

2015-16 Budget Estimates

Report No. 7, 55th Parliament
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
September 2015

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

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Acknowledgements

The committee acknowledges the assistance provided by the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the Department of State Development and the Department of Natural Resources and Mines during the course of the committee's inquiry.

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Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resource Committee's examination of the Budget Estimates for the 2015-16 financial year.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade, and the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines and their departmental officers for their cooperation throughout the process.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee and the secretariat.

I commend the report to the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Pearce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jim Pearce MP

Chair

September 2015

1. Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee (the committee) was established by the Legislative Assembly on 27 March 2015 and consists of government and non-government members.

The committee's areas of portfolio responsibility are:

- Transport, Infrastructure, Local Government, Planning and Trade, and
- State Development, Natural Resources and Mines.¹

1.2 The referral and inquiry process

On 17 July 2015, the Appropriation Bill 2015 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility were referred to the committee for investigation and report.

On 19 August 2015, the committee held a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade, and the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. A transcript of proceedings is available from the committee's website.

The committee considered the estimates referred to it by using information contained in budget papers, answers to pre-hearing questions on notice, evidence taken at the hearing, and answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing.

Prior to the public hearing, the committee provided the Deputy Premier and the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines with 20 questions on notice. Responses to all of the committee's questions were received.

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

1.3 Other members' participation

The committee granted leave to other Members to participate in its hearing. The following Members participated in the hearing:

- Mr Joe Kelly MP, Member for Greenslopes
- Mr Jim Madden MP, Member for Ipswich West
- Mr Scott Emerson MP, Member for Indooroopilly
- Ms Fiona Simpson MP, Member for Maroochydore
- Mr Tim Nicholls MP, Member for Clayfield, and
- Mr Andrew Cripps MP, Member for Hinchinbrook.

¹ Schedule 6 of the *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly*, effective from 31 August 2004 (amended 17 July 2015).

2. Recommendation

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

Recommendation

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2015 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

3. Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade

The agencies that are the responsibility of the Deputy Premier and Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade (Deputy Premier) include the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning.²

The Deputy Premier's primary ministerial responsibilities in relation to Transport and Main Roads include: air services, busways, passenger transport, railways, and transport infrastructure.³

3.1 Department of Transport and Main Roads

The Department of Transport and Main Roads has the following service areas:

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

The following table compares the appropriations (budget) for the department for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

| Department | Budget 2014-15 \$'000 | Est. Actual 2014-15 \$'000 | Vote 2015-16 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | | |
| departmental services | 4,619,043 | 4,527,872 | 4,601,502 |
| equity adjustment | 1,683,438 | 1,031,163 | 1,202,977 |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | .. | .. | 58,750 |
| Vote | 6,302,481 | 5,559,035 | 5,863,229 |

Source: Appropriation Bill 2015, Schedule 2, p 11.

3.1.1 Key budget initiatives

Key programs continuing in 2015-16 include:

- \$8.5 billion Australian and Queensland Government funded program to fix the Bruce Highway over 10 years (2013-14 to 2022-23)
- \$635 million Australian and Queensland Government funded Warrego Highway Upgrade Program over five years (2014-15 to 2018-19)

² The Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports is also responsible for the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The Minister for Main Roads is responsible for RoadTek and the Gold Coast Waterways Authority.

³ Queensland Government, Government Responsibilities, '[Administrative Arrangements Order \(No. 2\) 2015](#)', p 3.

- \$260.5 million Australian and Queensland Government funded Cape York Region Package over five years (2014-15 to 2018-19), and
- \$104.8 million Australian, Queensland and Local Government funded Bridges Renewal Program over four years (2014-15 to 2017-18).⁴

3.1.2 Issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee at the public hearing included:

- cost of air travel in remote communities in Far North Queensland
- Fair Review Taskforce
- assumptions in the budget regarding fair increases
- Uber ride share operations in Queensland
- affordable passenger transport services in rural and remote communities
- rail transport in North Queensland
- reform of public transport fares in South-East Queensland
- Moreton Bay Rail Link project
- 'nine and free' public transport trips
- on-time running figures and reliability of trains
- new generation rolling stock project
- extra capacity on Brisbane's rail network
- Gold Coast light rail
- customer satisfaction surveys
- capital infrastructure spending for Transport and Main Roads
- real-time information for efficiency and reliability assessment
- Tertiary Transport Concession Card
- long-term transport strategy
- cycling policy
- delivery of rail freight and livestock services in the regions
- Gold Coast Light Rail patronage, and
- 10-year plan for freight in Queensland.

3.2 Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning

The Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning has the following service areas:

- Capacity Building
- Community Recovery and Resilience
- Governance and Statutory Services

⁴ Queensland Budget 2015-16, Department of Transport and Main Roads, *Service Delivery Statements*, p 3.

- Local Government and Community Funding
- Better Planning for Queensland, and
- Leading Infrastructure Policy, Planning and Assessment for Queensland.⁵

The following table compares the appropriations (budget) for the department for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

| Department | Budget 2014-15 \$'000 | Est. Actual 2014-15 \$'000 | Vote 2015-16 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | | |
| departmental services | 175,864 | 176,174 | 302,837 |
| equity adjustment | 7,285 | 19,683 | 36,550 |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | 2,297,172 | 1,474,442 | 1,151,569 |
| Vote | 2,480,321 | 1,670,299 | 1,490,956 |

Source: Appropriation Bill 2015, Schedule 2, p 9.

3.2.1 Key budget initiatives

The department's key priorities and initiatives for 2015-16 are to:

- finalise the establishment of Building Queensland as a new and rigorous infrastructure advisor to government
- develop and deliver a state infrastructure plan, drive economic growth through innovative property and infrastructure partnerships and facilitate priority development infrastructure
- deliver a better planning system that supports effective public participation, whilst providing for efficient and consistent decision making that instils investment and community confidence
- help communities to prepare for natural disasters and continue implementation and management of the Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience
- develop and administer the Community Resilience Fund to build resilient infrastructure and a suite of local government funding programs, and
- support the Queensland Local Government Grants Commission in its administration of the financial assistance grant arrangements.⁶

The department's capital program primarily relates to capital works undertaken under the Indigenous State Infrastructure Program (ISIP). The ISIP improves environmental health conditions for people living in major communities in Indigenous council areas by providing safe and secure drinking water, safe sewerage systems, safe solid waste disposal arrangements, reductions in vector

⁵ Queensland Budget 2015-16, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, *Service Delivery Statements*, p 5. Prior to the machinery-of-government changes on 1 March 2015, the department was the Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience.

⁶ Queensland Budget 2015-16, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, *Service Delivery Statements*, p 3.

environments (such as mosquitoes) and dust reduction through sealed roads. In 2015-16, the total estimated capital expenditure program for the ISIP is \$7.1 million.⁷

3.2.2 Agencies within the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning

Economic Development Queensland

Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) is a commercialised business unit of the department. EDQ works with local governments, industry and other stakeholders in relation to planning, development and delivery of property and infrastructure projects.

EDQ's budget highlights for 2015-16 include:

- development of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games athletes' village including completion of a development Management Agreement for the first Health and Knowledge development
- commencement of works within the Yeerongpilly transit-orientated development, Toondah Harbour priority development area (PDA), and Northshore Civic Park, and complete significant upgrades to roads and public realm within Northshore Hamilton and Yeerongpilly
- realising sales of up to \$44 million in industrial land, including the Sunshine Coast Industrial Park and Gladstone State Development Areas, and procure \$14 million in development works across a number of industrial estates, and
- investigating the supply of industrial land for regional Queensland to identify and assess future economic development and catalyst infrastructure needs.⁸

Queensland Reconstruction Authority

The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) is a statutory body established under the *Queensland Reconstruction Authority Act 2011*. QRA manages and coordinates the government's restoration of communities and infrastructure reconstruction within disaster-affected communities.

The key priorities for QRA in 2015-16 include:

- ensuring the ongoing delivery of state-wide Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) reconstruction works, and reporting on their progress
- managing close-out, acquittal and Australian Government reimbursement processes related to Queensland's natural disaster events for the relevant financial year/s
- continuing damage assessment operations to capture and monitor progress of reconstruction in natural disaster-affected areas across the state, and
- continuing to operate a Regional Liaison Officer network to engage and consult with reconstruction delivery agents across the state, providing principal points of contact for each effected region.⁹

⁷ Queensland Budget 2015-16, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, *Service Delivery Statements*, pp 3-4.

⁸ Queensland Budget 2015-16, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, *Service Delivery Statements*, p 34.

⁹ Queensland Budget 2015-16, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, *Service Delivery Statements*, pp 44-45.

South Bank Corporation

The South Bank Corporation (SBC) is a statutory authority established under the *South Bank Corporation Act 1989*.

SBC has responsibility for, amongst other matters:

- administering the planning instrument for the Corporation area and planning assessment for the Southpoint development
- the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre
- the Parklands carpark
- retail and short-term commercial leasing and retail marketing, and
- road and footpath ownership and management.¹⁰

Trade and Investment Queensland

Trade and Investment Queensland (TIQ) is a statutory body with the following functions:

- facilitating, promoting, identifying, attracting and developing trade and investment opportunities
- conducting research into, and analysing, trade and investment opportunities, and
- partnering with governments, industry organisations and international networks to promote Queensland business and international trade and investment opportunities.¹¹

3.2.3 Issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee at the public hearing included:

- development and delivery of a state infrastructure plan
- Australian Government infrastructure funding
- Indigenous State Infrastructure Program
- RACQ 'Get Ready' Program
- development of North Australia and delivery of infrastructure
- local business tender opportunities for government procurement
- approach to sustainable funding and investment strategies for North Queensland
- assistance for communities to prepare for natural disasters
- funding for the 'GraffitiSTOP' program
- Growing Central Queensland initiative
- review of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority
- regulatory framework for local governments to manage their interests
- cost impacts of legislation on local governments

¹⁰ Queensland Budget 2015-16, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, *Service Delivery Statements*, p 54.

¹¹ Queensland Budget 2015-16, Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, *Service Delivery Statements*, p 61.

- administration of NDRRA funding
- international education and training export sector
- promotion of investment opportunities through Trade and Investment Queensland
- infrastructure investment strategy and funding models
- activities undertaken by EDQ
- local government capacity building
- 'Better Planning for Queensland' and outcomes of planning summit
- electronic development application lodgement system
- consultation on proposed changes to planning legislation
- Cedar Woods development
- infrastructure agreements
- use of call-in powers to review a decision or approve a plan
- Northshore Hamilton priority development area
- Federal Government's proposed changes to the NDRRA funding arrangements
- establishment of Building Queensland
- Northern Australian Infrastructure Facility
- cost benefit analysis of stage 2 of the Gold Coast Light Rail
- Cross River Rail
- staffing of the department
- preparation for local government elections, and
- category D NDRRA funding following Tropical Cyclone Marcia.

4. Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines

The agencies that are the responsibility of the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines include the Department of State Development and the Department of Natural Resource and Mines.

4.1 Department of State Development

The Department of State Development has the following service areas:

- Driving Business Development, Economic Growth and Job Creation, and
- Assessing, Approving, Facilitating and Delivering Major Projects.

The following table compares the appropriations (budget) for the department for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

| Department | Budget 2014-15 \$'000 | Est. Actual 2014-15 \$'000 | Vote 2015-16 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | | |
| departmental services | 347,814 | 176,064 | 394,882 |
| equity adjustment | (9,716) | (48,132) | (47,009) |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | 29,428 | 27,433 | 2,500 |
| Vote | 367,526 | 155,365 | 350,373 |

Source: Appropriation Bill 2015, Schedule 2, p 10.

4.1.1 Key budget initiatives

The department's future priorities include:

- facilitating new investment and delivering the capital program to provide increased job opportunities
- focussing Queensland's resources on global supply chains and regional strategies to promote competitiveness and growth
- increasing private capital expenditure in Queensland through a central point of contact and whole-of-government case management to create jobs
- adding value to government land by minimising risk to investment through uplift opportunities (such as changes to land tenure) to stimulate economic development and increase opportunities for job creation, and
- increasing economic development opportunities on government land by creating mixed use facilities on existing hubs.¹²

¹² Queensland Budget 2015-16, Department of State Development, *Service Delivery Statements*, p 2.

4.1.2 Issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee at the public hearing included:

- service area objective to boost business development
- service area objective to assess, facilitate and deliver major projects
- discontinued measures associated with statutory decisions made by the Coordinator-General
- Abbot Point Growth Gateway Project
- rights of landholders to object to resource development
- port-related commitments in the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan
- North Galilee Basin project and rail system
- Queensland and Australian Governments' assessment bilateral agreement
- Three Rivers Irrigation Project
- Integrated Food and Energy Developments project and memorandum of understanding
- Queen's Wharf Project
- Surat Basin Rail Project
- Nathan Dam and pipelines coordinated project
- Aurukun resource community
- amendment of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*
- economic growth of Gladstone Port and protection of the Great Barrier Reef
- Red Hill mining project
- social impact assessments
- Port of Cairns
- Queensland Charter for Local Content
- ASF Consortium Gold Coast integrated resort development
- proposed Aquis project in Cairns
- redevelopment of Great Keppel Island Resort
- project referrals to Building Queensland
- assessment of GVK Hancock rail corridor in the Galilee Basin
- Etheridge Integrated Agricultural Project, and
- promotion of regional integrated resort developments.

4.2 Department of Natural Resources and Mines

The Department of Natural Resources and Mines has the following service areas:

- Land and Water Services, and
- Mining Services.

The following table compares the appropriations (budget) for the department for 2014-15 and 2015-16.

| Department | Budget 2014-15 \$'000 | Est. Actual 2014-15 \$'000 | Vote 2015-16 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | | |
| departmental services | 333,967 | 320,126 | 321,291 |
| equity adjustment | 4,572 | 7,363 | 10,051 |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | 1,100 | 1,100 | 1,100 |
| Vote | 339,639 | 328,589 | 332,442 |

Source: Appropriation Bill 2015, Schedule 2, p 9.

4.2.1 Key budget initiatives

The department's priorities in 2015-16 include:

- working cooperatively and collaboratively with other Queensland Government line agencies in delivering integrated services and outcomes for the department's customers and stakeholders
- implementing changes to the vegetation management framework to appropriately manage and minimise the clearing of vegetation
- developing the legislative framework that will provide for the sustainable management of Queensland's water resources
- progressing the restoration of community rights to object to mining projects while maximising simplicity and efficiency of process for all stakeholders, and including agricultural infrastructure within the definition of restricted land
- continuing to progress the high rate of resolution of native title claims by consent and ensuring the security of rights granted in natural resources
- expanding and increasing online customer service options
- implementing an indigenous land strategy that delivers more flexible tenure arrangements and the ability for indigenous communities to achieve homeownership
- providing statutory valuations to 16 indigenous local government areas by 30 June 2016 in accordance with the *Land Valuation Act 2010*
- ensuring an effective contemporary regulatory framework for safety and health in the resources sector
- providing mine safety and health services
- scrutinising the approval processes for the New Acland Mine Stage 3 project, and

- negotiating and implementing a Memorandum of Understanding with the South Australian Government to enhance interjurisdictional cooperation and improve outcomes for companies operating across the State border in the Cooper Basin.¹³

4.2.2 Issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee at the public hearing included:

- service area highlights for Land and Water Services
- uranium policy
- review of the New Acland mine stage 3 project approval
- front-line services and development of 'MyMinesOnline'
- initiatives to increase agricultural production and water resource plans
- Aurukun bauxite mine
- Burdekin Basin water resource plan
- Southern Atherton Tablelands Development Scheme
- qualifications and competencies for appointments as a mine inspector and a industry safety and health representative
- national harmonisation mine safety regulatory impact statement
- review of the vegetation management framework
- management of water resources
- allocation of funding for natural disaster relief for Rockhampton and Fitzroy
- gas reservation policy and investment in onshore oil and natural gas
- unallocated water in the Gulf water catchment area
- vegetation management community round table
- Great Artesian Basin Sustainability Initiative
- drought support measures in affected communities
- collaborative drilling initiative
- stock route network and revenue
- service measures for mining services
- release of land for exploration in the Cooper Basin
- funding for the Queensland natural resource management program and schedule of projects and initiatives, and
- establishment of resources ministerial round table and community ministerial round table.

¹³ Queensland Budget 2015-16, Department of Natural Resources and Mines, *Service Delivery Statements*, pp 2-3.

5. Statement of reservation



Michael Hart MP State Member for Burleigh

9 September 2015

Mr Jim Pearce
 Chairperson
 Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
 Parliament House
 George Street
 Brisbane Qld 4000

Mr Pearce

RE: - Consideration of 2015/2016 portfolio budget estimates

We wish to notify the Committee of our reservations about aspects of the aforementioned of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee.

Transport

The LNP Opposition notes the confusion regarding the rate of the public transport fare increase next year. During estimates hearings the Director-General advised that the budget contains a 2.5 per cent fare increase. The Deputy Premier also indicated that the consumer price index or inflation in Brisbane is currently 1.5 per cent. This is in contrast to statements made prior to estimates by the government that fare increases would be in line with inflation. This prompted the Deputy Premier to make this commitment:

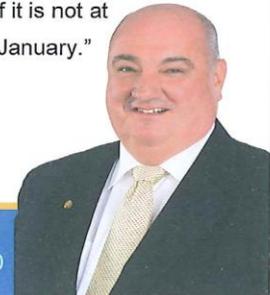
"I do want to reassure the committee that the commitment that we made at the time of the election in relation to fare increases of 1.5 per cent will be honoured on 1 January this year. It will only increase by CPI."

The Deputy Premier again reinforced her commitment again, later in the hearings:

"The budget papers project or predict that inflation will be at 2.5 per cent. If it is not at 2.5 per cent then public fares will go up at the rate that inflation is come 1 January."

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The LNP Opposition welcomes this commitment from the Deputy Premier, which came after considerable questioning by the Member for Indooroopilly. However, the Opposition also notes the record of the previous Labor Government, of which the Premier was the Minister for Transport, when public transport fares increased by 15 per cent year on year.

The LNP Opposition remains concerned the popular free travel after nine go card journeys on the Translink network could potentially be scrapped as part of the Labor Government's fare review. It was also concerning that the Deputy Premier was not aware of the results from the official customer satisfaction survey conducted by a division of her department, Translink.

The LNP Opposition was also disappointed with the politically evasive way in which the Deputy Premier answered legitimate questions about the business case for Stage 2 of the Gold Coast Light Rail. Her responses were not illustrative of an open and accountable government, for example:

"It is outrageous that there is a Gold Coast member on this committee who will sit there and allow the member for Indooroopilly to trash-talk the Gold Coast and Gold Coast Light Rail."

The LNP Opposition is also concerned that the Deputy Premier will not detail the current Community Service Obligation payment to Aurizon to be applied to regional rail services because of "Commercial in Confidence", despite the Service Delivery Statement highlighting that increased expenditure on the Lawton and Petrie Lines will be offset by a decrease in funding for regional rail services.

The LNP Opposition had many other questions it would have liked to have asked the Deputy Premier regarding transport, had time permitted. However, we were genuinely disappointed in the defensive responses to reasonable questions about the Transport portfolio.

Infrastructure and Planning

The Member for Clayfield had a number of questions about future funding of infrastructure which went unanswered. The LNP Opposition believes the people of Queensland have a right to know how the Labor Government intends to fund future infrastructure needs. The Deputy Premier has previously stated that infrastructure may need to be funded by further borrowings. However, she would not recommit to this stance when asked during the

estimates hearings. The Deputy Premier was only able to respond that the government would “be looking at innovative funding models”.

The LNP Opposition notes the Deputy Premier’s comments regarding the sale of surplus government land. During estimates the Deputy Premier commented:

“State governments of every political persuasion have been engaging in land that is surplus to requirements transactions... that is not going to change.”

The LNP Opposition believes this position does not reflect the Deputy Premier’s previous public position, including comments made in the House on 30 April, 2013:

“Once again this government is acting without a mandate. It has completely lost touch with the community and is riding roughshod over Queenslanders, wanting to sell vital public infrastructure to make a quick buck.”

The LNP Opposition was also concerned that not one project had been referred to Building Queensland, despite the body having 14 staff (as identified by Interim CEO David Quinn). In Mr Quinn’s own words, there is nothing to stop Building Queensland from getting involved in a project.

We would also like to reflect on the Deputy Premier’s commitment to release cost-benefit analyses of major infrastructure projects. As part of the Building Queensland policy document taken to the last election, this commitment was given:

“The cost-benefit analysis will not be hidden from public scrutiny.”

Despite this promise, the Deputy Premier refused Opposition requests to release the cost-benefit analysis of the Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 2, as part of the proper consideration of the project.

The Opposition also notes in correspondence following the Estimates Hearings, Minister Lynham has stated:

“Whilst the Department of State Development is leading the business case for the Townsville Stadium project, there has been consultation with Building Queensland on this project.”

That the Townsville Stadium project has not been referred to Building Queensland to lead as it appears to qualify under their function to ‘lead the preparation of business cases for projects with a capital cost of \$100 million or more’ conflicts with the justification the Government has used for establishing Building Queensland.

Local Government

The Opposition raised concerns during estimates that while the Deputy Premier's department monitors the regulatory impact of its own legislation on local government, it fails to take into consideration and monitor the cost impacts of legislation from other portfolios on local government. This is a valid issue given that financial sustainability is a significant matter facing local government and their ratepayers, particularly with recent changes to Industrial Relations legislation and proposed changes to other legislation affecting local government.

State Development & Natural Resources

The Minister was unable to explain why the service area highlights in the Service Delivery Statement for the Department of State Development did not include any initiatives that had originated under the Palaszczuk Government since 16 February 2015.

Similarly, the Minister was unable to explain why the service area objectives in the Service Delivery Statement of the Department of State Development did not include any projects that had originated under the Palaszczuk Government since 16 February 2015.

The Minister refused to accept the offer extended to him at the estimates hearing to explain to the committee how the Queen's Wharf project would be able to proceed without the 1 William Street project. The Minister refused to answer a question about what the Palaszczuk Government would do with the displaced public servants from the Neville Bonner Building, 80 George Street and 100 George Street as the Queen's Wharf project proceeded in the absence of the 1 William Street Project.

The Minister was unable to explain to the committee why the Palaszczuk Government had adopted contradictory positions regarding the release of unallocated water in catchments that had concurrent EIS processes underway, despite both of them being within a single water resource planning area.

It is concerning, from the point of view of the administration of the *Water Act*, that water can be released in the Flinders catchment at the same time as a coordinated project is undertaking

an EIS, while the release of water in the Gilbert catchment has been suspended pending the finalisation of an EIS for a coordinated project.

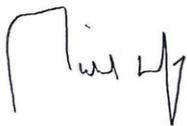
Such contradictory approaches does little for confidence in the administration of legislation for potential investors, industry and other water entitlement holders. The curious nature of the government's position is further exacerbated by the proposed water releases and both EIS process being located in the area covered by the Gulf Water Resources Plan.

The Minister could not explain how he would reconcile Labor's election commitments to repeal the former LNP Government's common sense changes to the *Vegetation Management Act* with the stakeholder roundtable review process he has established.

The Minister stated emphatically that it would be 'improper' for him to fetter the outcomes of the stakeholder review process but when asked how he would reconcile any differences between Labor's election commitments and the recommendations that came out of the review process, the Minister was forced to admit all stakeholders came to the roundtable knowing Labor had made certain election commitments.

The Minister could not say that the recommendations of the stakeholder roundtable process would determine any changes to the *Vegetation Management Act*. Therefore the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the review process certainly is fettered by Labor's election commitments and that regardless of the recommendations of the stakeholder roundtable, Labor will proceed with its election commitments.

Yours sincerely



Michael Hart
Member for Burleigh



Lachlan Millar
Member for Gregory