

Managing our department

Summary of financial management

This financial summary of the department's performance and position provides an overview of the key financial information for the year ended 30 June 2021. A complete view is provided in the Financial Statements which are included separately in this report.

The financial performance of the department was impacted as a result of machinery-of-government changes, with transfers of functions both in and out of the department pursuant to the *Administrative Arrangements Order (No. 2) 2020* issued 12 November 2020. The financial information for 2020–21 includes operations for the whole year for the departmental services of Environmental Policy, Programs and Regulation; Parks, Wildlife and Conservation; Science; and Heritage Protection, seven months for the period 1 December 2020 to 30 June 2021 in relation to operations of Youth Engagement which was transferred in to the department, and five months for the period of 1 July 2020 to 30 November 2020 for the operations of both Arts Queensland and the Corporate Administration Agency, which were transferred out of the department.

Financial performance snapshot

Table 1 – Summary of financial results of the department's operations

| Category | 2021 | 2020 | Variance |
|---|---------|---------|----------|
| | Actual | Actual | |
| | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Total revenue | 930,280 | 835,719 | 94,561 |
| Total expenses | 848,465 | 809,573 | 38,892 |
| Operating Result from continuing operations | 81,815 | 26,146 | 55,669 |
| Other comprehensive income | 95,000 | 48,984 | 46,016 |
| Total comprehensive income | 176,815 | 75,130 | 101,685 |

Revenue

The primary source of the department's revenue is appropriation from the Queensland Government which accounts for 72.3% of the department's total revenue. User charges and fees represent 11.8% of total revenue and consist of income streams associated with the issue of licences, permits and other fees for environmentally relevant activities and related to national parks. The department also received significant grant income, accounting for 7.6% of total revenue. These include grants associated with managing the environment including the Great Barrier Reef, Yellow Crazy Ants and the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

Expenses

The labour resourcing costs to administer departmental activities accounts for 36% of total expenditure. Supplies and services represent 24% of all expenditure. The major expense types include accommodation and operating leases, repairs and maintenance, outsourced services and information and technology costs. Grants and subsidies represent 31.5% of all expenditure with over 60% supporting waste reform, and the balance to support the environment and the arts. With a significant non-current asset base of \$5.04 billion which represents property, plant, equipment and intangibles, the department recorded depreciation and amortisation of \$65.12 million which represents 7.7% of total expenditure.

Budget result

Table 2 – Summary of operating result for the year

| Category | 2021 | 2021 | Variance |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| | Budget | Actual | 2021 Actual to Budget |
| | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Total revenue | 904,410 | 930,280 | 25,870 |
| Total expenses | 902,113 | 848,465 | (53,648) |
| Operating result | 2,297 | 81,815 | 79,518 |

Total revenue exceeded expectations by \$25.87 million which was primarily due to the revaluation increment of \$66.57 million relating to both land and infrastructure assets, offset by a reduction of appropriation revenue of \$54.46 million. There was a positive variance in user charges and fees with actual revenue exceeding budget by \$5.24 million. This is primarily due to higher-than-expected income for National Parks camping fees and vehicle permit fees. Grants and other contributions also saw a positive variance of \$5.87 million due to higher than budgeted contributions for Environmental Offsets and the Great Barrier Reef Field Management Program offset by rescheduling of funding from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority—The Riparian Recovery Program. Other revenue recorded a positive variance of \$2.32 million with the increase primarily related to higher-than-expected forfeiture of financial assurance held for environmental authorities.

Total expenditure was less than originally budgeted with a positive variance of \$53.65 million. This variance was predominantly related to the categories of supplies and services with a positive variance of \$20.73 million, and grants and subsidies with a positive variance of \$18.74 million. Both of these related to the rescheduling of a number of programs including Queensland Waste Levy Implementation, Queensland Reef Water Quality, Reef Management Technology, Cape York Peninsula Tenure Resolution Program and Joint Management and Yellow Crazy Ant Management.

Financial position

Table 3 – Summary of net assets as at 30 June 2021

| Category | 2021 Actual | 2020 Actual | Variance |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Total assets | 5,215,471 | 5,759,709 | (544,238) |
| Total liabilities | 38,218 | 65,299 | (27,081) |
| Net assets | 5,177,253 | 5,694,410 | (517,157) |

Assets

Assets decreased with receivables and property, plant and equipment making up the majority of the \$544.24 million variance. The decrease was mainly attributable to the decrease in property, plant and equipment due to the transfer of Arts Queensland assets of \$672.78 million as a result

of the machinery-of-government changes. This was offset by revaluation increments for both buildings, and heritage and cultural assets of \$95 million, and land and infrastructure assets of \$66.57 million.

Liabilities

The department's liabilities decreased by \$26.56 million. This reduction relates to trade creditors reducing by \$5.24 million and appropriation payable reducing by \$17.64 million. Both reductions relate to the general timing of transactions.

Overall, the department's financial position is very healthy due to the large asset portfolio and minimal liabilities.

Administered

Table 4 – Summary of the department's Administered activities

| Category | 2021 Actual | 2020 Actual | Variance |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------|
| | \$'000 | \$'000 | \$'000 |
| Total revenue | 389,669 | 458,576 | (71,201) |
| Total expenses | 389,669 | 458,576 | (71,201) |
| Total assets | 65,545 | 52,019 | 11,218 |
| Total liabilities | 65,545 | 52,019 | 11,218 |

The department administers, but does not control, certain activities on behalf of the Queensland Government. The administrative responsibility resides with the department: however, the monies are reported separately and outside of the department's controlled financial reporting.

The department returns all monies received to Queensland Treasury and therefore records a balanced result for the year. Further information is contained within the notes to the Financial Statements.

The administered ledger was impacted by the machinery-of-government changes, which saw a reduction of grants and subsidies of \$78.72 million. This variance is due to the department no longer recording administered grants paid to the Arts Statutory bodies from 1 December 2020.

Statement by the Chief Finance Officer

In accordance with the requirements of the Section 77 (2)(b) of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*, the Chief Finance Officer has provided the Director-General with a statement confirming the financial internal controls of the department are operating efficiently, effectively and economically. This is also in conformance with Section 54 of the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019.

The Chief Finance Officer has fulfilled the minimum responsibilities as required by the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*.

Corporate governance

Our corporate governance framework sets the department's direction and performance oversight arrangements.

The framework is based on the Australian National Audit Office's *Public Sector Governance* guides and the *Australian Standard AS 8000-2003 Good Governance Principles*. It is aligned with the Queensland Government *Performance Management Framework* and the Queensland Audit Office's *Leading Accountability – Governance*.

The department obtains information about its operational and financial performance through its performance management framework, governance structure and financial systems.

Ethics and accountability

The department recognises that employment in the public service is a position of trust and, as such, we hold ourselves to a high standard. We ensure our staff are aware of the importance of ethical decision-making and accountability as key factors in strong performance and effective governance. Our strategies, plans, systems and procedures promote a culture of integrity. Together with ethics-focused training, they help staff undertake their roles impartially and apolitically. Our ethics resources and strategies include:

- Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service—the standard for ethical behaviour expectations
- Code of Conduct online training—mandatory training for all staff at induction and regularly thereafter
- fraud and corruption awareness training—refresher training, completed by employees during 2020–21
- information on the department's website for staff and the public—includes information on how to report alleged wrongdoing by employees, right to information, complaints handling, role of the Queensland Ombudsman and rights of review
- fraud and corruption awareness and prevention website—resources to identify and mitigate risks
- provision of up-to-date information on ethics and integrity on the department's intranet—readily accessible by staff
- presentation to the Executive Leadership Team on fraud and corruption risks across the public sector by the Chair of the Crime and Corruption Commission
- online conflict of interest awareness module—made available for all employees
- tailored fraud and corruption risk mitigation training—delivered to managers and supervisors

- DES Fraud and Corruption Control Plan
- Corrupt Conduct Management policy and procedure
- Public Interest Disclosure policy and procedure.

Governance committees

The groups and committees below are the core of the department's governance arrangements. They ensure that the department has a clear direction, operates efficiently, and fulfils its legislative responsibilities. They oversee and inform all major activities and decision-making:

- Executive Leadership Team
- Finance Committee
- Health and Safety Strategy Group
- Digital Investment Strategy Committee
- Agency Security Committee
- Policy and Insights Leadership Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee

Executive Leadership Team

Chaired by the Director-General, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is the senior leadership body overseeing management and administration of the department. It meets fortnightly to:

- ensure departmental activities align with, and achieve, the government's priorities and the department's strategic objectives
- prioritise resources and capabilities to deliver key strategies and programs
- provide strong leadership, direction and guidance to the department.

ELT's responsibilities also include supporting the Director-General to comply with corporate governance responsibilities:

- setting the strategic direction of the department and developing the strategic plan

- stewardship of the department's strategic direction, including managing strategic and key operational issues
- managing the corporate planning cycle, including setting and monitoring risk, key performance indicators and corporate priorities
- overseeing the department's corporate governance framework and the work of the ELT sub-committees
- setting and exemplifying expectations about the department's culture, values and working environment.

Finance Committee

Chaired by the Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services, the Finance Committee meets monthly and is required to:

- provide governance over the department's financial resources
- develop the department's financial strategies
- monitor the department's performance against fiscal targets
- perform in-depth reviews of financial risks and key financial indicators
- determine strategies to manage key departmental pressures
- make recommendations to the Director-General on financial issues.

Health and Safety Strategy Group

Chaired by the Deputy Director-General, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships, the Health and Safety Strategy Group is an integral part of the department's workplace health and safety (WHS) governance arrangements. It helps discharge the department's duties under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

Meeting every six weeks, or as determined by the chair, the group advises the Director-General and ELT on WHS strategy, governance, policy and procedures, and systems performance.

Digital Investment Strategy Committee

Chaired by the Deputy Director-General, Science and Technology, the committee provides strategic leadership and governance of digital investments and strategies in the department. It ensures that all investments are aligned with whole of government priorities and the DIGITAL1st strategy. The committee meets monthly to:

- provide oversight of relevant whole of government policies to ensure appropriate control of initiatives managed by the department
- assess and recommend investments in digital initiatives and ICT activities
- ensure that digital service performance standards are efficient, effective and economical, meet the business needs of the department and are aligned with whole of government ICT policies, standards and guidelines
- review, report and recommend remediation of digital service or change management issues, and risks
- oversee supporting governance entities and digital working groups.

Agency Security Committee

Chaired by the Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services, the Agency Security Committee ensures that the department meets its information security obligations. These include delivery of the Information Security Management System (ISMS) in compliance with relevant legislation, regulations, government information security policies and international security standard (ISO 27001). The committee meets bi-monthly to:

- provide agency guidance on information security and ISMS issues
- ensure ISMS implementation plans are developed, monitored and progressed in line with the level of assurance required by the Director-General
- ensure information security risks are identified, assigned appropriate controls, managed within tolerance and approved
- oversee the application of a systematic approach to risk management under the ISMS
- ensure the annual information security assurance assessment is carried out with assurance reported to the Director-General prior to 30 September each year.

Policy and Insights Leadership Committee

The Policy and Insights Leadership Committee is chaired by the Deputy Director-General, Environmental Policy and Programs, and comprises key Executive Directors and Directors involved in higher-level policy development. The committee coordinates and improves policy and strategy development activities across the department. It ensures that policy development is:

- consistently informed by the best available policy approaches, including demonstrated principles, methods, tools, and frameworks
- underpinned by the best available science, research and consultation
- enabled by open and creative enquiry, commitment to complex problem-solving and a focus on collaborative solutions
- appropriately supported by the department's structure, human resources and culture.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is chaired by a member from outside the department and meets five times a year, including a special meeting to review the department's annual financial statements. It was established as required under section 24(1) of the Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019. The committee's role is to provide independent assurance and assistance to the Director-General on risk, control and compliance frameworks, external accountability responsibilities and the integrity framework. The committee also has responsibilities relating to financial statements, misconduct prevention, performance management, audits and reporting. It actively contributes to the improvement of the department's management of risks and the development of a risk appetite statement.

The committee is directly responsible and accountable to the Director-General, and has authority to:

- conduct or authorise investigations into matters within its scope of responsibility
- access information, records and personnel of the department for such purposes
- request the attendance of any employee, including executive staff, at committee meetings
- conduct meetings with the department's internal auditors and external auditors, as necessary
- seek advice from external parties, as necessary.

The role and functions of the committee do not change the statutory and regulatory duties and responsibilities of the Director-General, nor do they detract from management's responsibilities in relation to corporate governance, internal control, fraud prevention and risk management.

The Audit and Risk Committee comprises internal and external members. The following external members were appointed by the Director-General and were remunerated for their services:

- Marita Corbett, chair—entitled to be paid \$3,000 (GST exclusive) per meeting to prepare for, and attend, up to five meetings per annum, up to a maximum of \$15,000 (GST exclusive) per calendar year.
- Peter Dowling, external member—entitled to be paid \$600 (GST exclusive) per meeting to prepare for, and attend, up to five meetings per annum, up to a maximum of \$3,000 (GST exclusive) per calendar year.
- Karen Prentis, external member—entitled to be paid \$600 (GST exclusive) per meeting to prepare for, and attend, up to five meetings per annum, up to a maximum of \$3,000 (GST exclusive) per calendar year.

The following departmental officers were also members of the committee in 2020–21 and were not remunerated for their roles on the committee:

- Director-General
- Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services
- Deputy Director-General, Arts and Heritage (1 meeting)
- Executive Director, Operational Support, Environmental Services and Regulation
- Executive Director, Northern Parks and Forests Regional Operations, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships (from 30 November 2020 onwards).

Business and Corporate Partnership Board

The Business and Corporate Partnership (BCP) delivers corporate services and business programs to a core group of three Queensland Government departments. The BCP Board is responsible for the long-term performance and business success of the BCP. Its role is to provide leadership and set the strategic direction of the partnership.

The BCP operates through three corporate hubs—DES, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and Department of Resources. Each hub is managed by a Head of Corporate, who is responsible for delivering a set of core services to

the host agency and a selection of cooperative services to partnering agencies. The intent of this model is to ensure economies of scale, service integration, consistent service delivery, scalability, flexibility and responsiveness.

Accountability and risk management

Internal audit

Internal Audit Services provides an independent and objective assurance function to the Director-General in discharging responsibilities under section 78 of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009*. Its functions include:

- developing an Internal Audit Charter
- planning the internal audit program
- reporting internal audit issues
- managing the department's relationship with the Queensland Audit Office (QAO) and other external auditors
- supporting the QAO with its annual external audit of agency financial statements.

These functions are provided to the department and one other Queensland Government department (Department of Agriculture and Fisheries) under the BCP.

Internal Audit operates in accordance with the Internal Audit Charter, Audit Committee Guidelines issued by Queensland Treasury and Internal Audit Annual Plan—a risk-based plan endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee and approved by the Director-General. Internal Audit assists the Audit and Risk Committee obtain independent assurance of its responsibilities, including risk management, internal controls, financial statements, internal and external audit matters, and governance. The internal audit function is independent of management and the external auditors.

External scrutiny

Independent scrutiny of government performance may be carried out by several external entities. Significant external audits and reviews undertaken during the year are detailed below.

Queensland Audit Office – Effectiveness of audit committees in state government entities (Report 2: 2020–21) (Tabled 8 September 2020)

The QAO examined the effectiveness of audit committees in state government entities with the objective of providing insights on the current profile and practices of committees and identifying actions to help lift their performance and effectiveness. The report had recommendations for consideration by audit committees, audit committee chairs, chief executive officers and Queensland Treasury. The recommendations

have been noted and the department is currently awaiting the outcome of actions assigned to Queensland Treasury before implementing recommendations relating to the audit committee.

Queensland Audit Office – Awarding of sports grants (Report 6: 2020–21) (Tabled 29 September 2020)

The QAO information brief presented facts relating to the awarding of sports grants by the Department of Housing and Public Works, and the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport for the period 1 July 2017 to 29 February 2020. The brief focused on whether the awarding of sports grants was in accordance with documented processes that were appropriate and resulted in the impartial awarding of grants.

While the review did not specifically relate to DES, the QAO identified issues and made recommendations that QAO considered may relate to all government entities:

- Departments should ensure their processes comply with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the Financial Accountability Handbook, such that complete records are kept to support all decisions made to award grants, there is clear responsibility for approval of grant recipients, and financial authority rests with the Director-General.
- When a machinery-of-government change occurs and functions move between departments, departments should promptly conduct a review to ensure consistency of fundamental processes (such as approvals) and compliance with the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* and the Financial Accountability Handbook.

The department's Grants Administration Framework was reviewed, updated and approved by the Director-General in November 2020 and is compliant with the Act and the Handbook. The framework now clearly specifies that all DES grant funding must be approved by the Director-General. Machinery-of-government changes after the 2020 election resulted in the transfer of Arts Queensland and the Corporate Administration Agency out of the department and the inclusion of Youth Engagement. A review of the Youth Engagement processes for grant programs confirmed compliance with the department's Grants Administration Framework.

There are no outstanding recommendations for the department relating to this review.

Queensland Audit Office – Delivering successful technology projects (Report 7: 2020–21) (Tabled 30 September 2020)

The purpose of this insights report was to highlight recurring risks and issues with delivering technology projects and to share learnings with the wider public sector. While the review did not specifically relate to DES, the QAO identified issues and made recommendations that QAO considered may relate to public sector boards and executives across government:

1. Review their current portfolio of technology projects to re-confirm priorities ensuring that:
 - projects underway reflect the entity's highest priorities and align with changes in its economic and business environments
 - they only take on the number, size and nature of projects they have the capability to deliver
 - processes are in place to re-validate business cases to ensure that projects continue to be viable and the proposed benefits are still relevant
 - they actively challenge the progress and performance of projects—reports on benefits achieved are realistic and based on sound evidence.
2. Ensure that for future projects involving external suppliers:
 - the contracts provide incentives to deliver the right outcomes for the business and share the risks and rewards across all parties
 - the contracts clearly describe the solution and the performance measures to achieve the outcomes
 - there are strong relationships at all levels of internal and external teams to facilitate the delivery of projects.
3. Ensure that current and future technology projects are set up with the right mix of skills and resources.
4. Reflect on why projects have failed in the past and take timely actions to avoid making those mistakes again. Prior learnings must form part of the key considerations in managing project risks.

The department has fully implemented all of these recommendations.

There are no outstanding recommendations for the department relating to this review.

Queensland Audit Office – State entities 2020 (Report 13: 2020–21) (Tabled 11 February 2021)

This QAO report summarised state entities' audit results, evaluated the quality and timeliness of financial reporting and explored how entities addressed the risks of rapidly delivering new pandemic-related programs in 2020.

QAO made seven whole of government recommendations:

1. Use recent financial statement preparation experiences, including responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, to identify improvements and plan for the year ahead (all entities).
2. Improve timeliness of financial statements being made publicly available (relevant ministers and central agencies).
3. Strengthen the security of information systems (all entities).
4. Verify changes to supplier and employee information to prevent fraud (all entities).
5. Promptly review employee payments (all entities).
6. Automate financial approvals and monitoring of internal controls (all entities).
7. Ongoing compliance with financial accountability requirements following a machinery-of-government change (departments).

The department has considered, accepted and implemented all the recommendations.

Department of the Premier and Cabinet – Queensland Government Response to the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements – Final Report (Tabled 17 May 2021)

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements was established in February 2020 to inquire into Australia's preparedness for, response to and recovery from natural disasters; improving resilience; and mitigating the risk of changing climatic conditions.

The department provided input into the Queensland Government's response to the discussion paper and internal implementation

plan. DES is the lead agency for two recommendations and support entity for 18 recommendations.

The department will continue to liaise with partner agencies about the Report, including the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, and give the recommendations careful consideration for the future management of natural disasters in Queensland.

Inspector General Emergency Management (IGEM) – K’gari (Fraser Island) Bushfire Review Report 1: 2020-2021 (Tabled 27 May 2021)

The Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management has undertaken a review of the 2020 K’gari (Fraser Island) bushfire to examine ‘effectiveness of preparedness activities’ and ‘the response to the bushfire event by entities responsible for the management of the Island and bushfire and disaster management in Queensland.

The report outlined 38 recommendations which were supported or supported in-principle. DES is the lead agency for 15 recommendations and will collaborate with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) on a further seven recommendations.

The Review Report acknowledged the commitment and efforts of QPWS, key partner agencies such as QFES, the Butchulla People and Island community over a two-month period to a highly complex and challenging bushfire event.

The Queensland Government has committed \$5 million over four years and \$1 million ongoing to be split between the DES and QFES to support the implementation of the recommendations of the report.

DES has already commenced addressing a number of the recommendations from the report through existing departmental initiatives such as the \$16 million Enhanced Fire Management Project—a project that was highlighted in the report as a ‘good practice’ case study.

Good progress is being made to address two priority actions from the Review Report, those being the review of the Interagency Protocol between DES and QFES and the transfer of control arrangements for bushfires in line with the Queensland Bushfire Plan. Both agencies are working towards having these in place before the 2021 bushfire season.

Risk management

The department’s risk management policy is based on the international risk management standard (ISO 31000:2018) and Queensland Treasury’s risk management guidelines. These provide a sound framework for managing risks consistently across the department.

The department’s risk appetite statement applies to all risk management decision-making. It encourages prudent risk-taking and escalation when appropriate. Key strategic risks and opportunities are identified as part of our annual strategic planning process. Risks that may impact on business objectives are identified by business areas as part of their business planning.

Strategic and operational risks are reviewed regularly to monitor risk treatments and the overall effectiveness of controls. Strategic risks and other significant risks are reported quarterly to the Audit and Risk Committee. This year, the department reviewed and updated its strategic risks and risk appetite statement.

Recordkeeping

The department has a comprehensive records management framework that is consistent with the *Public Records Act 2002*, *Public Service Act 2008* and the Queensland State Archives Records Governance Policy.

Records are held in the corporate document and records management systems (eDOCS) in file structures with appropriate security access according to the Information Security Policy. There have been no serious security breaches of this system.

Our Digital Recordkeeping Futures plan outlines the strategic direction for recordkeeping in the department. We ensure the security, integrity and preservation of records, automatically capturing high value records from business systems for storage in the corporate recordkeeping system. The department’s record appraisal and disposal program is covered by approved retention and disposal schedules.

Under the post-election machinery-of-government change in 2020, records relating to Youth Engagement were transferred to the department from the former Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women.

Information systems

The department maintains critical information systems to support its services, including:

- Macropods Online—on-line platform for macropod harvesting and dealer licences, payment of fees, and maintenance of statutory record-keeping requirements
- Parks and Forests Permitting Hub—on-line permit system for activities in areas managed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services and Partnerships
- Environmental Authorities Hub—electronic lodgement and processing of Environmental Authority applications and annual returns
- Compliance Hub—contains community notification and compliance records for Environmental Services and Regulation Division
- Living Heritage Information System—places on the Queensland Heritage Register and other places of significant cultural heritage
- Property (Lot on Plan) Searches—allows the public to search for coastal development, contaminated land and heritage affect
- Air Quality Database—downloads and manages weather and air pollution data from stations statewide
- Public Register Portal—provides access to public registers searchable online
- Waste Tracking—collects, stores, manages and audits waste tracking data
- National Parks Booking System—National Parks camping and vehicle permits
- Corporate systems—manage correspondence, finance and human resources information
- DES intranet and internet—information and services to employees and the public.

Information Security Attestation

During the mandatory annual Information Security reporting process, the Director-General attested to the appropriateness of information security risk management within the department to the Queensland Government Chief Information Security Officer, noting that appropriate assurance activities have been undertaken to inform this opinion and the department's information security risk position.

Our people

Workforce profile

We employ a diverse range of talented people who work together to provide services to Queenslanders and deliver the government's strategic priorities. We strive to create workplaces where diversity is celebrated, career development is encouraged, and wellbeing, health and safety are valued.

As at 30 June 2021, DES employed 2,695.73 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, of which 91.2% were employed on a permanent basis.* The permanent separation rate is 5.19% per annum.

**The FTE figure reflects Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information (MOHRI) collected and reported as at 30 June 2021.*

Workforce planning

We are committed to attracting and retaining a workforce that is inclusive, diverse, engaged, agile and high performing. To meet the challenges of the future, the department has developed a four-year strategic workforce plan based on:

- embracing change—to remain an innovative, dynamic and agile workforce
- creating an inclusive and engaged workforce—marked by diversity, flexibility and wellbeing
- acquiring skilled talent and encouraging growth—through leadership, staff development and career pathways
- future-proofing our workforce—with effective workforce planning and management.

Talent acquisition

Onboarding

All new employees undertake an induction process to:

- provide a smooth transition into the department and the work environment
- provide information on employment conditions and entitlements
- help new starters understand the responsibilities and behaviours expected of them by the Queensland Government and the department
- provide an understanding of the function and operations of the department as well as the business group or work unit.

The induction process includes online courses for new employees:

- Welcome to DES
- Code of Conduct
- Emergency Safety
- Fraud and Corruption Awareness
- Work, Health and Safety
- Cultural awareness
- Information Privacy Awareness
- Starting the Journey
- Public Entities and the Queensland *Human Rights Act 2019*
- Disability Awareness
- Procurement 101
- Financial Delegations
- Information Security
- Recognise, Respond and Refer – Domestic and Family Violence Awareness.

Career pathway programs

The department supports a range of career pathway programs to ensure we have the right people with the right skills in the future. For example, in the 2020 graduate program, 26 graduates from a range of disciplines undertook a structured leadership development program with exciting, challenging and rewarding opportunities. Work placement opportunities were also provided for 21 university students as part of their degree requirements. These students came from a range of disciplines including environmental management and law. The department also undertook a defence force veteran work trial.

Maximising performance

Planning for performance

All employees participate in performance and development processes throughout the year. Consistent with the positive performance principles in the *Public Service Act 2008*, managers and staff are required to have regular and meaningful conversations about achievements and development needs. Employees are encouraged to consider a range of development options, including on-the-job training, self-directed eLearning modules via iLearn, Hot Tasks, relieving, short-term projects, coaching and mentoring, as well as participation in formal training activities.

Reward and recognition

The department values its employees and recognises that the department's high performance depends on the success and achievements of staff. The department's reward and recognition initiatives support a healthy and positive workplace culture and include:

- DES Excellence Awards
- Public Service Medals
- Premier's Awards for Excellence in Public Service Delivery
- Director-General's Safety Behaviour Awards
- Certificates of Service
- informal initiatives by supervisors and managers to recognise and celebrate the value and contributions of their staff.

Building capability

The department continues to support staff to develop critical skills and assist them in their career development. We provide a broad range of training and development opportunities for our staff, using the 70:20:10 model of learning and development. Development opportunities cover technical training, management and leadership, cultural capability training, disability awareness, and business and interpersonal skills. Employees have access to a range of other opportunities, including further education, conferences and seminars. Staff also make use of on-the-job development opportunities through self-directed learning, stretch projects, secondments and higher duties arrangements.

In 2020–21 the department's corporate training calendar was redesigned to ensure all training courses could still be delivered in a COVID-safe way, through alternative platforms and delivery methods. For example, traditional full-day, in-person courses were conducted using Microsoft Teams, with content reconfigured into shorter sessions spread across a few weeks. Facilitators used online breakout rooms and chat functions to provide the same collaborative learning experience.

Mentoring programs

This year the department developed a new approach to mentoring, built on the learnings of previous successful programs as well as the lessons from COVID-19. We designed an entirely online solution that allows employees to self-source mentors that most align to their development needs. The new program also allows mentors and mentees to access mentoring support as they require. The new online platform was launched in June 2021.

Leadership and management development

In 2020–21, we implemented a refreshed approach to leadership development that incorporates the Queensland public sector competency framework, Leadership Competencies for Queensland, employee feedback and Working for Queensland survey results. The new Leadership in Focus program, launched in March 2020, targets the advanced leaders within DES. The Framing Leadership program, launched in February 2021, targets new managers and emerging leaders. Both programs use online learning, face-to-face development, one-on-one coaching and group activities. This year, 36 employees participated in the new leadership programs.

Several other leadership development programs were also offered this year:

- Two employees completed the People Matters program, a three-day, hands-on development program that equips emerging leaders with foundational leadership skills.
- Four employees enrolled in the Public Sector Management Program, an 18-month program that provides current and aspiring leaders with the knowledge and skills to successfully manage the business-of-government.
- Fourteen employees completed the Performance Conversations module, helping managers understand how to empower others to achieve their best and how to have effective performance conversations with staff.

This year, two other leadership initiatives were offered to all employees. LEAD4QLD is a paid leadership capability assessment, providing employees with insights to their leadership strengths and development areas. Competency Compass is a free, interactive online tool that helps employees reflect on their leadership skills and prioritise areas for development.

In addition, 19 employees are participating in the pilot the EZRA coaching app for middle level managers with complex workforce challenges. Employees will receive unlimited access to a leadership coach for three months to help work through these challenges.

A diverse and inclusive culture

Despite this year's challenges, we maintained our focus on building a workforce that is inclusive and reflects the communities we serve. We continued to integrate diversity and inclusion considerations in all our programs and initiatives, including through our Cultural Capability Action Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan and Disability Service Plan.

A key element of our approach is implementing the department's Gurra Gurra Framework 2020–2026 by incorporating perspectives of First Nations peoples in everything we do. This year we launched our First Nations Employment and Development Action Plan 2020–25, to strengthen the rates of attraction and retention amongst First Nations employees.

Outlined below are the percentages of our workforce that identify with Equal Employment Opportunity groups:

| | |
|--------|---|
| 4.63% | Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people |
| 2.84% | People with a disability |
| 7.15% | People from a non-English speaking background |
| 49.11% | Women in the workforce |
| 43.90% | Women in senior leadership roles (CEO, SES, SO) |

We recognise the importance of acknowledging and celebrating days of cultural significance, to increase cultural awareness and recognise the importance of diversity. This year, across the department we promoted and celebrated:

- NAIDOC week—recognised in July 2020 but celebrated in November 2020 due to COVID-19
- AccessAbility Day—employees shared stories of their lived experience online
- International Women's Day and Queensland Women's Week—a range of online events and training around the 2021 theme #EachforEqual
- Four Disability Confidence sessions for managers and staff.

[Taking a stand against domestic and family violence—Not now, not ever. We're putting an end to domestic violence.](#)

This year the importance of an inclusive and supportive workplace was of major focus. The

shift to flexible working arrangements in response to COVID-19 raised many issues about employee safety, not just within DES but across the community. As a result, we increased our focus on domestic and family violence awareness and training, reinforcing our White Ribbon principles. This year, within the department we:

- reaffirmed the Executive Leadership Teams commitment to the Not Now, Not Ever campaign
- facilitated two Domestic and Family Violence Specialist sessions and one First Responder training session to ensure that employees have the skills and awareness to assist when required
- continued to promote the department's domestic and family violence policy and guides for managers and other employees, clearly outlining roles and responsibilities
- ensured employees were aware of the support available from the department's Employee Assistance Service for employees affected by violence
- provided domestic and family violence training for managers and supervisors, in Brisbane and Cairns
- continued to promote the online course Recognise, Respond, Refer into the department's training program, with approximately 40% of staff having completed the module
- included risks of violence or abuse against employees into our risk register to ensure it is addressed and reviewed on an ongoing basis
- sent all-staff emails and distributed flyers to increase awareness of building security protocols
- delivered the MATE Bystander training with 15 sessions delivered to over 265 employees.

Our staff also actively volunteered to help address domestic and family violence in the community by:

- fundraising over \$1,000 to support two women's shelters within Queensland, Maybanke in Brisbane and Flora House in Townsville
- participating in the Darkness to Daylight CEO Challenge, with 29 employees raising over \$5,924 for frontline support services.

Employee health and wellbeing

This year, we reviewed the department's safety systems to benchmark and improve our processes. Our new Workplace Health and Safety Management System, was released across the department. We also:

- redeveloped our incident reporting and recording system to streamline the end user experience while still obtaining critical risk management information
- strengthened the skills and capability of our safety personnel by establishing a Safety Advisor Network Group, with a focus on incident management, investigation and recordkeeping
- continued our wellness program, ensuring employees have access to skin cancer checks, flu vaccinations, mental health awareness sessions, nutritional information, financial fitness seminars and corporate memberships for health insurance
- started implementing the external review recommendations for our workplace health and safety systems and practices
- held the Director-General's Safety Behaviour Awards during Work Safe Month (October 2020) to reinforce our positive safety culture.

Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment

During the reporting period, no employees received redundancy packages.

Human rights—respect . protect . promote

The COVID-19 response

During the pandemic and associated government responses, the department played an important role in the state government's efforts to protect and support Queenslanders. For example, we temporarily closed national parks and camping areas, and managed camping numbers as restrictions eased. In taking these actions, the department was mindful of its obligation to ensure that any limitations on human rights were reasonable and justified. The actions taken by the department limited the Right to Freedom of Movement (Section 19) but were held to be consistent with the *Human Rights Act 2019* by protecting the Right to Life (section 16).

Internal focus on human rights

The department has continued to participate in the inter-departmental working group on human rights and promote human rights internally through its own Human Rights Act Working Group. The working group has members from each of the department's five divisions and relevant areas of Corporate Services, such as complaints and corporate governance.

The department requires all new staff to complete mandatory training on the department's human rights responsibilities as part of their induction. Tailored refresher workshops have also been held for current staff in key policy and program areas across the department. In December 2020, the department hosted a second seminar delivered by the Queensland Human Rights Commission to mark Human Rights Day, with a particular focus on the protection of First Nations cultural rights under Section 28 of the Act.

Reporting

This year, the department reported that it had not received any human rights complaints, satisfying its reporting obligations under section 97(2)(b) of the *Human Rights Act 2019*. In response to section 97(2)(c) and under the supervision of its internal Human Rights Working Group, the department completed a full review of all policies and procedures. The review found that the department complied with the Act, but also found that a small number of documents needed updating to fully align with the legislation.

Human rights watching briefs

In a matter currently before the Land Court (Waratah Coal Pty Ltd v. Youth Verdict Ltd and Others), the department assumed its statutory party role as a model litigant and assisted the court in its procedural and legal considerations of complex human rights matters.

The department has continued to engage with other agencies and the Human Rights Commission on the specific application of Section 28 of the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Cultural Rights for Aboriginal People and Torres Strait Islander People), to ensure legal compliance and strengthen policy (including the department's Gurra Gurra Framework). This is resulting in changes to internal processes. The department recognises the need for further legal analysis and advice on how to best protect rights under Section 28.