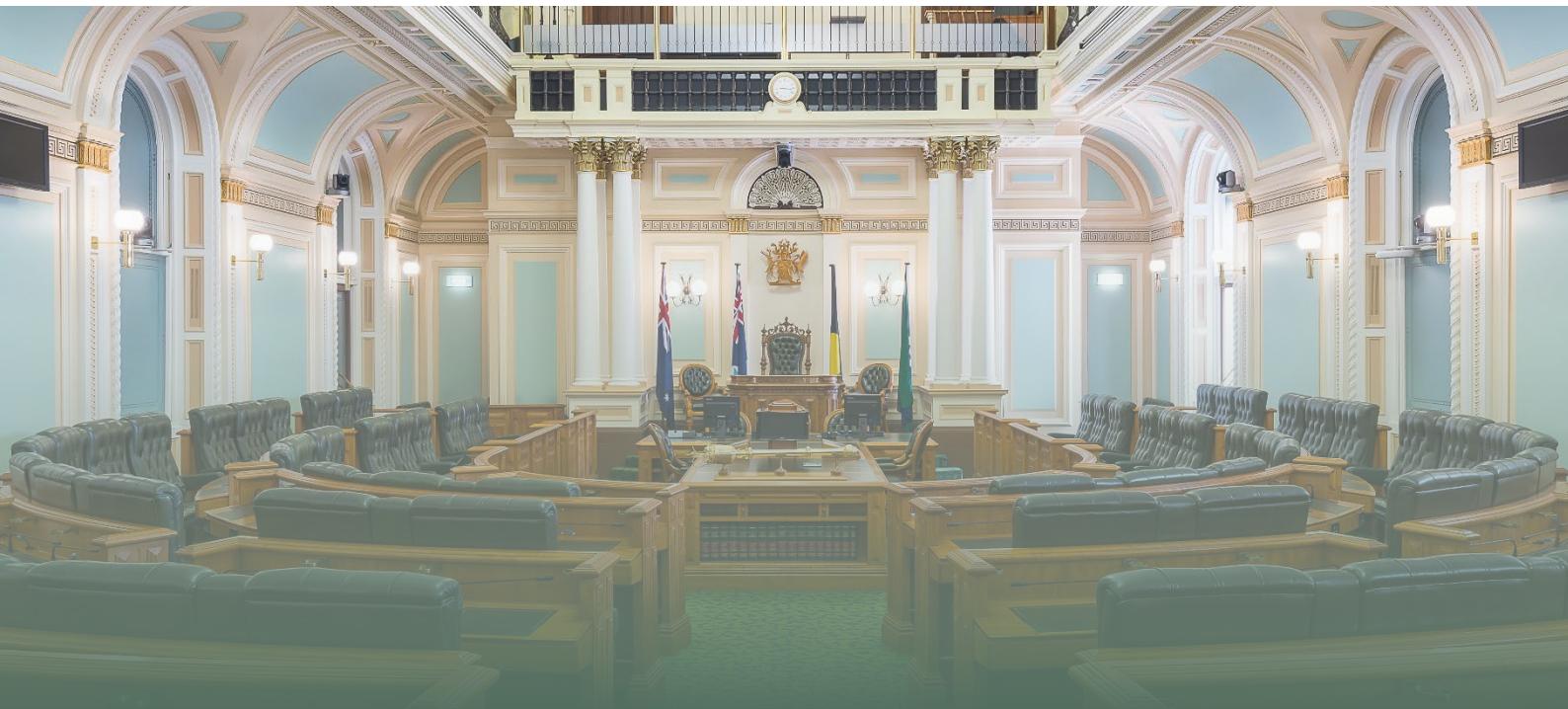




QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT **COMMITTEES**

Cross-Border Commissioner Annual Report 2024-25

Governance, Energy and Finance Committee



Report No. 19

58th Parliament, February 2026

Governance, Energy and Finance 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 Cross-Border Commissioner, staff from the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

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Chair's Foreword

The Governance, Energy and Finance Committee has oversight responsibility for the Cross-Border Commissioner under Schedule 6 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly and is responsible for considering the entity's annual report under section 94 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*.

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the Cross-Border Commissioner's annual report for the 2024-25 financial year (Annual Report).

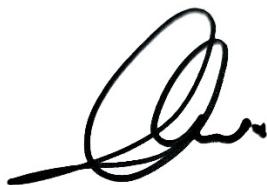
The committee reviewed the Annual Report and held a public briefing with representatives of the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner on 29 October 2025. The committee also held a public briefing with representatives from the Office earlier in the year regarding its establishment and work up to March 2025.

On behalf of the committee, I congratulate Mr Bob Gee APM on his appointment as the Cross-Border Commissioner from January 2026.

I also thank the Cross-Border Commissioner and staff from the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner and Department of Premier and Cabinet for assisting the committee with fulfilling its oversight responsibilities as considered in this report. I also thank the Parliamentary Service staff.

Finally, I note with sadness the sudden passing of Queensland's inaugural Cross-Border Commissioner, Mr Ian Leavers APM, in November 2025. Mr Leavers will be remembered as a diligent advocate for cross-border communities across Queensland whose achievements in this role were greatly appreciated by this committee and the residents of all the communities he served.

I commend this report to the House.



Michael Crandon MP

Chair

Executive Summary

This report presents the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee's (committee's) examination of the Cross-Border Commissioner's annual report for the 2024-25 financial year (Annual Report).

The Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner works to improve cross-border collaboration between government agencies and address issues affecting communities along Queensland's borders. The committee is responsible for oversight of the Cross-Border Commissioner.

The Annual Report provides details of the Cross-Border Commissioner's establishment, governance arrangements, performance, financial position and future plans. It details, in 2024-25, the work undertaken by the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner, spanning a wide range of policy areas, including youth crime; access to education and health services; transport infrastructure and planning; and disaster management and emergency response.

Ian Leavers APM was appointed as the inaugural Cross-Border Commissioner in August 2024. Mr Leavers passed away unexpectedly in November 2025. On 23 January 2026, Bob Gee APM was appointed as the new Cross-Border Commissioner.

The committee is satisfied that the Annual Report complies with the relevant legislative requirements and standards.

The committee made one recommendation, found at page v of this report, that the Legislative Assembly notes the contents of this report.

Recommendation

Recommendation 1 3

The committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly notes the contents of this report.

1. Introduction

This report presents the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee's (committee's) examination of the Cross-Border Commissioner's annual report for the 2024-25 financial year (Annual Report).

1.1. Overview of the Cross-Border Commissioner

The Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner was established in 2024.¹ The Cross-Border Commissioner is supported by a small team currently comprising two full time staff.²

What is a cross-border community?

The *Cross-Border Commissioner Act 2024* (CBC Act) defines cross-border communities to include any local government area that is adjacent to the border between Queensland and another state.³ This captures twelve local governments along Queensland's borders with New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory.⁴

The purpose of 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.⁵

The inaugural Cross-Border Commissioner, Ian Leavers APM, explained the need for this role as set out below.

“

Queensland border regions are vibrant, diverse and integral to the state's social and economic identity... However, living and working in a border region often comes with complexities and unique challenges that other locations in Queensland may not experience. While rules, regulations, infrastructure and services may change from one state to the next, the sense of kinship between one community and its neighbouring border community that happens to lie across a state border does not change.

Ian Leavers APM, Cross-Border Commissioner

29 October 2025, Public Briefing⁶

¹ *Cross-Border Commissioner Act 2024* (CBC Act), s 4.

² Office of the Cross Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, p 6.

³ CBC Act, s 3.

⁴ Office of the Cross Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, p 7.

⁵ Office of the Cross Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, p 5; CBC Act, s 2.

⁶ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 29 October 2025, p 1.

1.1.1. Commissioner

Ian Leavers APM was appointed as the inaugural Cross-Border Commissioner in August 2024. Mr Leavers passed away unexpectedly in November 2025.

Committee comment



The committee notes with sadness the passing of Ian Leavers APM, Queensland's first Cross-Border Commissioner. Mr Leavers will be remembered for his efforts to support cross-border communities across Queensland. The committee greatly appreciated hearing from Mr Leavers at its public briefing in October 2025 regarding the important work conducted by the office since its establishment.

On 23 January 2026, Bob Gee APM was appointed as the new Cross-Border Commissioner.⁷

1.2. Role of the committee

The committee was established by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 28 November 2024 as a portfolio committee.⁸

The committee's portfolio areas of responsibility include:⁹

Premier and Cabinet,
Veterans

Treasury, Energy and
Home Ownership

Finance, Trade,
Employment and
Training

The committee is responsible for oversight of the Cross-Border Commissioner.¹⁰ This responsibility includes examining their annual report and, if appropriate, commenting on any aspect of the report.¹¹

1.3. Inquiry process

The Annual Report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 26 September 2025 by the Hon David Crisafulli MP, Premier and Minister for Veterans.

The Cross-Border Commissioner and an officer from the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner provided the committee with a public briefing on the Annual Report on 29 October 2025. The Commissioner also provided an earlier public briefing on 13 March 2025, regarding the establishment of the office and its work up until that date.

⁷ Premier and Minister for Veterans, *Permanent Cross-Border Commissioner appointed* (media statement), 23 January 2026.

⁸ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, s 88; Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, Standing Order (SO) 194.

⁹ Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, SO 194, sch 6.

¹⁰ Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, sch 6.

¹¹ Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly, SO 194A.

Details of the witnesses who appeared at both briefings are provided at Appendix A. Transcripts of both briefings are available on the committee's webpage.

1.4. Legislative compliance

The committee's deliberations included assessing whether the Annual Report complies with the requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019, and the annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies.

Committee comment



The committee is satisfied that the Annual Report complies with the relevant reporting requirements for Queensland Government agencies.



Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly notes the contents of this report.

2. Examination of Annual Report

The Annual Report provides details of the Cross-Border Commissioner's establishment, governance arrangements, performance, financial position and future plans. Each of those issues is considered below.

2.1. Establishment

One of the most important tasks undertaken by the Cross-Border Commissioner in 2024-25 was the establishment and activation of the office. According to the Annual Report, this involved:

- recruiting staff, sourcing office locations, developing communication and branding platforms, and developing a consultation plan to commence community consultation
- undertaking a comprehensive listening and consultation tour of border communities.¹²

At the public briefing on 29 October 2025, the Cross-Border Commissioner explained the importance of the initial consultation process in shaping his work. This process revealed 'how broad and diverse the challenges facing our border communities truly are' and allowed the office to 'identify opportunities and to prioritise key initiatives'.¹³

¹² Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, p 6.

¹³ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 29 October 2025, p 2.

2.2. Governance

2.2.1. Staffing

The Annual Report notes that the Cross-Border Commissioner is supported by a small team comprising two full-time staff.¹⁴

The Cross-Border Commissioner advised the committee that the office is in the process of preparing a budget proposal for 2026-27 and may request additional resources for the employment of another project officer to support its work.¹⁵

2.2.2. Machinery-of-government changes

The Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner was affected by machinery-of-government changes that followed the 2024 election.¹⁶ The inaugural Cross-Border Commissioner explained the nature of these changes as follows:¹⁷

Initially, the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner was established with the ministerial scope under the then Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water, with my office transitioning over to DPC [Department of the Premier and Cabinet] during the machinery of government changes upon the formation of the new government. I believe this machinery of government change reflects the importance of the role of the Cross-Border Commissioner and the commitment of the new government to address concerns facing cross-border communities in Queensland.

2.3. Performance

The Annual Report details a variety of activities that the Cross-Border Commissioner undertook in 2024-25 to fulfil their objectives. These activities included:

- frequent and consistent visits to cross-border communities, on average more than one per fortnight
- establishing working relationships with key stakeholders, including government agencies and local governments
- engaging with counterparts in other jurisdictions, most notably the New South Wales and South Australian Cross-Border Commissioners
- advocating for, and providing assistance to, Local Disaster Management Groups in cross-border communities during the Cyclone Alfred weather event in March 2025
- responding to specific issues raised by people living in cross-border communities.¹⁸

Appearing before the committee, the inaugural Cross-Border Commissioner stressed the importance of being visible to communities. He explained:¹⁹

¹⁴ Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, p 8.

¹⁵ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 29 October 2025, p 5.

¹⁶ Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, p 8.

¹⁷ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 13 March 2025, p 2.

¹⁸ Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, pp 9-11.

¹⁹ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 13 March 2025, p 3.

... a large function of my role is to be visible in these border communities. I have made a conscious effort to attend community events and meetings in Mingoola, Mount Isa, Goondiwindi, Texas, Roma, Tenterfield and Liston, and there are future communities [sic] events planned in Mungindi and Thargomindah. I have also regularly attended Border Regional Organisation of Councils meetings, which is an advocacy body established by 12 local government authorities which operate along the south-western Queensland border.

The activities detailed in the Annual Report contributed to several tangible outcomes for cross-border communities in 2024-25, including:

- the provision of funding, by the Department of Youth Justice and Victim Support, to establish a dedicated community support officer for the Goondiwindi area
- ensuring people in cross-border communities could access cost-of-living electricity rebates
- improved access to sporting and cultural programs for children on both sides of the Queensland and New South Wales border.²⁰

The Cross-Border Commissioner provided more detail about the impact of his work at the public briefing on 29 October 2025. For example, he explained how he intervened to ensure that people living in the Goondiwindi area received the \$1,000 electricity rebate available in Queensland – a sizeable sum that some residents had not initially received:²¹

Working with the people and the Goondiwindi Regional Council, I put it out through their networks to get me the direct details of anyone who had any concerns. I had copies of the invoices and I was able to provide that to the relevant department in Queensland and those people subsequently got the thousand dollar rebate.

2.4. Financial position

The expenses associated with the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner are funded by appropriation revenue from the relevant government department.

In 2024-25, the office received a total of \$822,000. This comprised \$651,000 from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and (prior to machinery-of-government changes) \$171,000 from the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers.²²

The majority of expenses (\$541,000) incurred by the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner were employee expenses.²³ At the public briefing on 29 October 2025, the Commissioner explained that a small amount of grant funding (\$30,000) was provided to Goondiwindi Regional Council in 2024-25 to engage an external provider to undertake a service mapping exercise.²⁴ He explained his support for that initiative as follows:²⁵

²⁰ Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, p 10.

²¹ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 29 October 2025, p 3.

²² Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, p 14.

²³ Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, p 14.

²⁴ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 29 October 2025, p 8.

²⁵ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 29 October 2025, p 7.

I want to look at all of the funds that are coming in, where the services are going and what outcomes are being delivered. I believe there is probably some waste and I would like to see that the outcomes are reported to those people who get the money, because I believe that people are being socially disadvantaged through the waste. I think it needs to be tracked better if we are to make any meaningful change as we go into the future.

2.5. Future plans

The Annual Report identifies several priorities of the Cross-Border Commissioner:

- supporting implementation of the Queensland and New South Wales Governments' Memorandum of Understanding for Cross-Border Collaboration
- working with stakeholders to address issues relating to the overconsumption of alcohol in the state's northwest, including possible recognition of inter-jurisdictional alcohol banning notices
- advocating for improved recognition of skills and cross-border access to education resources, with a particular focus on allowing students to access their closest TAFE
- collaborating with relevant state and local government authorities to enhance cross-border coordination during emergencies and natural disasters
- supporting the implementation of outcomes of the Gold Coast Tourism and Transport Forum.²⁶

At the public briefing, the inaugural Cross-Border Commissioner explained why he had identified these issues as strategic priorities. For example, he identified instances of substandard transport infrastructure in and around the Gold Coast area which could pose potential dangers to residents in the event of a disaster or emergency.²⁷

Committee comment



The Cross-Border Commissioner provides vital assistance to Queensland's border communities. The committee was pleased to hear about the work undertaken by the inaugural Cross-Border Commissioner to establish the office and address the unique needs of people living near Queensland's borders.

The committee thanks the Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner for their diligent work throughout 2024-25.

The committee also notes the appointment of Bob Gee APM as the new Cross-Border Commissioner in January 2026. The committee looks forward to engaging with the new Commissioner in the future.

²⁶ Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner, *Annual report 2024-25*, pp 15-16.

²⁷ Public briefing transcript, Brisbane, 29 October 2025, p 6.

Appendix A – Public Briefings, Brisbane

Public Briefing, 13 March 2025

Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner

Ian Leavers APM	Cross-Border Commissioner
Ross Kirkman	Principal Project Officer

Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Filly Morgan	Associate Director-General, Governance and Engagement
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Public Briefing, 29 October 2025

Office of the Cross-Border Commissioner

Ian Leavers APM	Cross-Border Commissioner
Ross Kirkman	Principal Project Officer