



2022-23 Budget Estimates

Report No. 29, 57th Parliament
Legal Affairs and Safety Committee
August 2022

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee

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Acknowledgements

The committee thanks:

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

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

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Attorney-General | Hon Shannon Fentiman MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence |
| CCC | Crime and Corruption Commission |
| CCO | custodial correction officer |
| committee | Legal Affairs and Safety Committee |
| DFV | domestic and family violence |
| DJAG or department | Department of Justice and Attorney-General |
| ECQ | Electoral Commission of Queensland |
| FTE | full-time-equivalent |
| ICT | information and communications technology |
| IGEM | Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management |
| LAQ | Legal Aid Queensland |
| Minister | Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services |
| OIC | Office of the Information Commissioner |
| OQO | Office of the Queensland Ombudsman |
| PIDs | public interest disclosures |
| PLA | Prostitution Licensing Authority |
| Public Trustee | Public Trustee of Queensland |
| QCS | Queensland Corrective Services |
| QFCC | Queensland Family and Child Commission |
| QFES | Queensland Fire and Emergency Services |
| QHRC | Queensland Human Rights Commission |
| QPS | Queensland Police Service |
| RFS | Rural Fire Service |
| Royal Commission | Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| SDS (DJAG) | 2022-23 Queensland Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General) |
| SDS (QCS) | 2022-23 Queensland Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Corrective Services) |
| SDS (QFES and IGEM) | 2022-23 Queensland Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management) |
| SDS(QPS) | 2022-23 Queensland Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Police Service) |
| SES | State Emergency Service |

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Chair's foreword

This report presents a summary of the committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2022–23 financial year.

Consideration of the budget estimates allows for the public examination of the responsible Ministers and the chief executive officers of agencies within the committee's portfolio areas. This was undertaken through the questions on notice and public hearing process.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2022 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, and the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, and their departmental officers for their co-operation in providing information to the committee throughout this process.

I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their hard work and valuable contribution to the estimates process, 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.



Peter Russo MP

Chair

August 2022

1 Introduction

1.1 Role of the committee

The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee (committee) is a portfolio committee of the Legislative Assembly which commenced on 26 November 2020 under the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* and the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.¹

The committee's primary areas of responsibility include:

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

Section 93(1) of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001* provides that a portfolio committee is responsible for examining each Bill and item of subordinate legislation in its portfolio areas to consider:

- the policy to be given effect by the legislation
- the application of fundamental legislative principles
- matters arising under the *Human Rights Act 2019*
- for subordinate legislation – its lawfulness.

The committee also has oversight functions in relation to the Electoral Commissioner, Information Commissioner, Queensland Ombudsman and the Queensland Family and Child Commission.

On 21 June 2022, the Appropriation Bill 2022 and the estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility were referred to the committee for investigation and report.²

On 3 August 2022, the committee conducted a public hearing and took evidence about the proposed expenditure from Hon Shannon Fentiman MP, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (Attorney-General), and Hon Mark Ryan MP, Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Minister) and other witnesses. A copy of the transcript of the committee's hearing is available on the committee's webpage.

1.2 Aim of this report

This report summarises the estimates referred to the committee and highlights some of the issues the committee examined.

The committee considered the estimates referred to it by using information contained in:

- budget papers
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice
- evidence taken at the hearing
- additional information given in relation to answers.

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

² Standing Order 177 provides for the automatic referral of the annual Appropriation Bills to portfolio committees once the Bills have been read a second time.

Prior to the public hearing, the committee provided the Attorney-General and the Minister with questions on notice in relation to the estimates. Responses to all the questions were received.

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

1.3 Participation by other Members

The committee gave leave for other Members to participate in the hearing. The following Members participated in the hearing:

- Tim Nicholls MP, Member for Clayfield
- Amanda Camm MP, Member for Whitsunday
- Dale Last MP, Member for Burdekin
- Ros Bates MP, Member for Mudgeeraba
- Michael Berkman MP, Member for Maiwar.

2 Recommendation

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

Recommendation 1

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2022 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

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

This section discusses issues raised during the committee’s examination of the Bill.

3.1 Department of Justice and Attorney-General

The Attorney-General is the Minister responsible for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (department or DJAG). The department has 4 service areas as follows:

- Justice Services
- Legal and Prosecution Services
- Liquor, Gaming and Fair Trading
- Women and Violence Prevention.³

In addition, the Attorney-General is responsible for the:

- Queensland Human Rights Commission (QHRC)
- Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC)
- Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ)
- Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC)
- Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC)
- Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA)
- Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ)
- Office of the Queensland Ombudsman (OQO)
- Public Trustee of Queensland (Public Trustee).⁴

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2022 compares the appropriations for DJAG for 2021-22 and 2022-23.

| Appropriations | 2021-22 \$'000 | 2022-23 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | |
| departmental services | 711,479 | 829,221 |
| equity adjustment | (55,323) | (51,355) |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | 474,308 | 526,582 |
| Vote | 1,130,464 | 1,304,448 |

Source: Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 2, p. 10.

³ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 1.

⁴ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General).

3.1.1 Budget highlights – Department of Justice and Attorney-General

According to the 2022–23 Queensland Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General) (SDS (DJAG)), in 2022–23, the department will:

- continue the review of the *Justices Act 1886* and the *Criminal Practice Rules 1999* to achieve contemporary and effective criminal procedure laws in Queensland’s Magistrates Courts
- continue to implement initiatives to reduce rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in incarceration by 15 per cent (adults) and 30 per cent (children) by 2031 under the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*
- continually assess the suitability of gambling industry participants, including casinos, and the integrity of their products
- continue to work with the Responsible Gambling Advisory Committee to deliver actions under the *Gambling Harm Minimisation Plan for Queensland 2021–2025*
- continue to review a range of issues impacting the community titles sector, in consultation with the Community Titles Legislation Working Group
- continue provision of the enhanced funding announced in the 2021–22 Queensland Budget to enable domestic, family and sexual violence services to respond to demand including that associated with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19
- continue specialist support and trialling important initiatives for women in contact with the criminal justice and custodial systems, children and young people impacted by sexual violence and abuse, and young people using or at risk of using violence
- undertake a review of the objection process for mining leases through the Queensland Law Reform Commission
- progress amendments to the *Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980* and the *Mixed Use Development Act 1993* to improve protections for vulnerable residents of complex developments.⁵

According to the SDS (DJAG), 2022–23 budget highlights for the department include:

- \$291 million over 4 years, including \$21.3 million for LAQ and \$22.9 million held centrally, as part of a total funding package of \$363 million to deliver a Queensland Government response to the Queensland Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce report, *Hear her voice – Report one - Addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland*
- \$246.8 million over 5 years, including \$71 million held centrally from 2024–25 to 2026–27, to deliver safe, fair and responsible communities via an efficient and effective justice system underpinned by contemporary technology and safe, accessible and functional infrastructure
- \$7.5 million over 4 years to strengthen casino and gaming regulation, targeted harm minimisation initiatives and enhanced Gambling Help services
- \$6 million in additional funding over 2 years, including funds held centrally, to establish a Criminal Justice Innovation Office to provide expert advice on systemic issues, lead evidence-based policy making and advise Government on system priorities

⁵ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 2.

- \$5 million over 4 years to assist with the sustained workload increases in matters referred for prosecution in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution’s northern chambers of Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton.⁶

3.2 Queensland Human Rights Commission

The SDS (DJAG) states that in 2022–23 the QHRC will:

- intervene where appropriate in proceedings involving human rights issues to provide expert assistance to courts and tribunals
- finalise the review of QHRC services to provide a culturally appropriate Commission experience for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- publish reports on unresolved human rights complaints to encourage transparency and promote best practice decision making in government service delivery
- work with key stakeholders within the child protection and youth justice systems to urge the embedding of human rights principles within existing frameworks and encourage increased understanding and compliance with human rights obligations
- maintain an effective complaints process to manage the assessment and resolution of complaints under both the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* and *Human Rights Act 2019*, with a focus on reducing the current backlog of complaints and client wait times
- work with the Queensland Government to implement recommendations following review of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*.⁷

3.3 Crime and Corruption Commission

The CCC is an independent agency established under the *Crime and Corruption Act 2001* to combat major crime and reduce corruption for the benefit of the Queensland community. The CCC's vision is for safe communities supported by fair and ethical public institutions. The CCC's objectives are to:

- reduce the incidence of major crime and corruption in Queensland
- build organisational capability.⁸

Key priorities for the CCC in 2022–23 as identified in the SDS (DJAG) include:

- illicit markets of high value or high public impact
- crimes involving risks to, or actual loss of life or serious injury to a person
- crimes against children and vulnerable people
- corruption involving improper influence, abuse of authority and exploitation of public sector resources

⁶ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 3.

⁷ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 19.

⁸ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 25.

- critical organisational capabilities including digital, analytics, intelligence and workforce planning.⁹

3.4 Legal Aid Queensland

LAQ is an independent statutory authority that operates under the *Legal Aid Queensland Act 1997*. According to the SDS (DJAG), the key deliverables for LAQ in 2022–23 will be to:

- focus on delivering services that support clients adversely impacted by the events of COVID-19, and the South-East Queensland floods that occurred in early 2022
- continue to provide services in line with the requirements of the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020–2025 and Bilateral Schedule
- deliver new and expanding initiatives with service delivery partners across the state in the most effective and economical way.¹⁰

The main budget highlight for LAQ as noted in the SDS (DJAG) is the provision of \$76.8 million over 4 years with \$17.2 million commencing in 2022–23 that provides for an increase in professional fees for work undertaken by external service providers, along with funding to meet the non-discretionary demand growth for core services.¹¹

3.5 Office of the Information Commissioner

OIC provides independent, timely and fair reviews of decisions made under the *Right to Information Act 2009* and *Information Privacy Act 2009*. OIC assists agencies to adopt privacy by design and achieve compliance with the privacy principles, and provides an independent, timely and fair privacy complaint mediation service. OIC promotes greater awareness of right to information and information privacy in the community and within government and improves agencies' practices in right to information and information privacy.¹²

The SDS (DJAG) identified the following key deliverables for the OIC in 2022–23, including to:

- champion a contemporary legislative framework that is fit for purpose to help Queensland manage the challenges of digital service delivery while meeting public expectations in an increasingly interconnected digital world
- strengthen the Privacy Champions leadership network within and across agency sectors to embed privacy by design in senior decision-making and enhance cultural change
- address key drivers of significant demand for external review, including insufficient administrative release, high numbers of agency decisions made outside statutory timeframes, delayed responses from agencies and challenging interactions, to enable more efficient and effective outcomes for the community
- review training resource and assistance programs, and implement new approaches to meet evolving needs and improve communication and engagement with communities and agencies throughout Queensland

⁹ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 25.

¹⁰ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 31.

¹¹ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 31.

¹² 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 38.

- work with agency experts to ensure information management practices keep pace with rapidly evolving technology environment to build trust and enable safe digital service delivery and initiatives, including artificial intelligence processing of personal information
- report to Parliament on audits about current topics of interest, such as awareness of privacy obligations in selected agencies, publishing official information assets, and agency compliance.¹³

3.6 Queensland Family and Child Commission

QFCC was established as a statutory body on 1 July 2014 under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014*.

According to the SDS (DJAG), in 2022–23 the key deliverables for the QFCC are to:

- undertake evidence-based assessments of emergent matters associated with the youth justice and child protection systems
- implement the next iteration of the QFCC's Oversight Strategy, reflecting the evolving priorities to ensure obligations under the *Family and Child Commission Act 2014* are fulfilled
- host the Child Death Review Board and provide secretariat support to achieve its functions of undertaking systemic reviews of the child protection system, conducting research, identifying data trends and making recommendations for system improvements
- continue to progress *Principle Focus*, a comprehensive program to examine the dynamics and drivers of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children across Queensland's child protection system
- progress Oversight of the Youth Justice System, a 3-year program to assess the performance of the youth justice system and its impact on the wellbeing and rights of children and young people
- implement *Safer Pathways Through Childhood Framework*, a roadmap charting the direction and priorities for the QFCC's child death prevention activities for the next 5 years
- enhance youth participation in government decision-making processes through creating ongoing opportunities to have their views heard and connecting them with appropriate decision-makers.¹⁴

3.7 Prostitution Licensing Authority

The PLA is a licensing and regulatory agency established by the *Prostitution Act 1999*.

The SDS (DJAG) states that in 2022–23 key priorities for the PLA include:

- protecting the community from COVID-19 by working with licensed brothels to ensure COVID-19 safe operations, including assessing and enforcing compliance with the COVID-19 Safe Checklist: Public Health and Social Measure Direction
- contributing to the review being undertaken by the Queensland Law Reform Commission into the issue of regulating a decriminalised sex work industry in Queensland
- engaging with stakeholders, including representatives of the licensed sector of the sex industry, to enhance the licensing framework for brothels and the scope of regulation of the sector, to underpin the viability of brothel operations, and to further the underlying principles of the Act

¹³ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 37.

¹⁴ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 44.

- continuing to review and improve its operations and processes to assist and enable the licensed sector to support the licenced businesses by simplifying processes and procedures so that they can easily understand their obligations and manage their businesses safely, efficiently and effectively.¹⁵

3.8 Electoral Commission of Queensland

ECQ is an independent statutory authority established under the *Electoral Act 1992*. The ECQ's purpose is to deliver accessible, fair, transparent electoral services to all Queenslanders.¹⁶

The SDS (DJAG) states that in 2022–23, the ECQ will:

- continue to deliver state and local government by-elections as required
- undertake actions in the local government engagement strategy to strengthen relationships with Queensland's local government sector
- implement business improvements identified in the evaluations into the 2020 state and local government elections and improve future election delivery
- administer and enforce donation caps on political donations
- provide support to the Local Government Change Commission in its reviews of local government boundaries and electoral arrangements referred by the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics Infrastructure.¹⁷

The main budget highlight for ECQ as noted in the SDS (DJAG) is the provision of funding to facilitate preparations for state and local government elections in 2024.¹⁸

3.9 Office of the Queensland Ombudsman

The purpose of the OQO is to investigate administrative decisions, help agencies improve their practices, and oversee the system of public interest disclosures (PIDs).¹⁹

The SDS (DJAG) provides that in 2022–23, the key deliverables for the OQO are to:

- continue to deliver services that help people to know how and when to make a complaint
- provide a free and independent investigation service that reviews administration actions of state government departments and agencies (including state schools and TAFE), local councils and public universities

¹⁵ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 50.

¹⁶ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 57.

¹⁷ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 57.

¹⁸ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 57.

¹⁹ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 69.

- help agencies to improve their decision-making, administrative practices and PID management by making recommendations for improvement, delivering training programs and providing information and advisory services.²⁰

The main budget highlight for the OQO as noted in the SDS (DJAG) is the provision of net increased funding of \$2 million over 4 years with \$585,000 ongoing funding from 2025–26 onwards to ensure the sustainability and independence of the service delivery of the OQO into the future.²¹

3.10 Public Trustee of Queensland

The Public Trustee provides professional, customer-focused financial administration, deceased estate and trustee services and life planning assistance through its will and enduring power of attorney services.²²

The SDS (DJAG) provides that in 2022–23, the Public Trustee will:

- continue to enhance the Public Trustee's fees and charges model to ensure it is fair, transparent and reasonable
- support the establishment and effective operation of the Public Trustee Advisory and Monitoring Board
- implement initiatives to recognise customer support networks and promote positive and collaborative engagement with the Public Trustee
- deliver community education programs and initiatives, prioritising education, rights, and wellbeing of Queenslanders and engagement in advanced life planning
- refine and improve systems to support leading practice customer advocacy and complaints management
- develop and implement improvements to regional service delivery including enhanced connectivity
- explore strategies to enhance the effectiveness of deceased estate administration services to benefit customers
- continue to review customer and corporate investment strategies to meet changing environments.²³

3.11 Key issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee and visiting Members during the public hearing in relation to DJAG, QHRC, CCC, LAQ, OIC, QFCC, PLA, ECQ, OQO and the Public Trustee included:

- investment of \$246 million over 5 years to modernise courts, including \$22 million to replace the Beaudesert courthouse

²⁰ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 69.

²¹ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 70.

²² 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 81.

²³ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Department of Justice and Attorney-General), p 81.

- investment of \$76.8 million over 4 years and \$21.2 million per year in LAQ to increase essential legal services
- funding increase for the QHRC of \$6.9 million over 5 years and \$1.3 million per year ongoing
- release of 4-year gambling harm minimisation plan
- investment of \$7.5 million over 4 years to strengthen casino and gaming regulation
- investment of \$363 million to respond to all recommendations of the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce
- \$2 million in funding over the next 2 years to DVConnect
- powers of the Attorney-General in regards to the position of chair of the CCC
- matters relating to Investigation Workshop undertaken by the CCC
- legal costs relating to the Peter Carne, former Public Trustee, matter
- publication of the CCC report into the appointment of then under treasurer Frankie Carroll
- update on the CCC’s case management system, Nexus, including costs and termination of contract
- status of CCC’s investigation into matters related to the Queensland Forensic and Scientific Services division of Queensland Health
- targets of the CCC and percentage success rates
- costs for court matters regarding journalist F
- key stakeholders in relation to the Coaldrake review recommendations
- the work of the Office of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management
- update on Queensland Government’s work to support multicultural communities
- work to enhance the electoral process and transparency in decision-making
- matters relating to the electoral process and lobbying
- role of the Public Trustee and CCC
- cost of consultants to review the Public Trustee’s fees and charges over the last 12 months
- matters relating to the report into the Public Trustee’s fees and charges and its outcomes
- costs relating to the relocation of the Public Trustee office
- status of reviews into the specific cases of Chris Pearson and Peter Ristic relating to the Public Trustee
- proportion of additional funding to LAQ allocated between internal staff and external service providers
- location and duties of additional staff for LAQ
- matters relating to complaints to the CCC about the QBCC
- average length of time and the longest time to date to grant a transfer of a club licence, and the average length of time and the longest length of time to transfer a hotel licence
- matters relating to the postal vote application process
- update on Queensland Government’s protection of human rights
- update on the work of the QFCC

- update on the Human Rights Commission’s review of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*
- work of LAQ with financially disadvantaged Queenslanders
- work of LAQ in supporting Queenslanders to understand their legal and human rights
- legal indemnities for Cabinet ministers
- legal indemnities for former Treasurer Trad and associated legal costs
- funding increases for emergency accommodation/refuges in regard to domestic and family violence (DFV)
- funding for DFV specialist counselling, particularly for children
- allocation of DFV specialist counselling funding to the Sunshine Coast and Noosa region
- timeline for the introduction of legislation to better recognise trans and gender-diverse people in the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003*
- how community organisations benefit from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund
- update on the Queensland Government’s response to DFV
- update on the Queensland Government’s liquor regulation policies
- access for women and girls from all cultures and backgrounds to appropriate services when experiencing violence
- investment into Queensland courts
- funding to the Court Network volunteer program for victim support
- forensic lab inquiry and impact on sexual assault victims in the criminal justice system
- rape kit availability for women without a Medicare card
- tabling of and response to matters raised in the report of the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce
- standard of DNA testing kits in Queensland
- prevention programs for DFV perpetrators
- access to refuges for mothers with male children of a certain age
- access to sexual assault services in regional, rural and remote Queensland
- appointment of implementation supervisor for recommendations made in the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce report
- time frame for the 5-year strategic investment plan for DFV services
- cost of implementing all recommended actions from the *Hear her voice – Report one*
- time frame for introducing legislation relating to recommendations 52 to 60 and 62 to 66 of the *Hear her voice – Report one*
- time frame for the release of the revised inter-agency guidelines on responding to people who have experienced sexual assault
- increase of staff for women and violence prevention and allocation across the state
- funding for and review of the *Not now, not ever* report recommendations
- mandating of perpetrator programs for people under domestic violence orders
- location of DFV courts, particularly in relation to the Wide Bay and Sunshine Coast regions

- funding for coronial inquests, particularly for a death in custody or in the public health system or where the deceased person is a First Nations person
- statistics for what proportion of inquests over the last 5 years have involved inquests where the state has been involved or related to the death of a First Nations person
- update on work towards achieving gender equality
- work of agencies to support victims of DFV, particularly those victims who engage with police
- support for women and children who are attempting to leave domestic violence situations but do not want to leave pets behind
- funding support for frontline services for women and families experiencing violence
- representation of women in public places through statues
- update on the Investing in Queensland Women grant program
- update on government efforts to improve the representation of women in leadership roles.
- the CCC investigation into the appointment of then under treasurer Frankie Carroll by then treasurer/Member for South Brisbane, Jackie Trad. The CCC Chair declined to answer two questions about the CCC report of the investigation, citing the existence of a court order that prevented him from discussing the matter.²⁴

²⁴ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 3 August 2022, pp 2-42.

4 Minister for Police and Corrective Services

This section discusses issues raised during the committee’s examination of the Bill.

4.1 Queensland Police Service

The Minister is responsible for the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2022 compares the appropriations for the Queensland Police Service for 2021–22 and 2022–23.

| Appropriations | 2021-22 \$'000 | 2022-23 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | |
| departmental services | 2,496,168 | 2,659,113 |
| equity adjustment | 11,237 | 19,067 |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | .. | .. |
| Vote | 2,507,405 | 2,678,180 |

Source: Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 2, p. 16.

4.1.1 Budget highlights – Queensland Police Service

The 2022–23 Queensland Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Police Service) (SDS (QPS)), provides that in 2022–23 the QPS undertakes to:

- continue to support the implementation of the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026* and contribute to the response to the first report of the Queensland Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce, *Hear her voice – Report one – Addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland* (Report 1, Hear her voice), including delivering dedicated training programs focussing on coercive control to better equip QPS members to address domestic and family violence within the community
- continue to support the Queensland Government’s *Youth Justice Strategy 2019–23 - Working Together, Changing the Story* to assist young Queenslanders to make positive life choices through crime prevention and early intervention, with focus on serious repeat offenders
- continue to work closely with partner agencies to address justice-related targets to reduce rates of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in incarceration by 15 per cent (adults) and 30 per cent (children) by 2031 under the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*
- strive towards a more diverse workforce reflective of the Queensland community by developing sponsored pathways for First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse background applicants and employing local community members as protective security officers in remote communities
- continue to implement the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission), including collaborating with the University of Queensland to explore bias, trauma and victim centric approaches and align current training programs with the Royal Commission recommendations as part of its commitment to supporting victims of crime, organisational education and training, and continual improvement
- continue to assist the community during disasters such as the 2022 flood responses where police worked together with their local communities and continue to support the public health response to COVID-19

- continue to support the *Queensland Road Safety Strategy 2022–31* through proven road safety interventions, such as strong deterrence, enforcement and education programs, and contribute to the Queensland Government's targets for improved road safety outcomes.²⁵

The main budget highlights for the QPS as noted in the SDS (QPS) are:

- \$34.1 million over 4 years and \$5.5 million per annum ongoing as part of the government's total funding package of \$363 million over 5 years (\$350 million new funding and \$12.9 million internally met) to respond to Report 1, *Hear her voice*
- \$3.5 million to support the continuation of the Youth Justice Strategy - Five Point Plan to address youth crime
- \$6.1 million for a 12 month Road Safety Anti Hooning Maximum Saturation Deterrence trial of anti-hooning technology and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the technology in relation to hooning offending
- \$1.6 million in 2022–23 to address recommendations of the *Queensland Audit Office report 8: 2020–21 – Regulating firearms*, including expediting work to replace the Weapons Licensing Management System
- \$2 million to support the development of a business case for the relocation of the Police Academy, and other co-located Queensland Police Service functions, from the Oxley site to the Wacol Police Precinct.²⁶

4.2 Queensland Corrective Services

The Minister also has ministerial responsibility for the budget of the Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) which has a separate appropriation.

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2022 compares the appropriations for the QCS for 2021-22 and 2022-23.

| Appropriations | 2021-22 \$'000 | 2022-23 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | |
| departmental services | 1,066,466 | 1,150,997 |
| equity adjustment | 224,035 | 373,151 |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | .. | .. |
| Vote | 1,290,501 | 1,524,148 |

Source: Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 2, p 15.

4.2.1 Budget highlights – Queensland Corrective Services

The 2022-23 Queensland Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Corrective Services) (SDS (QCS)), provides that in 2022-23 the QCS undertakes to:

- continue to safely manage the demands of the prison population and work collaboratively with other criminal justice agencies to implement innovative responses to manage the ongoing demand on the criminal justice system

²⁵ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Police Service), p 1.

²⁶ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Police Service), p 2.

- continue to successfully engage staff and stakeholders to deliver quality services aimed at reducing recidivism including the delivery of psychological support services in correctional centres
- continue to enhance the department’s anti-corruption framework
- increase cultural liaison support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples under supervision in the community to support Closing the Gap commitments
- support the work of the Parole Board Queensland in relation to parole applications
- optimise the investment of resources in world-class equipment, technology, and facilities to meet the current and future challenges facing the Queensland correctional system
- continue the department’s capital program including work on the development of Stage 2 of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct which will result in more than 1,500 additional beds, an increase of 500 beds since the last budget.²⁷

The main budget highlights for the QCS as noted in the SDS (QCS) are:

- \$152.6 million over 4 years for infrastructure, maintenance, and minor capital works to support the safe operation of correctional centres
- \$33.6 million over 4 years to transition the Queensland Parole System Review recommendations to business-as-usual operations, trial end-to-end case management in multiple correctional centres (\$10 million over 2 years from 2022–23); and improve recruitment and training for Community Corrections officers (\$4.891 million over 4 years and \$1.286 million ongoing from 2025–26)
- \$20.2 million over 4 years to enhance Parole Board Queensland operations to enhance efficient consideration of parole matters
- \$30.4 million over 4 years (held centrally) to enhance the Integrated Offender Management System to support frontline correctional operations
- \$28.2 million over 2 years to establish a commissioning project team and appoint the correctional centre leadership team in preparation for the operation of Stage 2 of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct.²⁸

4.3 Key issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee and visiting Members during the public hearing in relation to QPS and QCS included:

- approved police officer strength numbers
- latest technology in officer safety equipment, including load-bearing ballistic vests, QLITE tablet devices, body worn cameras, and police vehicles
- number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) sworn officers employed by the QPS as at 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2022
- number of frontline police
- recruitment process for employing frontline police

²⁷ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Corrective Services), p 1.

²⁸ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Corrective Services), p 2.

- commencement and funding of the 5-day face-to-face DV training program for specialist DV officers
- number of specialist DV officers in QPS and number of those officers who have completed the DV training program
- upgrade of QPRIME
- the rate of sexual offences cleared within 30 days
- possible relocation of police station at Coolangatta and the Coolangatta Magistrates Court
- number of court mandated DV trackers on high-risk offenders ordered by the courts and number of offenders fitted with those trackers
- number of ouster provisions that have been simultaneously ordered with personal protection notices
- progress on integration of QPS systems with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries etc
- strategy for addressing alcohol fuelled violence in hot spots in the north coast region
- infrastructure plan for policies facilities at the Caloundra watch house
- use of spit hoods in Queensland watch houses and processes in place to ensure young children are not subject to the use of these devices
- awarding of honours and awards to QPS members
- awarding of the Queensland Police Meritorious Service Medal to Deputy Commissioner Douglas Alan Smith
- update on strategies to protect children from harm
- DFV training for police officers
- police services on the Sunshine Coast
- new and upgraded police infrastructure across Queensland
- crime prevention and early intervention initiatives for young people, particularly for serious repeat youth offenders
- update on the latest vehicle technology for QPS
- number of built beds in Queensland correctional facilities
- installation of additional hatches in older style cell doors and deployment of additional body worn cameras for QCS staff
- increase in resourcing for the Parole Board Queensland
- development of training system in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology to provide initial and ongoing training for QCS officers
- appointment of retired District Court judge Milton Griffin QC to undertake the 5-year review of the Queensland parole system
- transfer to public operation under QCS of all correctional facilities in Queensland
- proportion of additional 9 staff allocated in budget to custodial correctional officer (CCO) positions
- number of vacancies for CCO positions

- number of CCOs appointed during the 2021-22 financial year and number who left the employment of QCS
- time frame for construction and commissioning of the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre
- cost of repairing the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre
- cost of damage to Capricornia Correctional Centre
- cost of good-order bags distributed to prisoners at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and decision-making process for distribution
- award process for QCS staff
- cost of the Capricornia Correctional Centre workplace cultural review
- release of outcomes of workplace culture review 6 and 12 months after the initial Capricornia Correctional Centre workplace cultural review
- cost of Townsville Correctional Centre workplace cultural review
- prisoner-on-officer assaults
- time frame for implementation of recommendation 84 of the *Hear her Voice* report in relation to addressing domestic and family violence
- notification of release on parole of a prisoner subject to a domestic violence order to other parties to that order
- arrangements for transitional and permanent housing for potential and current parolees
- number of people awaiting a parole decision, and number waiting more than 180 days
- built bed capacity at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre as at 30 June 2021
- number of bunk beds built in Queensland in the 2021-22 financial year and number installed at the Capricornia Correctional Centre
- update on Queensland’s bunk bed program
- update on the operations of the Parole Board of Queensland
- update on the training to be delivered to community corrections officers
- update on the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct.²⁹

²⁹ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 3 August 2022, pp 44-66.

5 Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

The Minister is also the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. As such, the Minister's portfolio comprises Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) and the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management (IGEM).

5.1 Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2022 compares the appropriations for QFES for 2021–22 and 2022–23.

| Appropriations | 2021-22 \$'000 | 2022-23 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | |
| departmental services | 135,298 | 150,466 |
| equity adjustment | 1,990 | 3,296 |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | .. | .. |
| Vote | 137,288 | 153,762 |

Source: Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 2, p 16.

5.1.1 Budget highlights – Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

The 2022–23 Queensland Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management) (SDS (QFES and IGEM)), provides that in 2022–23, the QFES undertakes to:

- continue to maintain a responsive Fire and Rescue Service delivering state-of-the-art response, rescue, scientific and specialist capabilities to Queensland communities
- continue to work in collaboration with local governments and partners across Queensland to operate an effective State Emergency Service
- continue to focus on reducing bushfire risk through year-round planning and conducting of mitigation activities through Operation Sesbania; improving community safety awareness and knowledge in relation to bushfire safety and prevention; and increasing the skills and experience of Rural Fire Service volunteers
- continue the commitment to establish an integrated volunteer marine rescue service to ensure a sustainable model which will enhance marine rescue volunteer capability for on-water safety across Queensland
- continue to promote the home fire safety message highlighting the importance of fire escape plans; the roll out of smoke alarm legislation milestones; the Bushfire Safety campaign to educate Queenslanders on how to prepare their property and family for bushfire; and the Fight Fire Fascination initiative designed to support parents and guardians educate children to remain safe from fire
- continue to educate the community on road safety through the “If It's Flooded, Forget It” campaign which spotlights the dangers of flooded roads; and the Road Attitudes and Action Planning program delivered to Year 11 and 12 students in Queensland schools to promote safe driving practices
- continue to lead Queensland's response to key priority actions addressing relevant recommendations from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements, including enhancing hazard and risk management, implementing the new national fire danger

rating system and emergency warning activities to enhance the natural disaster preparedness capabilities of Queensland communities

- continue to support Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements stakeholders to reduce climate and disaster risk to communities.³⁰

The main budget highlights for the QFES as noted in the SDS (QFES and IGEM) are:

- an additional \$154,000 out of \$1.64 million over four years, from the Camera Detected Offences Program to continue and enhance the public awareness for road safety led by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services: If It's Flooded, Forget It
- funding to modernise and maintain the Queensland Emergency Operations Centre's critical ICT and audio-visual infrastructure.³¹

In addition, the SDS (QFES and IGEM) provides that the government is committing:

- increased funding of \$20 million for the State Emergency Service (SES) to enhance operational capability and risk management. This includes 40 additional staff to support SES activities and a \$10 million capital boost for equipment and facilities, including new SES flood boats and upgraded facilities for the Lowood SES Group
- increased funding of \$8 million for marine rescue services to support operational capability, including an additional \$5 million to accelerate the rescue vessel replacement program
- increased funding of \$10 million for new Rural Fire Service facilities, including funding for a new facility for Rural Fire Brigades in the Maryborough region.³²

5.2 Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management

The Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management (IGEM) provides independent assurance and advice about Queensland's disaster management arrangements and conducts monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities to enhance accountability and improve outcomes for the community.³³

The following table taken from the Appropriation Bill 2022 compares the appropriations for IGEM for 2021–22 and 2022–23.

| Appropriations | 2021-22 \$'000 | 2022-23 \$'000 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Controlled Items</i> | | |
| departmental services | 4,309 | 4,491 |
| equity adjustment | .. | .. |
| <i>Administered Items</i> | .. | .. |
| Vote | 4,309 | 4,491 |

³⁰ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management), p 1.

³¹ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management), p 2.

³² 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management), p 2.

³³ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management), p 12.

Source: Appropriation Bill 2022, Schedule 2, p 14.

5.2.1 Budget highlights – Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management

The SDS (QFES and IGEM), provides that in 2022-23, the IGEM undertakes to:

- complete a review of the South East Queensland rainfall and flooding event that occurred between 22 February and 7 March 2022
- continue working with lead agencies to monitor, evaluate and report on the progress of implementation of Queensland Government action plans published in response to IGEM reviews
- conduct capability reviews in consultation with key partners to provide a greater level of assurance about disaster management activities and performance
- deliver a 2022 Queensland disaster management research forum to coincide with the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in Brisbane in September 2022
- facilitate an annual disaster management plan assessment process to review the effectiveness of district and local plans.³⁴

5.3 Key issues raised at the public hearing

Issues raised by the committee and visiting Members during the public hearing in relation to the QFES and IGEM included:

- investment of \$28 million in volunteer services
- commencement of a new multiyear fleet build program for the Rural Fire Service (RFS) and the Fire and Rescue Service
- completion of new and replacement facilities at Maleny, Gracemere, Rainbow Beach, Rosewood and Charters Towers
- progress of new and upgraded facilities at Airlie Beach, Caloundra South, Drayton, Greater Springfield, Gympie South, Hervey Bay, Loganlea, Lowood, Maryborough, Moreton Bay, Mount Cotton and South Townsville
- IGEM review into the 2022 flooding event
- number of FTE first-response firefighters who joined QFES during the 2021-22 financial year and the number who left
- number of overtime shifts in the south-eastern region
- cost of overtime for firefighters across the state for the 2021-22 financial year
- funding to increase number of first-response firefighters
- minimum training standards and checks for volunteers before being tasked to an incident that may involve working in floodwaters
- qualifications and duties of volunteers
- consideration, release and cost of the KPMG Independent Review into the QFES, and allocated funding to implement the report's recommendations
- time frame for upgrade to the Boonah auxiliary fire station

³⁴ 2022-23 Queensland State Budget – Service Delivery Statements (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management), p 11.

- communications equipment for firefighters wearing self-contained breathing apparatus
- funding for replacement helmets
- number of fire brigades without a fire truck
- access to electricity, running water and bathroom facilities in fire sheds for RFS volunteers
- cost to bring facilities to standard
- ICT capabilities of the Queensland Emergency Operations Centre in connecting with early-alert monitors on bridges in real time and providing information to relevant authorities and organisations
- proportion of \$8 million for marine rescue services allocated to the frontline service delivered by coastguards
- analysis, research and decision-making process in relation to new RFS facilities
- support for State Emergency Service volunteers
- plans to futureproof service delivery in the Sunshine Coast area
- update on frontline RFS, including increasing the skills and experience of RFS volunteers
- update on the partnership between the IGEM and the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in relation to biosecurity hazards in Queensland
- update on firefighter numbers.³⁵

³⁵ Public hearing transcript, Brisbane, 3 August 2022, pp 67-77.

6 Statements of Reservation

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee – Statement of Reservation

Introduction

Opposition Members of the Committee agree with the passing of the 2022/23 State Budget (Budget).

However, the Budget is characterised by numerous shortcomings which have failed to meet the expectations of Queenslanders. Many of these shortcomings became increasingly evident during the Parliamentary Estimates process.

The Budget was an opportunity for the State Government to show Queenslanders that they have listened to them. It was a chance to open the books and show Queenslanders that they have been heard. It was a chance to reveal the true state of affairs and what will be done to make their lives just a little easier.

Estimates failed to provide reassurance that the great challenges facing Queenslanders were being addressed – the health crisis, the housing crisis, the youth crime crisis, the cost of living crisis, and the integrity crisis.

Estimates revealed a host of band-aid solutions that will do little to improve conditions throughout Queensland. Coupled with a litany of cost overruns and government financial waste – no better demonstrated than by the loss of over \$220 million of taxpayers' funds on the Wellcamp vanity project – no long-term solutions were presented by the Government.

Despite its inherent imperfections, the Estimates process drew attention to government neglect and waste and a cavalier disregard for the highest standards of probity and integrity in government.

Justice and Attorney-General

Within the Justice and Attorney-General portfolio, there was a reluctance towards openness and transparency on the issue of the taxpayer funded indemnity approval granted to former Deputy Premier and Treasurer Jackie Trad by the Attorney-General.

Despite repeated questioning, the Attorney-General failed to advise the costs to date incurred by Ms Trad in initiating proceedings to prevent the tabling of a report by the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) into the appointment of former Under Treasurer Mr Frankie Carroll.

The Attorney-General also failed to provide the reasons why she considered it appropriate to grant “special approval” as required under clause 12 of the Guidelines for the Grant of Indemnities and Legal Assistance. Clause 12 relevantly says:

“The State will not provide legal assistance to a Minister for the purpose of initiating or continuing separate legal proceedings by or on behalf of the Minister in relation to an Inquiry or Investigation, unless special approval in writing has first been obtained from the Attorney-General.”

Given the significant funds required for such Supreme Court action and its unusual nature taxpayers are entitled to understand the reasons why such “special approval” was granted.

Embarrassingly, the Attorney-General also had to write to the Committee two full days after her appearance to correct mistakes in her evidence to the Committee at the hearing.

By way of example the transcript records:

“Mr NICHOLLS: So you gave the approval for the legal indemnity to be provided for Ms Trad?”

Ms FENTIMAN: No, the Premier and I gave approval in accordance with the guidelines.

And shortly thereafter the transcript records another answer, as follows:

“Ms FENTIMAN: The matter to which you refer—I assume you are talking about clause 17 of the guidelines, so let’s be very clear. That relates to an inquiry or investigation in relation to the commission of an offence. What we are talking about is an indemnity that arose in relation to the former Treasurer’s role as Treasurer. The Crown Solicitor provides advice about whether or not the matter falls within the guidelines. The Premier and I both signed off on the indemnity, in accordance with the guidelines.”

And yet again, as follows:

“Ms FENTIMAN: Both of us gave approval in accordance with the guidelines, based on advice from the Crown Solicitor ... ”

Despite the fact that the Attorney-General stated she signed off on these indemnities and the availability at estimates of departmental officers including the Director-General, it is clear from her subsequent letter to the Committee that the Attorney-General was not across the detail.

Questioning revealed for the first time that in fact two indemnities had been provided to Ms Trad. One for the initial inquiry (mistakenly claimed during the hearing to be by the current Attorney-General and the Premier). The second was granted by the (current) Attorney-General only under clause 12 of the guidelines to meet Ms Trad’s costs of initiating proceedings to prevent publication of the CCC report. As we now know, even the existence of these proceedings was unable to be made public.

The decision of the Attorney-General to provide the second indemnity to Jackie Trad’s secret fight to suppress the report by the CCC, and unwillingness to share the cost to taxpayers to date of this action flies in the face of transparency and good government. The guidelines for indemnities, which the Attorney-General regularly referred to, also state that itemised monthly invoices must be provided to the Crown Solicitor on a monthly basis. The Attorney-General would clearly be able to ascertain and disclose the costs to date but is choosing to hide those costs from the Queensland public.

It is extraordinary in itself that the taxpayer is funding an action by Ms Trad to keep a CCC report secret, but the decision of this Government to not reveal how much the taxpayer is paying to do this is even more disgraceful. It contrasts with the information able to be provided by the CCC who can quite easily disclose the costs of responding to the action as well as the Carne matter referred to below.

Legal indemnities for Ministers and Assistant Ministers are an important part of our system. However, they are to be used as a shield, not as a sword.

Taxpayers, via the CCC, continue to bear the cost of former ministers and public officials fighting to have their investigations suppressed, with confirmation that the Peter Carne matter has cost the CCC \$109,691.25 in legal costs, as well as the resources taken by staff of the CCC to brief counsel. The Chair was restricted by court order from discussing the details of the report of the Trad issue (but not the costs), noting that he had been advised not to discuss the matter due to Supreme Court orders.

We also heard the proposed CCC case management “Nexus” system has been abandoned, with the CCC losing over \$700,000. The CCC has not commissioned a new system to date.

While service standards were changed in the effectiveness measures last year to change the targets, the new targets were significantly short this year, particularly the measure of “percentage of targeted

criminal organisations disrupted as a result of CCC intelligence operations” with the Chair describing them as “to some degree aspirational in terms of performance setting.”

The CCC confirmed there has been an almost doubling in complaints received about the Queensland Building and Construction Commission, from 16 in 2020-21 to 30 in 2021-22. One of these is currently under investigation of the CCC.

While the Government has continued to lay blame for fees and charges at the feet of the Public Trustee, it became evident it is Government making the final decisions in this matter. Questions revealed taxpayers paid almost half a million dollars for a landmark report into Public Trustee fees and charges, yet the report has not been released publicly at the request of Government, despite the publicity this year of Queenslanders being triple charged or overcharged and having their assets stripped.

Even when challenged that, as an independent body, the Public Trustee should release the report, the Public Trustee said he was advised to not release the report but to deliver it to Government for decision.

Further costs were borne by clients of the Public Trustee for the move 800 metres up the road to the new office accommodation to the tune of \$2.08 million.

This year the Government belatedly increased the funds available to Legal Aid allowing an increase in the scale of fees paid to Legal Aid providers. While much of the increased funding alleviate the underfunding of legal aid scale fees, there is also provision for additional external providers and internal staff, in particular, for additional duty lawyer services to specialist domestic and family violence courts as part of the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce recommendations. The LNP welcomes this increase.

The Department acknowledged industry concerns about the time taken to process transfer of club and hotel licences. The median time to transfer a hotel liquor licence in conjunction with a gaming licence was revealed to be 111 days, with the longest being 418 days.

Questioning also revealed that funding to the Court Network for general court support by volunteers has been withdrawn, despite being a low-cost addition to our courts which greatly improves the experience of court attendees. There seemed to be no plan to reinstate this service with answers to questions simply “that we intend to work with them.”

Women and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

It was clear from the Estimates Hearing that while the Attorney-General is also the Minister for Women, her Department abdicates responsibility to other Departments in regards to the safety and services women require, and this is evident in parts where service standards are lacking.

Whether it comes to access to medical care, high standard rape kits in line with other states, or forensic medical examinations these issues were passed onto other Departments with seemingly little advocacy from the Minister, nor evidence provided during the Minister’s response when questioned.

Whilst the Minister was happy to take Government dixer on gender equality and the workforce, the answers to questions of the number of small to medium enterprise companies owned by women who have received Government contracts was deferred to another Minister.

When it came to the number of court mandated domestic violence trackers on high-risk offenders or ouster provisions these were also outside the purview of the Minister and the question would not be answered, despite being a significant element of domestic and family violence response.

The recommendations from *Hear her voice – Report one* are behind schedule, with the Implementation Supervisor recruitment only now underway. This recommendation was to be actioned in early 2022 so we are already on the backfoot. Women cannot wait another day for this Government to act.

Pre-hearing Questions on Notice also revealed a chronic underfunding of sexual violence services, receiving less than 20% of the funding of domestic and family violence services.

While this Government continues to talk big on women’s safety, there is a lack of oversight across Departments to ensure women get the respect, services and support they deserve.

Police

Evidence provided at the Estimates Hearing showed that, despite commitments made to staff, volunteers and the Queensland public, the State Government is failing its own commitment to keeping Queenslanders safe.

Prior to the 2020 State Election, a commitment was made by the State Government to all Queenslanders that Police numbers would be boosted by 2,025 staff, including 1,450 sworn officers, by 2025. Budget documents tabled during the hearing show that the growth rate in sworn Police Officers has been less than 1% per annum since Labor’s election, casting doubt over the ability of this Government to honour their commitment.

In fact, in the financial year ending 30 June 2022, there was a net gain of only 143 sworn Police Officers due to an attrition rate 40% higher than predicted and far higher than we have seen in at least 8 years.

During the Estimates Hearing, the Queensland Police Commissioner described data used in the Budget documents as “incredibly inaccurate”, reinforcing the LNP’s belief that Labor’s commitment will not be honoured. Given substantial increases in the rate of offences such as Assault, Unlawful Entry, Unlawful Use of a Motor Vehicle, and Breach Domestic Violence Protection Order, the LNP fears that the Labor Government has, and will continue to, fail to keep Queenslanders safe.

The LNP believes that Queenslanders deserve the truth when it comes to issues that affect their safety, such as the sworn Police Officer numbers. Both the Commissioner’s evidence to the Committee and answers provided to pre-hearing Questions on Notice, show that staffing numbers are not readily, and reliably, available to Queenslanders, something the LNP believes the Government must address.

The LNP stands side by side with the community in demanding action on the scourge that is domestic and family violence. Of great concern to all Queenslanders will be the facts that no specialist domestic and family violence training was conducted in 2019, before the implementation of training moratoriums due to COVID-19. The LNP also has concerns regarding the timeline for the delivery of a five-day face-to-face DFV training program for all specialist domestic violence officers as recommended by the coronial inquest into the deaths of Hannah Clarke and her three children. Further, it was revealed that, of the 77 domestic and family violence specialist officers, over 40 are yet to complete the specialist course.

The evidence produced at the hearing raised serious concerns about the Labor Government’s capacity or willingness to reveal important information about their ability to manage aspects of the portfolio.

When the Minister was asked by the Member for Currumbin if the Minister would guarantee a new police station will be built in Coolangatta, should the current one be resumed as part of the plans for

the Light Rail Stage 4 expansion to Coolangatta, the Minister was not even aware that the Coolangatta Police Station has been earmarked for resumption as part of this expansion.

The LNP was heartened to hear the Commissioner confirm that Coolangatta is one of the key points on the Gold Coast for policing. However, it was extremely disappointing that the Minister was not even aware of the issue and could not guarantee plans to replace the police station. The State Government must ensure planning is underway now, to identify possible sites and to ensure the future of a police station in Coolangatta.

Whilst the Caloundra Youth Jail project is now cancelled, and costs totaling almost \$1 million was met by another department, the LNP expresses concern surrounding the use of existing resources, mainly human resources, in planning for the Caloundra Youth Jail; a project that the community opposed strongly and a project that Labor attempted to force on the community by stealth.

Our Police require the best resources possible in order to help keep Queenslanders safe from crime and to respond to emergencies. The LNP has concerns that resources such as the Computer Aided Dispatch system, which was referred to in the 2019 Greenfield Strategic Review as “legacy”, is only now being upgraded. As was shown in the coronial inquest into the deaths of Hannah Clarke and her three children, the availability of information to frontline Police Officers in a timely and reliable manner is essential to ensuring the safety of Queenslanders.

Given the important role that Police play in the lives of Queenslanders and the issues highlighted during the Estimates Hearing, the LNP will continue to, on behalf of Queensland Police and the community, hold the State Government to account to ensure commitments are honoured.

Corrective Services

The Estimates Hearing reinforced the LNP Committee Members’ belief that the State Government is not serious about frontline service delivery for Corrective Services. Despite overcrowding and increasing levels of serious assaults by prisoners on Custodial Corrections Officers (COOs), the Labor Government has seen new staff members reduce over the last three years, from 746 to 344 to just nine in the current budget.

Further illustration of Labor’s failure to ensure staff safety was provided when the Commissioner revealed that none of the nine positions budgeted for will be CCOs. As we saw in the section of the Hearing dedicated to the Police portfolio, it is clear that staffing is a key issue in Corrective Services and the LNP raised concerns regarding the filling of additional positions that will be required to operate the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre once it is fully operational.

Evidence given to the Committee during the Estimates Hearing showed that approximately \$2 Million worth of damage was done during the riots at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre in 2020 and the Capricornia Correctional Centre in October 2021. When questioned about the seeking of restitution from those convicted of participating in the riots, the Commissioner advised that this was a matter for the courts. Given the cost of damage will be borne by taxpayers, the LNP Committee members believe that the State Government should be seeking full restitution for the damages caused.

The Minister’s response as to why prisoners were provided with ‘show bags’ valued at almost \$50,000 in the immediate aftermath of a riot would be concerning to all Corrective Services staff, and the wider community, particularly those staff who saved lives and waited over 18 months for recognition. The Minister indicated the question was “a bit insulting”. The LNP recognises the role of CCOs, and other Corrective Services staff, in protecting Queenslanders and will continue to advocate for their safety and for them to receive the credit due to them, especially in relation to dangerous incidents such as riots.

While the target for the installation of bunk beds in cells was met during the 2021-22 financial year, the LNP is concerned that the Labor State Government has ratified a permanent increase in prisoner density. It has previously been shown that increased prisoner density, that is an increase in the number of prisoners per cell, is a contributing factor to assaults on staff and prisoners.

The LNP Committee Members note that, despite advice at the Estimates Hearing that additional beds have been provided, the Service Delivery Statement shows that facility usage, or occupancy rate, remained at 125.8% as at June 30 2022, almost 30% higher than the target shown in the same document. It is clear that the State Government has failed to increase correctional centre capacity as needed and the LNP will continue to hold the Labor Government to account to ensure that additional capacity is provided in a timely manner to improve the safety of staff working in Queensland's correctional centres.

Fire and Emergency Services

As with both the Police and the Corrective Services portfolios, the LNP has expressed, and will continue to express, concerns with relation to staffing levels and recruitment into Queensland Fire & Emergency Services. With a net gain of only 65 firefighters in the year ending 30 June 2022, the Labor Government's 2020 election commitment of 357 new firefighters by 2025 is now in serious doubt. The LNP believes the responsible Minister needs to clarify that the commitment is for additional firefighters, not a recruitment target that ignores attrition as we have seen used in other departments.

The need for additional firefighters was made obvious during the Estimates Hearing when it was revealed that the yearly overtime expenditure for full time paid firefighters was \$29.94 million. Of this, \$19.04 million was for staff shortages to, in effect, just keep 'stations running'.

The LNP values and recognises the importance of paid QFES staff to all Queenslanders. The LNP also values and recognises the importance of volunteer services that operate under the remit of QFES. An indication of the immense contribution of volunteers was the Commissioner's evidence to the Committee that SES volunteers alone undertook 159,445 operational hours in the 2021-22 financial year.

Given the importance of the role of volunteers in assisting Queenslanders, the LNP questioned the Commissioner on ensuring volunteers have the appropriate training to undertake emergency response taskings. It is deeply concerning that the Commissioner said tasking of volunteers to undertake duties they are not qualified for "could potentially occur". The LNP will continue to hold the Government to account to ensure that all volunteers receive the training they require for the tasks they are assigned.

When questioned in relation to the KPMG review, both the Minister and the Commissioner could not provide any indication on when the findings of the report would be released. It is disgraceful that a report described by the Minister at Estimates Hearings on 14 December 2020 as 'in the best interests of Queenslanders', and paid for by Queenslanders, has still not been released. Queenslanders and QFES employees and volunteers have a right to know what was in that report.

Furthermore, the Commissioner advised he received a copy of the report 'prior to Christmas last year.' The Commissioner also confirmed that no Rural Fire Service officer, volunteer or volunteer representative had seen the report.

The withholding of the KPMG review by the Labor Government is the latest instalment of reports that directly affect volunteers, and the safety of Queenslanders, being withheld on Cabinet-in-Confidence grounds. The Minister's inference that the implementation of the KPMG review will "also

be informed by the Inspector-General's work" indicates that the release of this taxpayer funded report, and its implementation, may still be quite some time away. The LNP, and Queenslanders, await the release of the KPMG review, as well as the review of the SES that was provided to the Labor Government in March 2020.

The facilities and equipment provided to both paid and volunteer emergency responders must be of the highest standard possible to ensure the safety of the community as well as the staff and volunteers themselves. The LNP welcomes the Commissioner's commitment to take action on the QFES-owned facilities, used by Rural Fire Service volunteers, that are not connected to electricity or running water and/or do not have toilet facilities.

Further, the LNP welcomes the Commissioner's evidence that communications issues experienced by firefighters using Self Contained Breathing Apparatus will be addressed as part of the rollout of new firefighting helmets that are currently in the procurement phase. However, the LNP also notes that communications issues that pose a potential life-endangering threat to firefighters were previously raised by the Communication Technology Enhancement Committee directly with QFES and, additionally, the LNP raised it in the House, calling for a parliamentary inquiry through the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee to urgently inquire into this issue. The LNP calls on the Minister to ensure that similar issues do not arise again.

Conclusion

Having interrogated Ministers and officials throughout the Estimates process, the Opposition does not believe the Budget presented a sustainable solution to the significant problems facing the Queensland economy and Queenslanders.


Just as ambulance ramping and hospital waiting times were at critical levels last year, housing shortages continue to exist throughout the entire state, crime rates continue to increase, and critical infrastructure remained underfunded.

The 2022/23 Budget was a lost opportunity that will make the lives of Queenslanders even more difficult in the coming years.

The squandering of millions of dollars demonstrates that the Government has turned its back on the needs of Queenslanders and has lost control of the levers of public administration.



Laura Gerber MP
Deputy Chair
Member for Currumbin



Jon Krause MP
Member for Scenic Rim

Report No. 29, 57th Parliament — 2022-23 Budget Estimates

Statement of Reservation

Sandy Bolton MP Member for Noosa

While supporting Report No. 29 “2022-23 Budget Estimates”, I wish to again raise the need for a review of the estimates process and committee system.

As this need is well documented, including in submissions to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, there is no need to repeat it here.

However, it is important to highlight that further rationale for this review has been provided.

Firstly, the Coaldrake Report which came out in June recommended expanding the oversight role of the committees, specifically that “Integrity bodies independence be enhanced by involvement of parliamentary committees in setting their budgets and contributing to key appointments.”

Further, in response to a question on day one of the estimates hearings the Clerk of the Parliament stated that for the accountability of government the parliamentary committees have not necessarily been discharging some of the things that were envisaged in the 2011 review, and that we have a long way to go with regard to that accountability aspect and the work of committees.

To address this and the many submissions by myself and other MPs the Committee of the Legislative Assembly should review the Committee system and estimates process.

This and the implementation of the Coaldrake recommendations opens the opportunity for real change. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain: an efficient transparent and equitable system.

In closing I would like to note the many improvements in this year’s hearings and thank fellow committee members, Ministers and visitors, for making that possible, and express gratitude to our Secretariat for their work and to the Ministerial staff and departmental officers, as I understand the amount of work that goes into these hearings.

In addition, gratitude to our Chair, the Member for Toohey, who allowed opposition and cross-bench members extra time to ask additional questions than was allocated. This was deeply appreciated.



Sandy Bolton MP
Member for Noosa