

Managing our department

Summary of financial management

This financial summary provides an overview of the department's performance for the year ended 30 June 2022 and position as at 30 June 2022. A complete view is provided in the Financial Statements which are included in this report.

The financial information for 2021–22 includes operations for the whole year for the departmental services of Environmental Policy, Programs and Regulation; Parks, Wildlife and Conservation; Science; Heritage Protection and Youth Engagement.

Financial performance snapshot

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

Category	2022 Actual	2021 Actual	Variance
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Total revenue	1,549,498	930,280	619,218
Total expenses	1,469,844	848,465	621,379
Operating Result from continuing operations	79,654	81,815	(2,161)
Other comprehensive income	267,236	95,000	172,236
Total comprehensive income	346,890	176,815	170,075

Revenue

The primary source of the department's revenue is appropriation from the Queensland Government which accounts for 83.7% of the department's total revenue. This has increased from 2021 primarily due to the decision of Government to make a lump sum payment in 2021–22 of the next four years of annual payments to councils under the Waste reform program of \$672.4 million. User charges and fees represent 6.6% 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 5.6% of total revenue. These include grants associated with managing the environment including the Great Barrier Reef, the Wet Tropics Management Authority and Natural Disaster Relief.

Expenses

The labour resourcing costs to administer departmental activities accounts for 21.1% of total expenditure. Supplies and services represent 12.4% of all expenditure. The major expense types include accommodation and operating leases, repairs and maintenance, outsourced services, service costs to other agencies and shared service providers and information and communication technology costs. Grants and subsidies represent 62.9% of all expenditure of which 90% represents grants relating to waste reform (including the 4-year lump sum payment for the waste disposal levy). The department recorded depreciation and amortisation of \$47.6 million which represents 3.2% of total expenditure, which is representative of the department's significant non-current asset base of \$5.4 billion primarily property, plant, equipment and intangibles.

Budget result

Table 2 – Summary of operating result for the year

Category	2022 Actual	2022 Budget	Variance 2022 Actual to Budget
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Total revenue	1,549,498	834,063	715,435
Total expenses	1,469,844	832,270	637,574
Operating result for the year	79,654	1,793	77,861

Total revenue exceeded expectations by \$715.4 million which was primarily due to a \$615.3 million increase in appropriation revenue to fund the lump sum payment in 2021–22 of the next four years of annual payments to councils under the Waste reform program. Grants and other contributions also saw a positive variance of \$36.4 million due to higher than budgeted contributions for natural disaster programs, environmental offsets and additional funding for the acquisition of protected area estate.

Total expenditure was significantly over the original budget with a variance of \$637.6 million. This variance was predominantly related to grants and subsidies which was higher than budget by \$638.1 million also related to the payment to local councils to mitigate the impact of the waste disposal levy on households.

Financial position

Table 3 – Summary of net assets as at 30 June

Category	2022 Actual	2021 Actual	Variance
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Total assets	5,622,796	5,215,471	407,325
Total liabilities	59,790	38,218	21,572
Net assets	5,563,006	5,177,253	385,753

Assets

Assets increased with property, plant and equipment making up most of the \$407.3 million variance. The increase was mainly due to the Asset revaluation process in 2021-22 which resulted in a net revaluation increment of \$322.2 million, with \$54.9 million being treated as revenue and \$267.2 million increasing the Asset Revaluation Surplus.

Liabilities

The department's liabilities increased by \$21.6 million. This increase predominately relates to the deferral of state government funding movement of \$19.6 million as a result of lower than planned expenditure for various programs.

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	2022 Actual	2021 Actual	Variance
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Total revenue	359,741	389,669	(29,928)
Total expenses	359,741	389,669	(29,928)
Total assets	82,330	65,545	16,785
Total liabilities	82,330	65,545	16,785

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 revenue and expenses decreased from the previous year due to the department no longer recording administered grants paid to the Arts Statutory bodies from 1 December 2020 following machinery of Government changes. This is offset by an increase in waste disposal levy revenue of \$45 million.

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—mandatory training for all staff at induction, followed by annual refresher training
- 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
- a comprehensive, department wide fraud and corruption risk assessment was completed by all business areas
- provision of up-to-date information on ethics and integrity on the department's intranet—readily accessible by staff
- online conflict of interest awareness module—made available for all employees
- online misappropriation or misuse of assets and resources module—available for all employees
- applying the risk management framework online module – to build employees' capability in identifying and managing risks
- financial fraud control online module—available for all employees
- a 'deep dive' was undertaken into the department's top fraud and corruption risks to identify and address gaps in controls
- an audit request by the Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland regarding misappropriation or misuse of assets and resources completed, resulting in a satisfactory response
- A tailored fraud and corruption risk mitigation training program was delivered to managers and supervisors
- An intranet site provides staff with information on management of lobbyist contacts and record keeping requirements and includes links to the Lobbyist Contact Register policy and procedure
- 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 and include:

- Executive Leadership Team
- Audit and Risk Committee
- Finance Committee
- Health and Safety Strategy Group
- Digital Strategy and Security Committee
- Policy and Insights Leadership Committee
- Business and Corporate Partnership Board.

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.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is chaired by a member from outside the department and met six times in the 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 risk framework.

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—paid \$3,000 (GST exclusive) per meeting to prepare for, and attend, five meetings, totalling \$15,000 (GST exclusive) for the year.
- Peter Dowling, external member and acting chair—paid \$600 (GST exclusive) per meeting to prepare for, and attend five meetings, and paid \$3,000 (GST exclusive) per meeting as acting chair, totalling \$6,000 (GST exclusive) for the year.

- Karen Prentis, external member—paid \$600 (GST exclusive) per meeting to prepare for, and attend, six meetings, totalling \$3,600 (GST exclusive) for the year.

The following departmental officers were also members of the committee in 2021–22 and were not remunerated for their roles on the committee:

- Director-General
- Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services
- Executive Director, Operational Support, Environmental Services and Regulation
- Executive Director, Northern Parks and Forests Regional Operations, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Partnerships.

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 Strategy and Security Committee

Co-Chaired by the Deputy Director-General, Science and Technology and Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services, the committee provides governance over the department's digital portfolio (following Director-General approval) and ensures the department addresses its information management and security obligations, including the performance of the Information Security Management System (ISMS).

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.

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.

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 – Regulating animal welfare services (Report 6: 2021–22) (Tabled 30 November 2021)

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF) and RSPCA Queensland deliver animal welfare services under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*. The Act gives the RSPCA powers to perform animal welfare investigations on behalf of the state. DAF has engaged RSPCA Queensland to provide animal welfare services predominantly in the coastal areas of Queensland and from the Gold Coast to Cairns.

The QAO assessed the effectiveness of DAF engagement with RSPCA Queensland.

During the review QAO identified one good practice for all regulators:

- All public sector regulators and oversight bodies self-assess against better practices in Appendix C *Good regulatory practices* and, where necessary, implement changes to enhance their regulatory performance.

This recommendation will be considered in conjunction with legislative compliance framework review and process for annual report on regulatory performance which is due in December each year.

Queensland Audit Office – State entities 2021 (Report 14: 2021–22) (Tabled 11 April 2022)

This report summarises the audit results of 229 Queensland state government entities, including the 21 core government departments.

The financial statements of all departments, government owned corporations, most statutory bodies and the entities they control are reliable and comply with relevant laws and standards.

However, QAO provided some recommendations for all entities to consider:

- Improve timeliness of financial statements being made publicly available (departments and relevant ministers)
- Ensure consistent payroll processes are implemented (all entities)
- Review appropriateness of financial delegations and of controls in place to prevent unauthorised grant approvals (all entities)
- Review procurement policies and manuals (all entities).

The recommendations relating to consistent payroll processes; appropriateness of financial delegations to prevent unauthorised grant approvals; and review of procurement policies and manual have all been completed. The recommendation relating to timeliness of financial statements being made publicly available will be considered in conjunction with the annual reporting process for 2021–22 and in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and independent statutory offices.

Crime and Corruption Commission – Misuse of public resources: how effectively are agencies minimising risks? (Tabled June 2022)

The Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) conducted an audit of seven agencies (including DES) to determine how effectively they reduce the risk/incidence, and deal with allegations of, fraud and corruption involving misuse of public resources. The Audit found that agencies dealt appropriately with allegations in most instances, had sound policies and procedures in place relating to the use of public resources, undertook sound awareness raising activities and had sound regimes in place for detecting wrongdoing.

The Audit also made a number of recommendations for improvement including in relation to record keeping and management of bulk fuels. While these recommendations were not directed to DES, we have noted them for consideration as part of our focus on continuous improvement.

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 assessments and escalation when appropriate. Key strategic risks and opportunities are identified as part of our annual strategic planning process. Risks that may have an impact on objectives are identified by areas as part of their business planning and operations.

Strategic and operational risks are reviewed regularly to monitor risk treatments and the overall effectiveness of controls. Strategic and operational risks are reported quarterly to management and the Audit and Risk Committee. This year, the department reviewed and updated its risk management policy and appetite statement and has worked towards improving the integration of risk management into divisional management teams. A new 'Enterprise Risk Management System' was also introduced to help further integrate risk into the department's business.

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 Customer and Digital Officer, noting that appropriate assurance activities have been undertaken to inform this opinion and the department's information security risk position.

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 (QSA) Records Governance Policy. Departmental policies are in place which allocate responsibilities for recordkeeping.

The records management framework includes an appraisal and disposal program, management of paper records, retrieval and digital delivery of records, an electronic document and records management system (eDRMS), assessment of records compliance in business systems, training, support, and a program of permanent records transfers to QSA.

A new strategic recordkeeping plan has been developed which focuses on managing records following a risk and value approach. The corporate eDRMS has been upgraded across the department.

There is an end-to-end recordkeeping service supporting business areas develop an effective recordkeeping culture and applying new technologies to maximise the use of digital records. Digital recordkeeping is implemented through increasing use of the corporate eDRMS, automated capture of records, and records compliant business systems. The Digitisation Disposal Policy enables the early disposal of paper records which have been digitised and are managed securely. Key legacy email records have been captured into the corporate eDRMS. Analysis of agency processes for improved recordkeeping practices and risk mitigation is ongoing.

The records held in the corporate eDRMS have file structures with appropriate security markings and access controls according to the Information Security Policy. There have been no security breaches of this system. Online eDRMS training is available for all staff.

The department is using the QSA ArchivesGateway to administer retrievals of files and access controls for permanent departmental records held at QSA.

Records are retained in accordance with approved general administrative and core business retention and disposal schedules.

Information systems

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

- Macropods Online—online platform for macropod harvesting and dealer licences, payment of fees, and maintenance of statutory record-keeping requirements
- Parks and Forests Permitting Hub—online 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 value
- 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
- The Accelerating Science Delivery Innovation (ASDI) program delivering platforms, technologies and standards to remediate and modernise Science Division's systems.

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.

The table at Figure 1 presents the workforce profile data by full-time equivalent (FTE) as at the last full fortnight of the June quarter.

Figure 1: Workforce profile data

	FTE
Total FTE for DES	2770.3

Note:

1. The FTE figure reflects Minimum Obligatory Human Resource Information (MOHRI) collected and reported as at 17 June 2022 as the last full pay fortnight for the year.

The table at Figure 2 presents the target group data as at the last full fortnight of the June quarter.

Figure 2: Target group data¹

Gender	Number (Headcount)²	Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount)
Woman	1486	50.5%
Man	1451	49.3%
Non-binary	8	0.3%
Diversity Groups	Number (Headcount)	Percentage of total workforce (Calculated on headcount)
Women	1486	50.5%
Aboriginal Peoples and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	126	4.3%
People with disability	120	4.1%
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Born overseas	54	1.8%
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse – Speak a language at home other than English (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages or Australian South Sea Islander languages)	71	2.4%
	Number (Headcount)	Percentage of total Leadership Cohort (Calculated on headcount)
Women in Leadership Roles ³	62	47.3%

Notes:

1. To ensure privacy, in tables where there are less than 5 respondents in a category, specific numbers should be replaced by <5.
2. Headcount is higher than the FTE count due to part-time and job share arrangements.
3. Women in Leadership Roles are considered those positions that are Senior Officer and equivalent and above.

Workforce planning and performance

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, DES 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—using evidence-based decision-making through analytical insights and effective workforce planning and management.

Talent acquisition

Onboarding

All new employees undertake an induction process to:

- provide a smooth transition into DES 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 DES
- provide an understanding of the function and operations of DES as well as their 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

DES supports a range of career pathway programs to ensure we have the right people with the right skills in the future. For example, in 2021, five First Nations school leavers were recruited to participate in the DES Gap Year program. The Gap Year Program is an 18-month entry-level employment program which allows young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school leavers to enter the DES workforce after graduating. As a talent pipeline, the program strengthens the representation of First Nations people in DES by providing equitable and tailored opportunities for young Indigenous people.

Industry placement opportunities were also provided for 37 university students as part of their degree requirements. These students came from a range of disciplines including environmental management and law.

Maximising performance

Planning for performance

All employees participate in performance and development planning (P&DP) 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 development activities.

Reward and recognition

DES values its employees and recognises that high performance depends on the success and achievements of staff. The DES 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
- Divisional and local awards
- Informal initiatives by supervisors and managers to recognise and celebrate the value and contributions of their staff.

Building capability

DES 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 and aligned to the Leadership Capabilities for Queensland. 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 2021–22, the corporate training calendar continued to include virtual course offerings to remain accessible to individuals utilising flexible work arrangements, as well as those who are geographically dispersed. The corporate training calendar was also further focused on initiatives and programs that help foster respectful workplaces across DES.

Mentoring programs

This year, we further developed a new approach to mentoring, built on the learnings of previous successful programs as well as the lessons learnt from COVID-19. An online mentoring platform provides an entirely online solution allowing employees to self-source mentors and drive their own development journey. With further challenges experienced during 2021–22, the mentoring program has been successful in enabling employees to connect with each other across the state and develop meaningful relationships.

The program was evaluated in February 2022 to assess its functionality and ensure it continues to meet employees' needs. There was an overwhelmingly positive response from participants in the program, with each employee able to utilise the platform to meet their needs. Ongoing promotion and awareness of the program continues to increase participation and at 30 June 2022, the program had 41 mentors and 62 mentees with 19 active matches across four programs (general, First Nations, Women in Leadership and technical).

Leadership and management development

In 2021–22, DES continued to deliver the foundational and advanced leadership programs, aligned to the Leadership Competencies for Queensland. The foundational program, Framing Leadership, aims to develop current and aspiring leaders (levels AO3–AO6 or equivalent), with the foundational skills to take on new leadership challenges. The advanced program, Leadership in Focus, aims to help further hone the skills of leaders AO7–SO level and equivalent. This financial year, 38 employees participated in these leadership programs.

Several other leadership development programs were also offered this year:

- Six employees completed the People Matters program, a three-day, hands-on development program that equips emerging leaders with foundational leadership skills.
- Four employees continued their participation 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.

Two other leadership initiatives continued to be 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, 40 employees are currently participating in the EZRA coaching program for middle level managers. Two additional cohorts are planned for the remainder of 2022. In this program, participants receive unlimited access to a professional leadership coach for three months to focus on their development and help work through leadership challenges they may be facing.

We are also designing and delivering a new leadership program, called Leading at DES. This program aims to build the foundational and functional skills that leaders need in today's environment, in order to build and maintain respectful workplaces across DES. This program will contain eight modules, including Self-Leadership, Managing for Success, Finance, Systems and Processes, Governance and Accountability, Strategic Operational and Workforce Planning, Recruitment and Onboarding, and the MATE Bystander program. The Leading at DES program forms part of the greater Respectful Workplaces program of work.

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, Multicultural Action Plan and Disability Service Plan.

On 22 April 2022, we marked the 12-month anniversary of the launch of the DES Gurra Gurra Framework 2020–2026. This framework has been integral in reframing our relationships with First Nations peoples and incorporating their perspectives in everything we do. During the year, we also progressed the First Nations Employment and Development Action Plan 2020–25, working across DES to strengthen the attraction and retention of First Nations employees.

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

- NAIDOC week—recognised and celebrated virtually in July 2021
- Disability Action Week—during which employees and supervisors could attend disability confidence sessions as well as participate in online learning such as the SBS Disability Inclusion Program. Following promotion of the SBS online module the People and Culture team held a debrief session where employees could come together, share their learnings and reflect on how they could transfer their learnings to the workplace
- International Women's Day and Queensland Women's Week—where we had record attendance at a live Teams event with 649 employees hearing from the Honourable Meaghan Scanlon, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs, guest speaker Jessica Rudd, the DES Director-General and a panel of DES employees who discussed the 2022 theme of #BreaktheBias
- a new suite of awareness raising sessions, including; Unconscious Bias, Gender Identity, Words at Work, Hybrid Inclusion 101, Managing for team Wellbeing, SBS Inclusion online modules, and the Certificate IV in Indigenous Cultural Capability.

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

In 2021–22, we continued our focus on raising awareness and building capability in recognising the signs of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV), responding to those who use harmful, abusive or violent behaviour, and supporting those affected. We also worked towards DES' White Ribbon reaccreditation and achieved this on 28 April 2022.

This year, we:

- communicated ELT's statement of commitment to a workplace free from sexual harassment
- facilitated 2 DFV Specialist sessions to ensure that employees have the skills and awareness to recognise the signs of DFV, respond with empathy and refer those affected to appropriate support
- continued to deliver the MATE Bystander program. A total of 331 employees have completed the program this year and 310 are part of the Bystander Teams channel
- ensured employees were aware of the support available from the Employee Assistance Service for employees affected by violence
- launched Module 2 of the Recognise, Respond, Refer – Domestic and Family Violence Awareness course, as well as continuing to promote the original session. A total of 323 employees have completed Module 1, with another 15 employees completing the manager module during the period.

There has been an ongoing review and consideration of the risks of violence and/or abuse against employees, with this incorporated into our risk register.

Our staff also actively volunteered to help address DFV in the community by:

- fundraising \$4,985 to support 2 women's shelters within Queensland—Maybanke in Brisbane and Flora House in Townsville
- participating in the Darkness to Daylight CEO Challenge, with 12 employees raising \$2,316 for frontline support services.

Employee health and wellbeing

This year, we continued implementation of the DES safety management system and further improved our compliance processes. We also:

- redeveloped our WHS reporting by developing a PowerBI WHS Dashboard
- established the DES Mental Health Support Officer Network by training 46 staff in Mental Health First Aid across the state
- established an Employee Support Office role to provide guidance and assistance to staff involved in complex HR processes
- commenced a review into incident reporting and corrective actions tracking processes with a view to automate the activity
- 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
- continued to manage the impacts of COVID-19 on our workforce and stakeholders, maintaining focus on safe working environments
- held the Director-General's Safety Behaviour Awards during Work Safe Month (October 2021) to reinforce our positive safety culture.

Early retirement, redundancy and retrenchment

During the period, three employees received voluntary redundancy packages at a cost of \$290,867 (gross) (including accrued leave entitlements). Two of these staff were in a job share arrangement.

Human rights—Respect. Protect. Promote.

Actions taken to further the objects of the Act

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

The implementation of human rights in the department has progressed to a 'business as

usual' operations approach, focussed on specific issues or implementation questions. A review of the objectives and membership of the internal working group is underway to ensure its ongoing role in this regard. The department continues to monitor new legal analysis and policy and practice advice on human rights.

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.

Human Rights complaints received by the agency

Over the past 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*. The department has yet to receive a substantiated complaint relating to human rights since the commencement of the legislation.

Reviews for compatibility with human rights

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. A small number of documents are being updated to fully align with the legislation.

Human rights watching briefs

The department has continued to keep a watching brief on the *Waratah Coal Pty Ltd v. Youth Verdict Ltd and Others* case currently before the Land Court.

The department has maintained its engagement 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*).