference
Governance management and structure	Organisational structure	ARRs – section 13.1	Page 8
	Executive management	ARRs – section 13.2	Not applicable
	Government bodies (statutory bodies and other entities)	ARRs – section 13.3	Not applicable
	Public Sector Ethics	<i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> ARRs – section 13.4	Page 12
	Human Rights	<i>Human Rights Act 2019</i> ARRs – section 13.5	Page 12
	Queensland public service values	ARRs – section 13.6	Not Applicable - Incorporated within the DPC Annual Report.
Governance – risk management and accountability	Risk management, audit committee, internal audit, external scrutiny, information security attestation	ARRs – section 14.1 ARRs – section 14.2 ARRs – section 14.3 ARRs – section 14.4 ARRs – section 14.6	Not Applicable - Incorporated within the DPC Annual Report.
	Information systems and recordkeeping	ARRs – section 14.5	Page 12
Governance – human resources	Strategic workforce planning and performance	<i>Directive No.04/18 Early Retirement, Redundancy and Retrenchment</i> ARRs – section 15.2	Not Applicable - Incorporated within the DPC Annual Report.
	Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment	ARRs – section 16	
Open Data	Statement advising publication of information,	ARRs – section 16	Page 7
	Consultation, overseas travel, Queensland language services policy	ARRs – section 31.1 ARRs – section 31.2 ARRs – section 31.3	Not Applicable - Incorporated within the DPC Annual Report
	Charter of Victims' Rights	VCSVRB Act 2024 ARRs – section 31.4	
Financial statements	Certification of financial statements	<i>Financial Accountability Act 2009</i>	Not Applicable - Incorporated within the DPC Annual Report.
	Independent Auditor's Report		

ARRs - Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies

