



Estimates Committee D

2010

Report to the Legislative Assembly

INTRODUCTION

On 20 May 2010, in accordance with Standing Order 167(3), the Legislative Assembly appointed Estimates Committee D. It ordered the committee to investigate and report on the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2010 (the Appropriation Bill) for organisational units within the portfolios of the Ministers for:

- Main Roads; and
- Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs.

The Appropriation Bill authorises the Treasurer to pay an amount (the vote amount) from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2010 (clause 2), 1 July 2011 (clause 3) and 1 July 2008 (clause 4(1)). The Appropriation Bill provides for the amount paid to a department to include the amount already authorised by section 3 of the *Appropriation Act 2009* to be paid for the financial year starting 1 July 2010 (clause 2(3)).

For each department, clause 2(2) and schedule 2 of the Appropriation Bill provide that the vote amount:

- is appropriated for the financial year for the department to be applied to its departmental services, administered items and equity adjustment as stated; and
- includes amounts for departmental services, administered items and equity adjustment delivered by the department in the financial year starting 1 July 2009 but for which the department has not been paid in that financial year.

Accordingly, the matter on which the committee reports is whether the proposed expenditures for the two portfolios be agreed to.

COMMITTEE EXAMINATION OF PROPOSED EXPENDITURE

On 1 July 2010, Estimates Committee D provided each Minister with 20 questions on notice and received the Ministers' answers on 15 July 2010.

On 16 July 2010, the committee conducted a public hearing to take oral evidence from the Minister for Main Roads, and the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs. A Hansard transcript of the committee's hearing can be accessed at:

www.parliament.qld.gov.au/Hansard

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

- the Appropriation Bill 2010;
- the Queensland Government 2010-11 State Budget Papers;
- answers to pre-hearing questions on notice;
- oral evidence taken at the hearing; and
- documents tabled at the hearing.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

This report sets out the committee's findings on the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill for organisational units within the two relevant portfolios. Each portfolio is considered below.

An additional volume of information tabled with the report contains questions on notice, answers to questions on notice received from the respective ministers prior to the hearing, additional material provided at the hearing and minutes of committee meetings.

MINISTER FOR MAIN ROADS

Schedule 1 to the Appropriation Bill would authorise the following payment to the Department of Transport and Main Roads:

Department	Budget 2009–2010 (\$'000)	Est. Actual 2009–2010 (\$'000)	Vote 2010–2011 (\$'000)
Transport and Main Roads	7,392,660	7,270,472	7,344,391

Schedule 2 provides further:

Department of Transport and Main Roads	Budget 2009–2010 (\$'000)	Est. Actual 2009–2010 (\$'000)	Budget 2010–2011 (\$'000)
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
Departmental Services	3,429,962	3,302,663	3,357,634
Equity Adjustment	2,426,549	2,408,884	2,433,147
<i>Administered Items</i>	1,536,149	1,558,925	1,553,610
Vote	7,392,660	7,270,472	7,344,391

The Appropriation Bill does not provide information on the split of the appropriation between the Main Roads portfolio and the Transport portfolio within the Departmental organisation.¹ Upon request, the Department of Transport and Main Roads provided the following information which details the appropriation for the Main Roads ministerial portfolio, within the Department of Transport and Main Roads, for 2010-11 compared to the 2009-10 financial year:

Main Roads	Budget 2009-2010 (\$'000)	Est. Actual 2009-2010 (\$'000)	Budget 2010-2011 (\$'000)
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
Departmental Services	2,037,496	1,918,023	1,947,666
Equity Adjustment	1,787,938	1,868,275	1,809,856
<i>Administered Items</i>			
<u>Vote</u>	<u>3,825,434</u>	<u>3,786,298</u>	<u>3,757,522</u>

The Queensland Government 2010-11 State Budget Papers (Service Delivery Statements, 2-113) provides that the department's purpose is to plan, deliver and manage a transport system that connects Queensland.

In respect of the Main Roads portfolio, the 2010-11 Agency Budget Highlights include:²

Queensland Motorways Limited

- \$347.6 million for capital expenditure program totals, including \$76.8 million to complete the Gateway Upgrade Project.
- \$198 million to upgrade a section of the Gateway Motorway to six lanes from Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road to Miles Platting Road.

Key priorities for Main Roads in 2010-11 include:

South East Queensland

- \$550 million to continue the federally-funded Ipswich Motorway upgrade between Dinmore and Goodna.
- \$288 million in state and federal funding to upgrade the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra.
- \$117 million to continue Stage 1 of the Centenary Highway duplication.
- \$95.9 million to continue construction of a roundabout on Airport Drive on the Gateway Motorway as part of the Airport Link Project.
- \$88 million to commence a two-lane extension of the Port of Brisbane Motorway.
- \$56 million in joint state and federal funding to widen the Pacific Motorway between Nerang and Worongary.
- \$50 million in joint state and federal funding to continue the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway.
- \$30 million for intersection improvements on the Warrego Highway.
- \$18.6 million in federal funding to repair and strengthen a section of the Bruce Highway.
- \$16.8 million for improvements to intersections on the Gatton-Esk Road.
- \$14 million to duplicate a section of the Gold Coast Highway from two to four lanes.
- \$8.5 million to complete the duplication of a key section of Steve Irwin Way.
- \$8.1 million for widening and sealing works on the New England Highway.

Central Queensland

- \$37.6 million towards the completion of the duplication of the Forgan Bridge in Mackay .
- \$29.5 million for the Calliope Range deviation on the Dawson Highway.
- \$13.7 million in federal funding to continue four-laning works on the Bruce Highway southern approaches to Mackay.
- \$6 million to continue repairing, widening and strengthening a section of the Capricorn Highway.
- \$3.9 million to commence construction of a bridge and approaches on the Aramac-Torrens Creek Road, Cornish Creek.

Southern and South West Queensland

- \$10 million to commence widening on various sections of the Eidsvold-Theodore Road.
- \$9.3 million to complete a duplication, from two to four lanes, on a section of Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road.

¹ The appropriation for the Transport portfolio within the Department of Transport and Main Roads is being considered by estimates committee C in 2010.

² At pages 8 and 10, available at: <http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/~media/files/home/about-us/corporate-information/publications/departementoftransportandmainroadsbudgethighlights201011.pdf>

North, Far North and North West Queensland

- \$48.5 million in joint state and federal funding to progress the widening to four lanes of the Douglas Arterial on the Bruce Highway (Townsville Ring Road).
- \$20 million to continue the federally-funded upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Innisfail and Cairns.
- \$20 million to progress the federally-funded upgrade of the Bruce Highway between Ingham and Innisfail on the Cardwell Range North.
- \$8.3 million in joint state and federal funding for structural rehabilitation of the Burdekin River Bridge on the Bruce Highway between Bowen and Ayr.
- \$5 million to continue construction of a new two-lane sealed road on the Kennedy Developmental Road between Hughenden and Winton.
- Commencement of the realignment of the Bruce Highway at Cardwell Range.

The committee's examination of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio included examination by way of pre-hearing questions on notice and questions without notice at the hearing on 16 July 2010. The matters examined at the hearing are outlined below. Further detail, including the questions on notice and the Minister's answers, is contained in the additional information volume.

Matters examined during the hearing included:

- Transport of livestock and the potential impact on Queensland's roads;
- Road maintenance;
- Infrastructure spending on bridges and new road projects throughout Queensland;
- Future growth needs for motorists in regional Queensland;
- Road projects stemming from the South East Queensland Infrastructure Planning Project, and their 'P' ratings;
- The Infrastructure Australia report to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG);
- Consultation with local stakeholders in developing roads;
- Urban congestion in South East Queensland;
- Motorway congestion;
- Job creation;
- Traineeships and apprenticeships;
- Job security for Queensland Motorways employees in light of the proposed sale of motorway tolling rights;
- The Safer Roads Sooner initiative;

- Road safety;
- Road tolls;
- Change of name for the 'Old' Gateway Motorway;
- National Disaster Relief and Recovery arrangements (NDRRA) funding;
- *Grey Nomad* tourism initiatives;
- The cost of police resources for road construction;
- Heavy vehicle recovery units;
- Cleaning motorways; and
- Proposed infrastructure to service the Sunshine Coast University Hospital.

MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

Schedule 1 to the Appropriation Bill would authorise the Treasurer to make the following payment to the Department of Communities:

Department	Budget 2009–2010 (\$'000)	Est. Actual 2009–2010 (\$'000)	Vote 2010–2011 (\$'000)
Communities	4,685,756	3,957,535	4,633,446

Schedule 2 provides further:

Department of Communities	Budget 2009–2010 (\$'000)	Est. Actual 2009–2010 (\$'000)	Budget 2010–2011 (\$'000)
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
Departmental services	3,237,559	3,058,930	3,705,123
Equity Adjustment	1,178,741	623,750	637,470
<i>Administered Items</i>	269,456	274,855	290,853
<u>Vote</u>	<u>4,685,756</u>	<u>3,957,535</u>	<u>4,633,446</u>

The Appropriation Bill does not provide information on the split of the appropriation between the Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs portfolio and other portfolios within the Department of Communities.³ Upon request, the Department of Communities provided the appropriation for the

³ The appropriation for the other portfolios within the Department of Communities is being considered by estimates committee F in 2010.

Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs:

Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs	Budget 2009-2010 (\$'000)	Est. Actual 2009-2010 (\$'000)	Budget 2010-2011 (\$'000)
<i>Controlled Items</i>			
Departmental services	1,380,049	1,338,502	1,595,667
Equity Adjustment	60,581	24,274	45,456
<i>Administered Items</i>			
<u>Vote</u>	<u>1,440,630</u>	<u>1,362,776</u>	<u>1,641,123</u>

The Queensland Government 2010-11 State Budget Papers (Service Delivery Statements, 3-2) state:

The Department of Communities has four Ministers, each with discrete portfolio responsibilities...The Ministers work closely together on issues of common interest to their portfolios.

The budget papers state further (Service Delivery Statements, 3-2):

The Department's whole-of-agency objectives are: better services and pathways for our clients; more inclusive, active and safe communities; a more sustainable, community service system that delivers better value; and to support priority strategies through the delivery of business enabling services.

Highlights for Disability and Community Care Services in the 2010-11 budget papers (SDS 3-5 to 3-6) indicate:

- \$1.054 billion for specialist disability services.
- \$528.7 million for home and community care services.
- \$28.6 million for non-clinical mental health services.
- \$12.5 million increase in recurrent funding for specialist disability support services including:
 - \$4.4 million to support young people with a disability leaving school or the child protection system to acquire the skills to live as independently as possible in the community;
 - \$3.2 million to assist more people in hospitals with spinal cord injuries to return to their community;
 - \$2.9 million to provide early intervention and support services to children with a disability and their families;

- \$1 million to expand the Community Living initiative to enable people with a disability to live as independently as possible; and
- \$1 million for two specialist intensive early intervention services in the Bundaberg and Mackay regions to assist children with Autism Spectrum Disorder to improve their social and educational outcomes.

Highlights for Multicultural Services in the 2010-11 budget papers (Service Delivery Statements, 3-7) indicate that in 2010-11 the department will:

- Develop a new multicultural policy following state-wide consultations;
- Provide a range of grant programs worth \$34 million to deliver events and programs to recognise Queensland's cultural diversity, including improving access to services for people from culturally diverse backgrounds with:
 - Ongoing funding for 19 positions in non-government organisations;
 - 15 positions in local government; and
 - 1 coordinator in the Local Government Association of Queensland.

The committee's examination of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio included examination by way of pre-hearing questions on notice and questions without notice at the hearing on 16 July 2010. The matters examined at the hearing are outlined below. Further detail, including the questions on notice and the Minister's answers, is contained in the additional information volume.

Matters examined at the hearing included:

DISABILITY SERVICES

- Disability assistance package;
- A ten-year disability services plan and the potential impact of a national disability insurance scheme;
- Disability access to public transport;
- Action plan for children with a disability;
- Early intervention services to support children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and needs-based mapping to determine where autism services are required;
- Young people with a disability leaving school or the child protection system receiving support to live independently;
- Post-school services to assist young people to transition to work or further study options;
- Younger people in aged care;
- Therapy support for children with a disability;
- Co-tenancy of disabled persons in disability support accommodation;

- Community Living Initiative;
- Home and community care programs;
- Wacol development plan for specialised units;
- Support for disabled people who require aids and equipment;
- Services and assistance for homeless people with a mental illness;
- Community mental health services in the Sunshine Coast area;
- Funding to assist non-government organisations;
- Funding support to regional service providers;
- The demand for the *Meals on Wheels* service, and assistance to those volunteers to comply with the Home and Community Care service agreements;
- Support for non-government providers of services for children with cerebral palsy;
- Respite services for family members of persons with a disability;
- Support for the deaf community and their families;
- Support for persons with spinal cord injuries;
- Assistance for Multicap;
- Hydrotherapy pools; and
- Implementation of the Carter report recommendations.⁴

MULTICULTURAL SERVICES

- Key performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of staff working to improve access to services for culturally diverse backgrounds;
- Budget allocation for the administration of Multicultural Affairs Queensland (MAQ);
- Queensland Multicultural Awards;
- Funding for initiatives in Beaudesert and Logan;
- Increase in staff and related expenses;
- Multicultural Assistance Program;
- Development of a new multicultural policy;
- Support for Indian students;
- Interpreter services and training in cultural diversity and linguistic competencies;
- Water and surf safety training for culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
- MAQ's response to the Pacific tsunami;

- English language training in multicultural communities;
- Suitability of targets for consultations with representatives of culturally diverse communities;
- Collection of qualitative and quantitative data on participation levels at MAQ sponsored events; and
- Programs and grants to assist Queensland's African communities.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The committee has investigated the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2010 for organisational units within the portfolios of the Minister for Main Roads; and the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs.

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure for the portfolios be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.



Ms Grace Grace MP
Chair
August 2010

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D	
MEMBERSHIP	
Ms Grace Grace MP Chair	Member for Brisbane Central
Ms Fiona Simpson MP Deputy Chair	Member for Maroochydore
Mr Andrew Cripps MP	Member for Hinchinbrook
Mr Aidan McLindon MP	Member for Beaudesert
Ms Carolyn Male MP	Member for Pine Rivers
Mr Mark Ryan MP	Member for Morayfield
Hon Dean Wells MP Member from 20/05/10 to 26/07/10; 28/07/10 to 03/08/10	Member for Murrumba
Ms Barbara Stone MP Member for 27/07/10	Member for Springwood
SECRETARIAT	
Ms Amanda Honeyman (Research Director) Mrs Gail Easton (Executive Assistant)	

⁴ Honourable WJ Carter QC, *Challenging Behaviours and Disability — A Targeted Response*, 2006.

Estimates Committee D

2010

Statements of Reservation

from

Ms Fiona Simpson MP

Member for Maroochydore

Shadow Minister for Transport and Main Roads

and

Mr Andrew Cripps MP

Member for Hinchinbrook

Shadow Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs

and

Mr Aidan McLindon MP

Member for Beaudesert

STATEMENTS OF RESERVATIONS

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D

FIONA SIMPSON MP

SHADOW MINISTER FOR MAIN ROADS AND TRANSPORT

& Member for Maroochydore

GENERAL COMMENTS

There are a number of general reservations that need to be made in relation to the Queensland Estimates Committee process:

- The structure of the Budget Papers, and in particular the Service Delivery Statements, do not provide sufficient detailed information to enable proper scrutiny of activities and expenditures undertaken by Government
- Insufficient time is allocated for hearings by Estimates Committees when considering particular portfolios – only 90 minutes or about 36 questions for a \$3.7 billion
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for hearings by Estimates Committees throughout the year
- Opposition Members are provided with insufficient time during Estimates Committees Hearings to pursue issues
- There is a continued failure by Government Ministers to allow Public Servants and Statutory Officials who exercise direct responsibility for the conduct of activities to directly answer questions posed by Members
- No mechanism exists to require full, direct and honest answers to Questions on Notice
- No mechanism exists to require Ministers to fully, directly and honestly answer questions posed during Hearings

MAIN ROADS CAPITAL BUDGET

The LNP is concerned that the Main Roads Capital Budget was cut by \$250 million this year. When asked, the Minister was unable to justify this drop. This is particularly concerning in light of the additional \$500m the Queensland Government is collecting as a result of their broken promise imposing an additional fuel tax on Queensland motorists for the first time.

It should also be noted that the budget papers show a substantial drop off in infrastructure spending in the forward estimates, with Net acquisition of Non-financial assets halving between 2009-10 and 2013-14. This drop is highly concerning and undermines any confidence that industry may have that infrastructure spending will continue.

In addition the LNP is very concerned by the ongoing underspend by the Government on major roads projects through-out Queensland. In particular many federally funded projects were well behind schedule including:

- Cooroy to Curra Bruce Highway – \$152m underspent
- Dinmore to Goodna Ipswich Motorway – \$200m underspent
- Cardwell Range Bruce Highway – \$16m underspent
- Springwood South, Pacific Highway – \$64m underspent

Unfortunately it appears the government's rhetoric on infrastructure is only underpinned by hot air.

The LNP is also concerned by the notes in the Service Delivery Statements that the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) funding has been brought forward from 2010-11 to 2009-10, apparently leaving 2010-11 underfunded if our state experiences natural disasters, as per normal, this financial year. The Government seems to be robbing Peter to pay Paul in this important project.

MAINTENANCE

The LNP would like again to put on record our concern regarding the lack of focus this government places on the important maintenance required to keep our roads network up to the job. Increasingly roads are not performing to their design standard due to the lack of funding for maintenance.

The LNP believes the Minister misled parliament on road maintenance expenditure for 2010/2011

The State Labor Government's inexcusable decision to stop reporting road maintenance expenditure in the budget papers is designed to frustrate scrutiny of this vital issue. Ironically, the removal of this performance measurement caused a performance issue for the Minister who got the figures wrong when questioned.

Earlier in the hearing, the Minister claimed that in 2010/2011 the Department would spend \$700 million on road maintenance and that this was an increase on last year's expenditure. However, this was at odds with the published actual for 2009/2010 of \$820 million, which meant the Minister's claimed increase was \$120 million less than last year's figures (SDS Appendix p5-53).

The Minister was asked to explain. He replied: "The department will continue to review its services and service standards annually. It is important to note that for the maintenance, preservation and operation of existing road assets the 2009-10 target was \$577 million and this year it is \$820 million."

However, the \$820 million was not a target, it was the 2009/2010 actual and the target for 2010/2011 which the minister claimed earlier was \$700 million was no longer published in the budget papers but simply was recorded in the Appendix as a "discontinued measure".

The Minister's next explanation had as many holes in it as a pot-holed goat track:

Mr WALLACE: Right across the budget we are, if you like, changing the way that we report so that it can be more clear. I have got nothing to hide when it comes to maintenance because it is such a great program that we are rolling out.

Ms SIMPSON: It is not in the budget.

Mr WALLACE: I believe it is in the appendix."

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

The Government has continued to fail in properly planning transport infrastructure for the future.

Even projects promised by the Government with costings, including those in the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program (SEQIPP), have not been properly costed.

The Minister conceded that the costings of projects in SEQIPP were, at best preliminary. It seemed, however, many would be best described as "back of the envelope".

The LNP notes this may be the reason that the government has now moved to hide the costs of projects in SEQIPP in the out years by no longer publishing them. We would like to express our concern that this poor practice will become the norm in the coming Queensland Infrastructure Plan.

The Queensland Government's poor performance in the recent Infrastructure Australia Report to COAG is indicative of the structural failure of transport infrastructure planning. No Queensland Government road project was listed by Infrastructure Australia as Ready to Proceed or Threshold.

Thus when the Main Roads Minister was asked specific questions about how many road projects were P-rating assessed (a measure used to determine the maturity of costings and planning of projects) in SEQIPP, he could not answer. He said the Department did not do that for all projects as 'they may not stack up'. This raises concerns about longer-term road projects in SEQIPP has having only 'aspirational' costings with no real commitment from Government:

Ms SIMPSON: Minister, it is my understanding that your department, in the process of planning and costing projects, assigns a P rating to projects which indicates the certainty that the cost of the project will not exceed its estimate. Minister, can you confirm how many of the road projects listed in SEQIPP either do not have a P rating or have a very low certainty P rating?

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Mr WALLACE: We do have a P rating for our road projects right across the state. Indeed, P90 is the estimate that we work up for projects across the state—that is, a 90 per cent certainty that that will be, if you like, the budget and the outcome that will be delivered. In terms of planning a road project—and let us take, for instance, our Cardwell Range project in the member for Hinchinbrook's electorate—we look at it closely. We developed a P90 estimate which we then used in our business case for funding to the federal government. Those estimates are very important in developing our plans and also seeking that funding. The member for Maroochydore talks about other P ratings. They are done, if you like, in the lead-up to a planning exercise. It can be very expensive to ascertain a P90 rating, especially on a project that may not stack up. Before we commit to a P90 rating on a project, we will go through a number of steps and develop other P ratings.

It is also concerning that the Minister was unable to advise what mode share work had been done by the department to cope with the additional trucks forecast to travel on our major highways, particularly the additional 5,000 trucks forecast as a result of the closure by stealth of Queensland's livestock rail network. This will have additional impact due to the flow on impact on our state's grain logistics chain.

The LNP is pleased the Minister supported the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, despite the fact that this was not prioritised at all by the Federal Government's Infrastructure Australia, and also applaud the Federal Coalition's undertaking to begin construction of this project in the next term of Federal Government.

QUEENSLAND MOTORWAYS & TOLLS

The LNP expresses concern regarding the massive increases in tolls charged on the Gateway and Logan Motorways, timed just before this asset is disposed of through Labor's massive fire-sale of assets.

In addition it is noted that the Minister refused to answer how much the government has spent on investigating congestion and distance based tolling (Non-Government Question on Notice 16). The LNP rejected these proposed costs for motorists and challenged the Government last year to do the same. It was only this year after the Government spent an undisclosed amount on investigating these charges, that the Labor Government rejected them. However, the cost of their investigations remains a secret. This demonstrates how the Government treats with contempt the answering of questions asking for this expenditure to be explained.

Gateway Bridge	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
2009	\$1.37	\$2.95	\$2.95	\$7.36
2010	\$1.93	\$3.85	\$5.78	\$10.20
	41%	31%	96%	39%
Kuraby				
2009	\$0.79	\$1.97	\$1.97	\$4.83
2010	\$1.14	\$2.27	\$3.41	\$6.02
	44%	15%	73%	25%
Loganlea				
2009	\$0.79	\$1.18	\$1.18	\$3.47
2010	\$0.73	\$1.46	\$2.19	\$3.87
	-8%	24%	86%	12%
Heathwood and Paradise Road				
2009	\$0.79	\$2.10	\$2.10	\$4.83
2010	\$1.20	\$2.40	\$3.60	\$6.36
	52%	14%	71%	32%

Discontinued Measures

The LNP would like to express concern regarding the wide swathe of discontinued measures shown in Appendix 5. The Minister's inability to read this document when questioned, and his apparent belief that that these measures were not being discontinued, was of high concern.

It is also concerning that the measure for congestion in the new SDS measures is not available and is still under review.



Member for Maroochydore

Shadow Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Estimates 2010 - Committee D

Statement of Reservations

I refer to the draft report for Estimates Committee D and submit a Statement of Reservations in relation to the Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs portfolio; with some general comments on the process of Estimates Committees hearings. There are a number of general reservations that need to be made in relation to the Queensland Estimates Committee process:

- The budget papers, in respect of both the Capital Statement and the Service Delivery Statement, are not reported from financial year to financial year with any consistency and do not provide sufficiently detailed information to enable proper scrutiny of activities and expenditures undertaken by Government.
- Insufficient time is allocated for hearings by Estimates Committees to effectively consider and scrutinise the appropriations for individual portfolios.
- Opposition Members are provided with insufficient time during Estimates Committee hearings to pursue important issues relating to the budget.
- There is a continued failure by Government Ministers to allow senior Public Servants and Statutory Officers - who exercise direct responsibility for the conduct of departments and other government entities - to directly answer questions posed by Members during Estimates Committee hearings.
- No mechanism exists to require full, direct and honest answers to Questions on Notice submitted to Ministers ahead of Estimates Committee hearings.
- No mechanism exists to require Ministers to provide full, direct, honest and relevant answers to questions posed during Estimates Committee hearings.

The following observations relate specifically to the proceedings of Estimates Committee D, regarding the Disability Services & Multicultural Affairs portfolio.

Forced Co-tenancy

I asked the Minister about the practice of forced co-tenancy for people living with disability with a view to ascertaining what action DSQ and the Bligh Labor Government was pursuing to address this issue in Queensland. Initially, the Minister asserted that there was no forced co-tenancy in Queensland, but later conceded that, due to limited resources, "everybody realises that we have to utilise our resources (in a way that requires) that people do at times share houses".

Forced co-tenancy involves the withdrawal or denial of the right of a person with a disability to determine their own residential arrangements while staying in publicly provided disability support accommodation. This can lead to segregation and marginalisation of that person from the rest of the community. The most concerning

cases are when a person with a disability is denied, or is unable to, access care and support services; unless they accept these shared living arrangements.

For those individuals requiring high-level personal and lifestyle support, the reality is there is very little choice at all. For the Minister to deny forced co-tenancy exists in Queensland demonstrates a head-in-the-sand approach to this serious issue. Forced co-tenancy is a reality for many people with a disability and is a real concern, not only for them, but for their friends, carers and families as well.

NDIS & 10 Year Disability Service Plan

I asked the Minister about the potential for the 10 year Disability Services Plan for Queensland, currently being developed by DSQ, to be superseded by the current inquiry by the Productivity Commission into the viability of establishing a National Disability Insurance Scheme. While the Minister spoke at length about the development of the 10 year plan and the NDIS, she failed completely to address the substance of the question, which was directed at the use of departmental resources to pursue an activity that may be rendered redundant almost immediately.

Whilst I acknowledge the Minister has made no formal commitment to the NDIS, it is certainly the most anticipated public policy issue currently being discussed in the disability service sector across Australia. Whilst the Bligh Labor Government may argue that administrative and strategic planning is essential, strangely, an NDIS does not feature as part of the 10 year plan consultation. I note the Minister did not volunteer the cost of the consultation process, or offer any insight as to what the Bligh Government considered to be essential features of an acceptable NDIS.

Wacol Infrastructure Redevelopment

As I had done during the 2009-10 Estimates hearing, I asked the Minister about the Wacol Infrastructure Redevelopment project. The Wacol Infrastructure Redevelopment is a separate and discreet line item in both the 2009-10 and the 2010-11 Capital Statements. The total estimated cost in the 2009-10 Capital Statement was \$16.048 million. In 2010-11, this had declined to \$13.732 million. That is a clear reduction of approximately 14% as it related to this line item in the Capital Statement. However, the Minister denied that this was the case.

The Minister claimed the difference between the Capital Statements could be explained by a re-allocation of funds and cross-over of budget allocations between the Wacol Infrastructure Redevelopment and the Positive Futures program, both of which are initiatives implementing Carter Report recommendations regarding the ongoing care of people with disabilities exhibiting challenging behaviours. This issue is a perfect example of the total failure of the Bligh Labor Government to report budget allocations between financial years with any consistency or transparency. This practice undermines confidence in the Budget Estimates process.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Mapping

ASD is a life-changing condition that may be as prevalent as 1 diagnosis per 160 children aged 6-12 years within Australia. The Minister has nominated the provision of early intervention services as one of her three priorities and I have repeatedly acknowledged their worthiness. However, I do have some reservations about the Bligh Labor Government's current implementation of policy designed to address this priority. During the Hearing, I cited a 2007 Australian Advisory Board report on ASD which states which claims Queensland at that time had no data relating to the prevalence of ASD in pre-school aged children across the state.

In her answer, the Minister confirmed that proper mapping of ASD is only occurring in Queensland "now". The obvious question to follow on from that admission is how has DSQ been allocating funding according to need across the state when accurate needs-based mapping has not yet been completed? The question is particularly relevant when we consider that the Minister and DSQ has allocated significant funding to certain service providers to deliver early intervention services targeting ASD, while other service providers have been passed over for support.

Meals on Wheels Service Agreements

During the estimates committee hearing, I raised the concerns and frustrations of several locally-based Meals on Wheels organisations that are struggling to deal with the increased bureaucracy and red tape imposed on them by the Bligh Labor Government through the introduction of new, large and complicated Service Agreements. Meals on Wheels is a community based, volunteer-driven organisation that delivers an essential service to many vulnerable people in Queensland.

While more than an extra 1,000 meals per week were delivered than was budgeted for in the 2009-10 year, Queensland Meals on Wheels volunteers were also forced to contend with the complex regulations in Parts A, B and C of the new compulsory Service Agreement between themselves and the Department of Communities. The Minister claimed that funding had been provided to assist Meals on Wheels providers meet food preparation standards in meeting the new Service Agreement conditions, but could not point to widespread complaints about food safety issues amongst clients of Meals on Wheels to justify the regulations.

This is what makes the Minister's response so unsatisfactory. The onerous nature of these regulations on Meals on Wheels organisations, which include strict food preparation requirements, mandatory criminal history checks and the submission of the new and complicated Service Agreements, appear to exist to satisfy Bligh Labor Government bureaucrats, rather than reflecting a systemic failure by these not-for-profit service providers to deliver a much needed service to Queenslanders.

Queenslanders are motivated to volunteer their time and effort to groups like Meals on Wheels because want to help people and strengthen their community. The additional red tape imposed on Meals on Wheels organisations are a source of frustration for the volunteers who deliver the meals and are the cause of increased

costs for the operations as a whole. The Minister made no commitment to reducing the red tape or to providing additional support to assist Meals on Wheels providers to deal with the paperwork and comply with the regulations imposed by her department.

Community Mental Health

I asked the Minister about the allocation of \$1.5 million to two community mental health service organisations for acquittal in the Sunshine Coast region. Of particular interest was the \$550,000 grant to FSG Australia, an established Gold Coast-based service provider, for a peer support program. While undoubtedly a reputable organisation, FSG Australia currently has no established presence on the Sunshine Coast. I inquired as to why local community mental health support service providers on the Sunshine Coast were not capable of delivering the peer support program.

While the number of organisations that tendered to deliver the peer support programs was provided, the answer failed to canvass the reason why a local service provider based on the Sunshine Coast could not deliver this service. A further concern is that a proportion of the grant may be required by FSG Australia to establish a physical or administrative presence on the Sunshine Coast, when those funds could have been used by an established local mental health service provider already based on the Sunshine Coast to deliver peer support services.

CAMS & LAMPS Programs

The 2009-10 Estimates hearings revealed that no key performance indicators existed to gauge the effectiveness of Multicultural Affairs Queensland funded employees in the CAMS and LAMPS programs. At the 2010-11 Estimates hearings, I asked the Minister a similar question, only to be advised that she had:

".....asked (her) department to start taking full reports from the different LAMP and CAMS workers across the state. I think it is very important that as minister I know what they are doing".

While not questioning the value or the necessity of CAMS and LAMPS officers, or the programs themselves, there ought to be satisfactory measures applied to all programs involving the use of public funds - to ensure appropriate probity and accountability - and (in this case) to engender confidence in Multicultural Affairs Queensland itself.

Signed,



Andrew Cripps
Member for Hinchinbrook
Shadow Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs

Dear Madam Chair

Many thanks for your accommodating and efficient role as Chair for Estimates Committees D.

It is my opinion that the process of Estimates Committees is fundamentally flawed.

Half the day consisted of pre-arranged questions and the other half of the day consisted of deranged answers. If this is the best check of accountability we have to offer within our parliamentary process, then, as an elected body, we have collectively failed Queensland.

Friday, 16 July 2010, will be a day which I will never be able to get back but one thing I discovered was how feeble an attempt was made to constitute a measure of accountability.

In fact, it was quite disheartening as the process fails to genuinely address any shortfalls in the budget.

I realise that in 1994 the Goss Government may well have had good intent introducing such a process but why don't we all just call it for the sham that it is and save the taxpayers a million dollars.

How can we honestly go through the same motions next year and the year after without someone saying something to rectify this embarrassing political situation we have found ourselves in.

Queenslanders are tired of this type of politics and are searching for a bit of straight talk for a change. Where has the robust debate gone? Where are the honest checks and balances?

The setting in the red chamber was very prestigious but we desperately need it to be used for the purpose it was built.

Madam Chair, you did a good job in the role as Chair for which I am thankful for.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aidan McLindon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aidan McLindon
Member for Beaudesert