



QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT

COMMITTEES

Annual Report 2022-23



Report No. 49, 57th Parliament

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

November 2023

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

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Deputy Chair	Jim McDonald MP, Member for Lockyer
Members	Michael Hart MP, Member for Burleigh
	Robbie Katter MP, Member for Traeger
	Jim Madden MP, Member for Ipswich West
	Tom Smith MP, Member for Bundaberg



The State Development and Regional Industries Committee of the 57th Parliament

Front row (L-R) Mr Michael Hart MP, Mr Chris Whiting MP (Chair), Mr Robbie Katter MP

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Acknowledgements

The committee acknowledges the assistance provided by the committee secretariat, the Queensland Parliamentary Service, departmental officers, and other organisations and individuals who have contributed to the work of the committee.

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Chair's foreword

This report details the activities of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

In accordance with section 108 of the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, this report includes a summary of issues considered by the committee, a brief description of Ministers' responses to committee recommendations, a statement of revenue and spending for the year, and a list of committee meetings and names of members attending or absent from each meeting.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the work of the committee during this reporting period.

I also thank my fellow committee members for their ongoing dedication and collaborative approach and the committee's secretariat and parliamentary staff for their professional support throughout the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Whiting', written in a cursive style.

Chris Whiting MP

Chair

Report in brief

In the 2022-23 financial year, the committee:					
	examined		considered		reviewed
	5		11		45
	bills		reports of the Auditor- General		pieces of subordinate legislation

The State Development and Regional Industries Committee is a portfolio committee with responsibility for:

- State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
- Agricultural Industry Development, Fisheries and Rural Communities
- Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water.¹

The committee’s examination of bills during the year included proposals to:

- modernise Queensland’s animal welfare laws to reflect modern scientific knowledge, community attitudes and expectations, and to implement recommendations from the *Inquiry into animal cruelty in the management of retired Thoroughbred and Standardbred horses in Queensland* and the Auditor-General’s Report 6: 2021-22 - *Regulating animal welfare services*²
- establish a regulatory framework to implement an expansion of existing arrangements for the measurement and reporting of non-urban water take³
- implement an electoral expenditure caps scheme for local government in Queensland.⁴

Following consideration of these bills, the committee recommended that each of them be passed. It also made 7 recommendations designed to clarify or improve the operation of the legislation proposed in the bills, which were accepted by the government. One recommendation for the government to consider future legislative amendments was noted and referred to the Attorney General and Minister for Justice for consideration.

In addition to scrutinising legislation, the committee undertook 2 self-referred inquiries. The inquiry into the functions of the Independent Assessor commenced in the previous financial year and concluded in October 2022. The inquiry into the impact of climate change on Queensland agricultural production was still in progress as at 30 June 2023.

In July and August 2022, the committee examined portfolio budget estimates for 2022-23.

The committee also considered examined 11 Auditor-General reports during the year and maintained its oversight of the Independent Assessor.

The committee’s total expenditure for the year was \$419,822.

¹ As set out in Schedule 6 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

² Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022.

³ Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022.

⁴ Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022.

1 Functions of the committee

The State Development and Regional Industries Committee is a portfolio committee responsible for:

- State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
- Agricultural Industry Development, Fisheries and Rural Communities
- Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water.⁵

The committee has a broad range of responsibilities within its portfolio area, as detailed in Figure 1 below. These responsibilities are set out in the *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*.⁶ The committee is also responsible for overseeing the performance of the Independent Assessor, as detailed in Schedule 6 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

Figure 1: Committees are responsible for oversight of many matters within their portfolio areas



2 Overview of committee activities

In 2022-23, the committee engaged with a range of stakeholders who made submissions to its inquiries, as well as representatives of government departments and agencies, the Auditor-General and the Independent Assessor.

As detailed in Table 1 (over page) which summarises the activities of the committee in the last financial year, the committee heard from 92 witnesses across 14 public briefings, 3 public hearings and 2 private briefings. The evidence provided by these witnesses assisted the committee to conduct its work, including 5 bill inquiries, 2 self-referred inquiries, and consideration of 11 Auditor-General's reports.

Members' attendance at committee proceedings is set out in **Appendix A** of this report.

The committee's reports during 2022-23 are available from the committee's webpage: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/SDRIC.

⁵ As set out in Schedule 6 of the Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly.

⁶ Sections 92-94.

Table 1: Committee activities, by type, 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Activity	Number
Committee meetings	28
Public briefings	14
Private briefings	2
Public hearings – Brisbane	3
Witnesses questioned at private and public briefings and hearings	92
Inquiry submissions received	83
Site visits and stakeholder meetings	13
Meetings/briefings with Schedule 6 oversight bodies ⁷	1
Bill inquiries	5
Pieces of subordinate legislation examined	45
Public account inquiries: Examination of portfolio budget estimates	1
Auditor-General reports examined	11
Inquiries into other matters (self-referred)	2
Reports tabled	20

3 Examination of budget estimates

In July and August 2022, the committee examined the 2022-23 budget estimates for its portfolio areas, which totalled approximately \$4.8 billion.⁸ The committee held an estimates hearing with the relevant portfolio Ministers on 27 July 2022.

The committee 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.

The Legislative Assembly passed the Appropriation Bill 2023 without amendment on 17 August 2022.

⁷ The Independent Assessor.

⁸ See State Development and Regional Industries Committee, *Report No. 24, 57th Parliament, 2022-2023 Budget Estimates*, August 2022.

4 Bill inquiries

When it examines legislation, the committee is responsible for considering:

- the policy to be given effect by the legislation
- whether it complies with basic standards for laws, known as ‘fundamental legislative principles’
- whether it is compatible with the human rights of people in Queensland
- whether subordinate legislation is lawful.

The committee conducted 5 bill inquiries in 2022-23, 2 of which were in progress at the end of the financial year.

The committee reported on 3 bills during the year, recommending that each be passed, and also made additional recommendations, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Bills examined by the committee, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023

Bill	Report no.	Recommendations
Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022	23	3
Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022	34	4
Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022	37	4
Queensland Climate Transition Bill 2023	Inquiry ongoing as at 30 June 2023	
Planning (Inclusionary Zoning Strategy) Amendment Bill 2023	Inquiry ongoing as at 30 June 2023	

4.1 Animal Care and Protection Amendment Bill 2022

The stated objectives of the Bill were to modernise Queensland’s animal welfare laws to reflect modern scientific knowledge, community attitudes and expectations, and to implement recommendations from the *Inquiry into animal cruelty in the management of retired Thoroughbred and Standardbred horses in Queensland* (Martin Inquiry) and the Queensland Audit Office’s report *Regulating animal welfare services (Report 6: 2021-22)* (QAO report).

The Bill proposed amendments to the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*, *Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936*, *Racing Integrity Act 2016* and *Disability Services Act 2006* to:

- facilitate the ethical use of animals for scientific purposes while protecting their welfare
- strengthen enforcement powers to address risks to animal welfare by clarifying or prescribing new offences
- prohibit inhumane practices, such as the firing or blistering of the legs of dogs or horses, the use of prong collars, and the use of certain poisons on pest animals
- create an approved accreditation scheme which will allow a non-veterinarian to perform certain procedures on cattle
- clarify legislation and remove redundant provisions
- implement recommendations from the Martin Inquiry, including those relating to the monitoring of livestock slaughter facilities
- implement government-supported recommendations of the QAO report, aimed at strengthening the oversight of RSPCA inspectors.

The committee accepted 1,495 submissions and held a public briefing, 2 public hearings, and a private hearing in the previous financial year.⁹ The committee conducted site visits to meet with stakeholders in 2 regional locations in relation to the inquiry.¹⁰

The committee tabled the report of its inquiry on 1 July 2022, recommending that the Bill be passed. The committee also recommended that the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) continue to work with the Australian Government in relation to a prohibition on the import of dog collars incorporating protrusions designed to puncture or bruise an animal's skin; and that DAF continue to implement the Auditor-General's recommendations on regulating animal welfare and monitor RSPCA Queensland's animal welfare inspectorate work.

The recommendations were accepted by the government, with the Minister providing advice that the Queensland Government will continue to work with colleagues in the Australian Government in relation to the prohibition on the import of the dog collars, and will continue to implement the QAO recommendations in full.

The Bill was passed on 2 December 2022.

4.2 Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

The primary objective of the Bill was to amend the *Water Act 2000* (Water Act) to establish a regulatory framework for implementing a changed approach for measuring the take of non-urban water, resulting from Queensland Government commitments in response to the Independent Audit of Queensland Non-urban Water Measurement and Compliance report and the Murray-Darling Basin Compliance Compact.

The Bill proposed:

- to expand existing arrangements to broaden the type of equipment and devices that holders of a metered entitlement may take water, to ensure that both simple take (e.g. where water is pumped directly from a river or an aquifer) and complex take (e.g. where overland flow is captured through diversion works and the water is stored in on-farm storage) can be measured
- to allow the installation of telemetry in some areas to improve the receipt of information about water take
- that entitlement holders be required to prepare a management plan which sets out the measurement system that they will use to measure and calculate the water they take, with the aim of improving the way overland flow water take is measured and reported
- amendments to the Water Act, the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*, and the *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring Act) 2009* to improve the operational efficiency of these Acts
- minor operational and technical amendments to the framework for managing underground water.

The committee accepted 17 submissions to its inquiry and held a public briefing and a public hearing. The committee tabled the report of its inquiry on 9 December 2022.

The committee recommended that the Bill be passed. The committee made 3 further recommendations, that the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water (DRDMW):

⁹ Public briefing in Brisbane on 23 May 2022, public hearings in Brisbane on 14 and 15 June 2022, and private hearing in Brisbane on 14 June 2023; see also State Development and Regional Industries Committee, *Report No 29, 57th Parliament – Annual Report 2021-22*, October 2022, <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/tp/2022/5722T1815-4F40.pdf>.

¹⁰ Site visits to Roma Saleyards on 5 July 2023 and Charleville Abattoir on 6 July 2023.

- continue to monitor cost implications and transition time needed to implement strengthened measurement requirements
- provide the Water Engagement Forum with exposure drafts of regulations in advance of implementation and that a review of regulations be conducted after a period of no more than 5 years
- develop and publish a clear framework that specifies how reported data will be collected, used, distributed and published.

All recommendations were accepted by the government. The government response provided advice on the department's actions and commitments to implementing the committee's recommendations.

The Bill was passed with amendment on 14 September 2023.

4.3 Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022

The objective of the Bill was to implement an electoral expenditure caps scheme for local government in Queensland, with the following key features:

- local government electoral expenditure caps for:
 - councillor and mayoral candidates
 - groups of candidates
 - registered political parties that endorse a candidate in an election
 - third parties (registered and unregistered)
- the Electoral Commission of Queensland to decide and publish enrolment numbers for local government areas and divisions and the corresponding caps
- prescription of certain offences as integrity or serious integrity offences under the *Local Government Act 2009* and *City of Brisbane Act 2010*.

The committee accepted 25 submissions and held a public briefing and a public hearing for its inquiry.

The committee tabled the report of its inquiry on 24 February 2023. The committee recommended that the Bill be passed and made 3 additional recommendations:

- that the Minister include training on electoral expenditure caps in the training and professional development requirement for councillors and local government candidates
- that the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DSDILGP) consider conducting a review of the electoral expenditure caps scheme within 12 months of the 2024 local government elections, and that the key findings of the review be published
- that the Queensland Government consider future legislative amendments to ensure that independent candidates in local government elections are not unintentionally lawfully prevented from holding fundraising activities.

The government accepted the recommendations regarding training for councillors and candidates and a review of the expenditure cap scheme. The committee's recommendation that the government consider future legislative amendments to ensure that independent candidates are not prevented from holding fundraising activities was noted and referred to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice for consideration.

The Bill was passed with amendment on 18 April 2023.

4.4 Queensland Climate Transition Bill 2023

The objectives of the Private Member's Bill are to:

- support Queensland to meet its obligations under the Paris Agreement to keep global heating to 2°C, preferably 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions

- establish a new statutory authority to develop and implement a strategic climate transition plan that manages compensation, training and job opportunities for workers and local communities affected by the transition away from fossil fuels.

During 2022-23, the committee accepted 24 submissions to its inquiry and held 2 public briefings.

As at 30 June 2023, the committee's inquiry was on-going.

4.5 Planning (Inclusionary Zoning Strategy) Amendment Bill 2023

The objectives of the Private Member's Bill are to build housing, by requiring developers to do so, and to integrate public housing with other residential areas in order to maximise social inclusion.

The Bill proposes to achieve these objectives by enacting an inclusionary zoning strategy under which developers will be required to dedicate 25 per cent of new residential dwellings, including apartment buildings and housing estates, as public housing. The Bill would require the Queensland Government to introduce the strategy into Queensland Parliament within 2 months of the Bill's date of assent.

The committee accepted 20 submissions to its inquiry and held a public briefing during the year.

As at 30 June 2023, the committee's inquiry was on-going.

5 Other inquiries

The committee undertook 13 other inquiries during 2022-23 in relation to public accounts, public works and its other responsibilities.

5.1 Public accounts inquiries

The committee is responsible for assessing the public accounts of entities within its portfolio areas with regard to the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of financial management. This responsibility includes examination of government financial documents including annual reports, and reports of the Auditor-General relevant to the committee's portfolio areas.¹¹

5.1.1 Auditor-General reports

The committee's role includes consideration of reports of the Auditor-General that fall within its portfolio areas.¹² The Auditor-General leads the Queensland Audit Office (QAO), which is the independent auditor of the public sector. The Auditor-General reports to parliament on the results of the QAO's audit work, providing insights and advice, and recommendations for improvement.

In 2022-23, the committee considered 11 reports of the Auditor-General. The committee held 4 public briefings with the Auditor-General, QAO officials and relevant agencies during the year in the process of considering the reports.

The Auditor-General reports considered by the committee are shown in Table 3, with a summary regarding each report in the sections that follow.

¹¹ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, s 94(1).

¹² *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, s 94(1).

Table 4: Auditor-General reports considered in 2022-23

Auditor-General report	Consideration completed/ongoing	Committee report no.	Committee recommendations
Report 18: 2018-19 — <i>Local government entities: 2017-18 results of financial audits</i> ¹³	completed	32	1
Report 2: 2019-20 — <i>Managing the sustainability of local government services</i> ¹³	completed	32	1
Report 13: 2019-20 — <i>Local government entities: 2018-19 results of financial audits</i> ¹³	completed	32	1
Report 9: 2020-21 — <i>Water 2020</i>	completed	38	1
Report 17: 2020-21 — <i>Local government 2020</i>	completed	32	1
Report 3: 2021-22 — <i>Water 2021</i>	completed	38	1
Report 6: 2021-22 — <i>Regulating animal welfare services</i>	completed	42	0
Report 9: 2021-22 — <i>Regulating dam safety</i>	completed	33	1
Report 15: 2021-22 — <i>Local government 2021</i>	completed	32	1
Report 16: 2021-22 — <i>Contract management for new infrastructure</i>	completed	39	2
Report 7: 2022-23 — <i>Major projects 2022</i>	ongoing		

5.1.1.1 Examination of Auditor-General Reports on the local government sector

The committee tabled a report of its consideration of 5 Auditor-General reports from 2018-19 to 2021-22 relating to Queensland's local government sector (Report No. 32), on 28 November 2022. These Auditor-General reports are outlined below.

The committee recommended that all local governments be required to establish an independent audit and risk management committee. The Queensland Government supported the recommendation in principle, advising however that it did not propose to amend to the *Local Government Act 2009*.

Report 18: 2018-19 — Local government entities: 2017-18 results of financial audits

Auditor-General Report 18: 2018-19 — *Local government entities: 2017-18 results of financial audits* summarises the financial audit results of the 77 local governments in Queensland for the year ended 30 June 2018, as well as examining the financial results of the 83 entities controlled by Queensland local governments.

The report made 8 recommendations. For councils, recommendations included improving financial reporting processes, strengthening the security of information systems, and enhancing procurement and contract management practices. For DSDILGP, recommendations included requiring all councils to establish audit committees with an independent chairperson, developing new financial sustainability ratios, and providing greater certainty to councils over long term funding.

¹³ These reports were initially referred to the former Economics and Governance Committee but the examination lapsed on dissolution of the 56th Parliament in October 2020. At the beginning of the 57th Parliament, the committee resolved to continue examination of the Auditor General reports that lapsed on dissolution of the 56th Parliament and were within the committee's areas of responsibility.

Report 2: 2019-20 — Managing the sustainability of local government services

Auditor-General Report 2: 2019-20 — *Managing the sustainability of local government services* summarises the results of an audit of 5 Queensland councils on their management of the financial sustainability of the services they deliver. The QAO also included the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs (DLGRMA) in the audit as it provides support and advice to councils as well as providing the operating framework through legislation and regulation that aims to improve councils' accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

The report examined the councils' service planning for their communities, their understanding of the value communities obtain from services, their understanding of the full cost of providing the services, and their monitoring and reporting on service performance to identify opportunities to improve service efficiency and effectiveness.

The report made 8 recommendations to the 5 audited councils intended to apply to all councils in Queensland, and 2 recommendations to DLGRMA for the development of supporting frameworks, documents and measures to assist councils in improving their financial sustainability.

Report 13: 2019-20 — Local government entities: 2018-19 results of financial audits

Auditor-General Report 13: 2019-20 — *Local government entities: 2018-19 results of financial audits* summarises the audit results of Queensland's 77 local government entities (councils) and the entities they control, for the year ended 30 June 2019.

The report contains recommendations for actions by councils to strengthen governance frameworks, strengthen internal controls and processes, secure employee and supplier information, improve cyber security awareness, strengthen asset management, improve financial management, improve the timeliness of financial reporting to communities, improve monitoring of controlled entities and long-term obligations for landfill rehabilitation, and improve new system implementations.

The QAO also recommended the DLGRMA implement legislative changes to require all councils to have audit committees with independent chairs, as well reviewing the current financial sustainability ratios for local governments, and requiring entities controlled by councils to make their financial statements publicly available.

Report 17: 2020-21 — Local government 2020

Report 17: 2020-21 — *Local government 2020* summarises the financial audit results of Queensland's 77 local government entities (councils) and the entities they control, for the year ended 30 June 2020.

The report made 5 recommendations for councils which include improving financial reporting processes, strengthening the security of information systems and risk management processes, and enhancing procurement and contract management practices.

Four recommendations to DSDILGP included requiring all councils to establish audit committees with an independent chairperson, developing new financial sustainability ratios, providing greater certainty to councils over long term funding, and providing training in financial governance to councillors and senior leadership teams.

Report 15: 2021-22 — Local government 2021

The Auditor-General Report 15: 2021-22 — *Local government 2021* summarises the financial audit results of Queensland's 77 local government entities (councils) and the entities they control, for the year ended 30 June 2021.

The report made 6 recommendations to councils, in addition to those made in prior years that remained unresolved. The recommendations related to councils:

- reassessing maturity levels of their financial statement preparation processes
- assessing their audit committees against the actions in the 2020-21 audit committee report
- improving the overall control environment

- reviewing asset management plans to confirm that plans include planned spending on capital project
- reviewing asset consumption ratios in preparation for the new sustainability framework
- enhancing their liquidity management.

5.1.1.2 Examination of Auditor-General Reports on the water sector

The committee reported on its consideration of Auditor-General reports from 2020-21 and 2021-22 relating to Queensland's water sector (Report No. 38), which was tabled on 24 February 2023. These Auditor-General reports are outlined below.

The committee recommended that DRDMW take steps to ensure that all water entities establish their own independent audit and risk management committees, and that the committees be required to consider information management system and cyber security risks. The Queensland Government supported the recommendation, noting the water entities included in the audit have independent audit and risk management committees as part of their existing governance structures.

Report 9: 2020-21 — Water 2020

Report 9: 2020-21 — *Water 2020* summarises the audit results of 6 entities in Queensland's water sector: Seqwater, Sunwater, Urban Utilities, Unitywater, Gladstone Area Water Board, and Mount Isa Water Board.

The report made 3 recommendations: that all entities strengthen the security of information systems and ensure they understand complex employee arrangements arising from the interaction of employee contracts with enterprise agreements, and that the distributor-retailers (Urban Utilities and Unitywater) improve timely recognition of donated assets (charges paid by developers through the donation of assets such as water and sewerage infrastructure).

Report 3: 2021-22 — Water 2021

Auditor-General Report 3: 2021-22 — *Water 2021* summarises the audit results of 6 entities in Queensland's water sector: Seqwater, Sunwater, Urban Utilities, Unitywater, Gladstone Area Water Board, and Mount Isa Water Board.

The QAO noted that water entities had actioned 2 of the 3 recommendations made in the previous year's report (Report 9: 2020-21 — *Water 2020*) for more timely recognition of donated assets by Urban Utilities and Unitywater, and implementation of processes to understand complex employee arrangements associated with enterprise agreements.

The report made one recommendation that the water entities address the security of their information systems.

5.1.1.3 Report 6: 2021-22 — Regulating animal welfare services

Auditor-General Report 6: 2021-22 — *Regulating animal welfare services* summarises the results of an audit to assess the effectiveness of DAF's engagement with the RSPCA Queensland in delivering animal welfare services. The audit did not assess each party's processes for delivering animal welfare services.

The QAO found that the framework through which DAF provides animal welfare services should be strengthened to provide for better oversight of RSPCA Queensland inspectors and ensure consistency in enforcement approaches across the state. The QAO also found DAF has not been using all the means it has under the current framework to oversee, guide, and support RSPCA Queensland in enforcing the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*. The report made 5 recommendations related to strengthening the legislative framework and clarifying and strengthening DAF's role and oversight practices.

The committee tabled a report of its consideration of Auditor-General Report 6 on 30 May 2023.

5.1.1.4 Report 9: 2021-22 — Regulating dam safety

The Auditor-General Report 9: 2021-22 — *Regulating dam safety* summarises the results of an audit to examine how DRDMW collects and uses information to manage risks to dam safety. The QAO found that DRDMW has the key elements of an effective regulatory framework, but it is not effectively or consistently applying some important elements of the framework. The audit found that there are gaps in the way DRDMW collects and manages the information it needs, how it targets risks, and how it acts on non-compliance.

The QAO made 9 recommendations relating to improving the implementation and application of the regulatory framework and approach to dam safety by DRDMW to ensure greater compliance.

The committee tabled a report of its consideration of Auditor-General Report 9 on 5 December 2022 which recommended that government entities, such as bulk water providers and relevant local governments, be required to add independent audit and risk management committees to their governance structure. The government supported this recommendation to the extent that it relates to bulk water providers.

5.1.1.5 Report 16: 2021-22 — Contract management for new infrastructure

Auditor-General Report 16: 2021-22 — *Contract management for new infrastructure* examined how effectively government entities designed their contract management frameworks and applied them to contracts for new infrastructure projects. The audit focused on the Department of Energy and Public Works and the Department of Education who, between them, deliver approximately 60 per cent of the state's infrastructure projects.

The QAO made 11 recommendations to assist entities in designing and implementing infrastructure contract frameworks.

The committee tabled a report of its consideration of Auditor-General Report 16 on 1 March 2023, recommending that within 12 months the committee further examine the progress of implementation of the QAO's recommendations by the Department of Energy and Public Works and the Department of Education.

5.1.1.6 Report 7: 2022-23 — Major projects 2022

Auditor-General Report 7: 2022-23 — *Major projects 2022* is an audit brief on Queensland's major infrastructure projects and expenditure by the Queensland Government. The report provided details of expenditure across Queensland's regions and within government portfolios over 5 years, the status of the Cross River Rail project, an assessment of the Cross River Rail's procurement and contract management plans, and an overview of future and planned major projects.

As at 30 June 2023, the committee's consideration of the report was ongoing.

5.2 Public works inquiries

The committee may consider public works undertaken by an entity that is a constructing authority¹⁴ for the works, or consider any major works,¹⁵ with its portfolio areas.

The committee did not conduct a public works inquiry during the financial year.

¹⁴ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, s 96.

¹⁵ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, s 94.

5.3 Inquiries into other matters

The committee is required to deal with an issue referred to it by the Legislative Assembly,¹⁶ or may initiate an inquiry into any other matter in relation to its portfolio areas that the committee considers appropriate.¹⁷

5.3.1 Inquiry into the functions of the Office of the Independent Assessor

In November 2021, the committee initiated an inquiry into the functions of the Independent Assessor. The inquiry followed a period of public commentary regarding the actions of the Independent Assessor and a request from the Deputy Premier resulting from concerns raised by the local government sector.

The committee considered 60 submissions and held public hearings in Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, Karumba, Mount Isa, Bundaberg, Toowoomba and the Gold Coast between January and March 2022. Many elected officials and council officials took the opportunity to share their insights into the operation of the councillor conduct complaints system, and opportunities for reform of the system.

The committee consulted with stakeholders throughout the reporting period, including on the draft recommendations for the committee's final report.

The committee's report was tabled on 14 October 2022 and made 40 recommendations. The government supported 22 of the recommendations and supported in-principle the remaining 18.

5.3.2 Inquiry into the impact of climate change on Queensland agricultural production

On 24 January 2023 the committee initiated an inquiry into the impacts of climate change on Queensland agricultural production.

The committee's terms of reference are to inquire into and report on:

- a) the impacts of climate change and climate variability on Queensland agricultural production and the existing and potential future risks of climate change on the sector
- b) opportunities for the Queensland Government to create and support resilience, adaptation and mitigation measures in preparing the agricultural sector for future climate change.

During 2022-23, the committee held briefings with industry stakeholders and scientific and academic experts, including the Bureau of Meteorology, National Farmers' Federation and CSIRO, in Brisbane, Cairns and Canberra, and undertook site visits to meet with industry stakeholders in Cairns and Brisbane.¹⁸

The inquiry was ongoing as at 30 June 2023.

6 Scrutiny of subordinate legislation

Subordinate legislation is legislation made by a department or other entity under powers given to them by an act of parliament. All subordinate legislation must be tabled in the Legislative Assembly, which can disallow it by resolution.¹⁹ To help it decide whether or not to do so, the Legislative

¹⁶ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, s 92(2).

¹⁷ *Parliament of Queensland Act 2001*, s 92(1)(d).

¹⁸ Private briefing, Brisbane, 21 March 2023; Queensland University of Technology Centre for Tropical Crops and Biocommodities Laboratory, Brisbane, 21 March 2023; Redlands and Queensland Crop Development Facility, Redlands, 22 March 2023; Private briefing, Brisbane, 22 March 2023; Cairns Airport Mangrove Boardwalk, Cairns, 12 May 2023; Cairns Institute, Cairns, 12 May 2023; Public briefing, Brisbane, 31 May 2023; University of Queensland Elkhorn Facility, Brisbane, 31 May 2023; Bureau of Meteorology, Canberra, 1 June 2023; CSIRO, Canberra, 1 June 2023; National Farmers' Federation, Canberra, 1 June 2023.

¹⁹ *Statutory Instruments Act 1992*, ss 49 and 50.

Assembly refers each item of subordinate legislation to the relevant portfolio committee for consideration.

When examining subordinate legislation, each committee considers a range of matters, including:

- whether it has sufficient regard for fundamental legislative principles
- whether it is consistent with the human rights of people in Queensland
- whether the explanatory notes provide an adequate explanation of why the subordinate legislation is needed and what it does
- its lawfulness.

During 2022-23, the committee examined 45 pieces of subordinate legislation. The committee held a public briefing and conducted a site visit with affected stakeholders during the year in the process of its examination of subordinate legislation.

As shown in Table 5, the committee identified matters relating to fundamental legislative principles or human rights in less than half of the subordinate legislation it examined and reported on in 2022-23. Where issues were identified, in each case the committee was ultimately satisfied that the subordinate legislation had sufficient regard for fundamental legislative principles, and any limitations of human rights were reasonable and justified in the circumstances.

The committee made 3 recommendations in relation to explanatory notes that accompanied subordinate legislation considered during the year:²⁰

- Rural and Regional Adjustment (Horticultural Netting Program – Trial Expansion) Amendment Regulation 2022 – that DAF take steps to ensure that supporting documents are available at the same time that subordinate legislation is tabled
- Water Plan (Fitzroy Basin) Amendment Plan 2022 – that DRDMW clarify a discrepancy between the subordinate legislation and the explanatory notes
- Planning (Economic Support Instruments) Amendment Regulation 2023 – that DSDILGP provide the committee with the results of the stakeholder consultation on the regulation.

In all cases the government either accepted the committee's recommendation or provided the requested information.

Table 5: Portfolio subordinate legislation examined, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023

Report No.	Subordinate legislation	Matters identified		Explanatory notes adequate
		Fundamental legislative principles	Human rights	
25	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Tourism Business Professional Advice Rebate Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022	1	0	✓
	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Tourism and Hospitality Sector Hardship Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022	1	0	✓

²⁰ With the exception of these matters, the committee considered that the explanatory notes tabled with all subordinate legislation complied with part 4 of the *Legislative Standards Act 1992*. The committee noted that all of the human rights certificates tabled with the subordinate legislation examined and reported on in 2022-23 provided sufficient information to consider compatibility with human rights.

Report No.	Subordinate legislation	Matters identified		Explanatory notes adequate
		Fundamental legislative principles	Human rights	
	State Development and Public Works Organisation (State Development Areas) (Gladstone) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Agriculture and Fisheries Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Rural Agricultural Development Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022	1	0	✓
26	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Horticultural Netting Program - Trial Expansion) Amendment Regulation 2022	1	0	✗
	Water (Fee Unit Conversion) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Fisheries (Hammerhead Sharks) Amendment Declaration 2022	1	1	✓
	Fisheries (Coral) Amendment Declaration 2022	1	1	✓
27	Planning Legislation (Fee Unit Conversion and Other Amounts) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Zero Emission Vehicle Rebate Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022	1	0	✓
	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Rural and Regional Adjustment Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland Regulation 2022	0	2	✓
	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Resilient Homes Assistance Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
30	Water Plan (Fitzroy Basin) (Postponement of Expiry) Notice 2022	0	0	✓
	Energy and Water Ombudsman Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Sugar Industry Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
31	Water Plan (Fitzroy Basin) Amendment Plan 2022	0	0	✗
	Planning (Economic Support Instruments) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	1	✗
	Rural and Regional Adjustment and Other Legislation (Brisbane River Tourism Berthing Assistance Scheme and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Natural Disaster-related Assistance Schemes) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓

Report No.	Subordinate legislation	Matters identified		Explanatory notes adequate
		Fundamental legislative principles	Human rights	
35	Fisheries (Spanish Mackerel) Amendment Declaration 2022	1	2	✓
36	Planning (Secondary Dwellings) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Water Plan (Pioneer Valley) (Postponement of Expiry) Notice 2022	0	0	✓
	Planning (Emergency Housing) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
40	Fisheries (Effort Caps and Other Matters) Amendment Declaration 2022	1	1	✓
	State Penalties Enforcement (Dam Safety) Amendment Regulation 2022	1	1	✓
41	Fisheries (Commercial Fisheries) Amendment Regulation 2022	1	0	✓
	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022	1	0	✓
	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Resilient Homes Assistance Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Water Amendment Regulation 2022	1	1	✓
	Planning (Rooming Accommodation) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	1	✓
	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Variation of Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2022	0	0	✓
	Water Plan (Barron) (Postponement of Expiry) Notice 2022	0	0	✓
	Fisheries Legislation Amendment Declaration 2022	1	2	✓
	Planning Amendment Regulation 2022	0	1	✓
	Biosecurity (Varroa Mite and Other Matters) Amendment Regulation 2023	1	0	✓
	Economic Development (Variation of Caloundra South UDA) Amendment Regulation 2023	0	1	✓
	Planning (Caboolture West Interim Structure Plan) Amendment Regulation 2023	0	1	✓
Under examination as at 30 June 2023	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Boosting Accessible Tourism Experiences Grant Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023			
	Fisheries Quota (Regulated Coral Trout) Amendment Declaration 2023			
	Fisheries Legislation (Coral) Amendment Regulation 2023			

Report No.	Subordinate legislation	Matters identified		Explanatory notes adequate
		Fundamental legislative principles	Human rights	
	Rural and Regional Adjustment (Carbon Farming Advice Assistance Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023			
	Local Government Electoral Regulation 2023			

7 Consideration of forms authorised by legislation

The committee's responsibilities include monitoring the operation of s 48 of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1954* in relation to legislation within its portfolio area. That section sets out a number of requirements for forms, including how forms must be notified and made available to the public.

During 2022-23, there were no forms within the committee's portfolio areas notified in the *Queensland Government Gazette*.

8 Statutory oversight

Standing Order 194A read with Schedule 6 of the Standing Orders, sets out the committee's oversight functions and responsibilities in respect of the Independent Assessor.

8.1 Oversight of the Independent Assessor

The committee has oversight responsibility for the Independent Assessor, whose role is to investigate and assess complaints made about individual local government councillors. The committee's functions include monitoring and reviewing the Independent Assessor's performance of the functions of the office.²¹ The committee does not have the power to re-investigate complaints made to the Independent Assessor or reconsider a decision or finding of the Independent Assessor. The committee does not act as an appeal body in respect of decisions made by the Independent Assessor.

The committee received a public briefing from the Independent Assessor, Ms Kathleen Florian, and staff from the Office of the Independent Assessor on 12 June 2023. Briefing material provided by the Independent Assessor, including a snapshot of key performance indicators, is published on the committee's website.²²

9 Committee expenditure

Committees are funded from the appropriation made to the Legislative Assembly and rarely generate revenue. After funding is allocated for the Committee Office as a whole, expenditure by individual committees is determined by their specific requirements and volume of work. Travel expenditure is subject to an additional approval process.

²¹ Legislative Assembly of Queensland, *Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly*, Standing Order 194(a).

²² Office of the Independent Assessor, correspondence, Operational Report and further information, 30 June 2023, p 1, <https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/com/SDRIC-F506/OIA-64B9/OIA%20Operational%20Report%20and%20further%20information%20-%2030%20June%202023%20to%20publish.pdf>

In 2022-23, the committee's total expenditure was \$419,822. The committee did not receive any revenue.

Figure 2 below shows the three main areas of expenditure. As Figure 2 illustrates, employee expenses for the secretariat staff who support the committee comprised the majority (approximately 88 per cent) of expenditure. The committee's secretariat is a three-person team, supplemented with additional resources from across the Committee Office as needed throughout the year.

Figure 2: Main areas of committee expenditure in 2022-23



After staffing expenses, committee travel costs incurred to conduct briefings and site visits in regional and interstate locations, was the next highest expense for the committee. Meeting expenses were the third largest area of expenditure.

Table 7 provides a more detailed breakdown of the committee's expenditure for the year. Technology expenses, and expenditure on legal advice which allowed the committee to obtain expert briefings on each bill's compliance with the *Human Rights Act 2019*, were also significant expenses.

Table 7: Expenditure of the committee, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023

Item	\$
Employee expenses	370,809
Meeting expenses (which includes broadcast support)	11,523
Technology (software licences, telephones, teleconferencing & videoconferencing)	6,543
Legal advice	4,160
Printing and supplies	1,704
Advertising	--
Committee travel (including business travel)	25,083
Total expenditure	419,822

Appendix A: Meeting attendance record

Table A1 below shows the attendance of committee members at private committee meetings (PrM), public briefings (PB), private briefings (PrB) and private hearings (PrH), and public hearings (PH) during the reporting period.

Standing Order 202(1) provides that in the case of a committee members' illness or inability to attend, another member may be appointed to attend that meeting or stand in for a particular inquiry. The details of these appointments are included in the footnotes.

Table A1: Meeting attendance record, 1 July 2022 – 30 June 2023

Meeting Date	Activity	Chris Whiting MP (Chair)	Jim McDonald MP (Deputy Chair)	Michael Hart MP	Robbie Katter MP	Jim Madden MP	Tom Smith MP
12 July 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27 July 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27 July 2022	PH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8 August 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15 August 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
29 August 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
29 August 2022	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
29 August 2022	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
29 August 2022	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13 September 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10 October 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
10 October 2022	PB	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
10 October 2022	PB	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
11 October 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
17 October 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
24 October 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
24 October 2022	PB	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
7 November 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7 November 2022	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Meeting Date	Activity	Chris Whiting MP (Chair)	Jim McDonald MP (Deputy Chair)	Michael Hart MP	Robbie Katter MP	Jim Madden MP	Tom Smith MP
11 November 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
14 November 2022	PH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗ ²³	✗ ²⁴
28 November 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5 December 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✗ ²⁵	✓	✗ ²⁶	✓
14 December 2022	PB	✓	✓	✗ ²⁷	✗	✗ ²⁸	✓
24 January 2022	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
31 January 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
31 January 2023	PH	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14 February 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20 February 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13 March 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13 March 2023	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21 March 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21 March 2023	PrB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22 March 2023	PrB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27 March 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27 March 2023	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
17 April 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27 April 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓

²³ Jessica Pugh MP replaced Jim Madden MP as a committee member on 14 November 2022 under SO202(1).

²⁴ James Martin MP replaced Tom Smith MP as a committee member on 14 November 2022 under SO202(1).

²⁵ Andrew Powell MP replaced Michael Hart MP as a committee member on 5 December 2022 under SO202(1).

²⁶ Jessica Pugh MP replaced Jim Madden MP as a committee member on 5 December 2022 under SO202(1).

²⁷ Tim Mander MP replaced Michael Hart MP as a committee member on 14 December 2022 under SO202(1).

²⁸ James Martin MP replaced Jim Madden MP as a committee member on 14 December 2022 under SO202(1).

Meeting Date	Activity	Chris Whiting MP (Chair)	Jim McDonald MP (Deputy Chair)	Michael Hart MP	Robbie Katter MP	Jim Madden MP	Tom Smith MP
15 May 2023	PrM	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
22 May 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22 May 2023	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22 May 2023	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
31 May 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
31 May 2023	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12 June 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12 June 2023	PB	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20 June 2023	PrM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Legend: PrM private meeting PB public briefing
 PrB private briefing PH public hearing
 PrH private hearing